

Living in the Shadowlands (Teaching)

1. Introduction.
 - A. Introduction Slide – Living in the Shadowlands. **[slide 1]**
 - B. Bret's been teaching on creation, fall, redemption, and consummation. **[slide 2]**
 - C. We are going to look at a subset of that chart as it applies to our lives – redemption and consummation – between salvation and when we die (or Jesus comes back). **[slide 3]**
 - D. Going to do a number of these timeline types of charts. (For those who might be listening – will see a horizontal line intersected on the left with a line for redemption, or salvation when referring to the individual. To the far right will see another vertical line indicating consummation, or death for most. (We won't be discussing that time between death and final judgment in this teaching.) The space between our salvation and our death we will show as the Shadowlands, our life on the current earth, (which we could say in theological terms as sanctification).

2. Why the Shadowlands?
 - A. Taken from C.S. Lewis writings and perspective. There is a movie with Anthony Hopkins and Debra Winger which depicts their meeting, getting married and dealing with her death within four years of marriage, from cancer.
 - B. C.S. Lewis has to reconcile his Christian faith with the pain and suffering he goes through in losing his wife, Joy. He contrasts our shadowy worldly existence with the substantial reality of heaven. He has to resolve grief in this life with the joy of entering eternity for his wife.
 - C. For us, I'm looking to depict the life we live while in the physical temporal place on this earth in its current form and in the throes of our sin, and in the eternal spiritual realm where we have access into the Holy of Holies, by Christ's sacrifice and through his Holy Spirit in us.

3. Initial Text.
 - A. Let's start with this text: **I John 3:1-3 How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. ²Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. ³Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure. **[slide 4]****

- B. There is a contrast right away between us who know Christ and those who do not. They are not in the Shadowlands, they are in complete darkness. That's where we came from. **John 1:4-5** speaks of Jesus – **In him was life, and that life was the light of men.** ⁵**The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.** [slide 5]
- C. The good news is, we are not left to darkness anymore, unless we choose to live in it. Back to our text – **I John 3:1** [slide 6] **the world does not know us**, because we are not left in the same darkness. It can't understand God, so it can't understand us. But **verse 2** says **what we will be has not yet been made known.** We see glimpses of God's glory, but we don't fully see it yet.
- D. Let's look at another verse: **I Corinthians 13:12** **Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.** [slide 7] Again, the Shadowlands, I don't even see myself clearly.
- E. One more verse – **Hebrews 11:1-2** **Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.** ²**This is what the ancients were commended for.** [slide 7] From these verses one can see how hard it is to walk the Christian life at times. How do you walk out something that you can't see?
- F. But God desires to show us who he is. **Hebrews 11:6** says that **without faith, it is impossible to please God; because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.** Part of coming to God and earnestly seeking him involves looking to the future. We see God's character growing in us and we desire to be like Jesus, as sons and daughters. We also should have a desire for his kingdom, his presence. This also fits in with our memory verses for the year: **II Peter 3:13-14** **But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.** ¹⁴**So then dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him.** [slide 8] Our question now becomes: how much of eternity or heaven can we know on this earth while still in our sinful nature and body? How much does God reveal of himself in the Shadowlands? Moses was able to see the glory of God as he was protected by God. Paul was caught up in the third heaven, caught up to paradise, hearing things that man is not permitted to tell. John had the visions of heaven while on the island of Patmos, which he described in the book of Revelation. Jesus spoke of seeing what the Father did and doing it. How do we walk this out?
4. Let's go back to our Shadowlands Timeline again.

- A. Now I'm going to start filling out the Shadowlands Timeline, starting with some lists to both the left of redemption and to the right of consummation. **[slide 9]**
 - B. To the left of redemption, which implies after the fall of man, we see "fear". To the right of consummation or in the eternal we see "love".
 - (1). **I John 4:18 There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. [slide 10]**
 - (2). We see fear right away in the Garden, after Adam and Eve eat the fruit, they hide from God. Why? Because they were naked! Yet on the right side of the timeline, we see love, God's love. That love was demonstrated by Jesus going to the cross for us, so we might have eternal life and not fear punishment.
 - C. Let's clear out the timeline and add some more to the left and right of the Shadowlands. **[slide 11]** To the left we see bitterness, anger, rage, slander and malice. To the right, in the eternal, we see kindness, compassion, and forgiveness.
 - (1). **Ephesians 4:31-32 Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. ³²Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. [slide 12]**
 - (2). We are seeing that the list of things on the left are because of our sin. We have a sinful nature. That nature won't be gone till we die or Jesus comes back.
 - D. Let's add a number of other things to this timeline and take a look. **[slide 13]** I've added sin, death, evil desires, greed, idolatry and grief to the side left of redemption. To the right I added holiness, life, righteousness, giving, worship of God, and joy. There are a number of other things that I could add to these lists (like pain and suffering), but notice the gap is still there, in the Shadowlands, where you and I live.
5. Us in the Shadowlands - to view this chart realistically, we have to establish more of what the Shadowlands area is like.
- A. It is a place where you and I live in the redemption of Christ. When we accept Jesus, we are now comprised of three parts that are impacted by the sin of the fall on the left and the access to God on the right.
 - (1). **[slide 14]** We have the Holy Spirit in us. **Ephesians 1:13-14 And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit. ¹⁴who is a deposit guaranteeing**

our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession – to the praise of his glory. [slide 15]

- a. With the Holy Spirit comes the fruit of the Spirit – Galatians 5:22-23.
 - b. There are gifts of the Spirit – can read in I Corinthians 12.
 - c. We'll say more about the Holy Spirit shortly.
- (2). **[slide 16]** Second part of us that we see impacted in the timeline is our spirit becomes alive. Bret has been teaching over a number of weeks that when Adam and Eve sinned, their immediate death was spiritual, they would later die physically. Our spirit is considered dead until made alive by Christ.
- a. **John 3:5-6** Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. ⁶Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit." **[slide 17]**
 - b. **Romans 8:10, 16** ¹⁰But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, your spirit is alive because of righteousness. ¹⁶The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. **[slide 17]**
- (3). **[slide 18]** The last part of us that we must deal with is our sinful nature. It's the part of us that must go through death or change when Jesus comes back.
- a. **Romans 8:12-14** - Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation-- but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. ¹³For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, ¹⁴because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. **[slide 19]**
 - b. We continue to struggle with our sinful nature. Some things it seems to take years to resolve. Some things God deals with quickly. In some ways, it would be nice to go into eternity right away after accepting Christ. Then we don't have to struggle anymore. The problem then would be that there would be no one to evangelize.
- (4). I modified the timeline one more time to show what it really feels like to be a Christian at times. **[slide 20]** This chart shows some of the sin in the Shadowlands area and also some of the fruit of the Spirit and things from the eternity side of the chart, all mixed together. Is this the type of life

we are supposed to live while trying to get a glimpse of eternity?

B. No – this is not a complete picture. [I am a computer programmer, if there is a problem in code, I need to go back and see what I missed.] Let's take a look at one of two areas where God allows us to step into the spiritual realm, into eternity, to participate at times with that which is unseen.

(1). First – with the Holy Spirit. Haven't we already looked at the chart with the Holy Spirit in us and with us in the Shadowlands area? Yes, but do you and I really depend on the Holy Spirit? What do we depend on the Spirit to do?

a. Lead:

- **Luke 4:1** Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert... [slide 21]
- **Acts 13:2** While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." [slide 21]
- **Acts 16:6** Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. [slide 21]

b. Help us in prayer:

- **Romans 8:26** In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. [slide 22]
- **Ephesians 6:18** And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints. [slide 22]
- Question could be – what does it mean to pray in the Spirit?

c. Spiritual warfare - **Ephesians 6:12, 17** ¹²For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms...

¹⁷Take the helmet of salvation and sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. [slide 23]

Whether we like it or not, we do participate in the

heavenly realms while living in the Shadowlands. Satan was thrown down from heaven. Where does that leave him? In the same place we live!

- d. Bears fruit in us – spoke earlier of **Galatians 5:22-23**.
- e. Has gifts to be used in the body of Christ – mentioned I Corinthians 12. Also **Hebrews 2:3-4 ... This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. ⁴God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will. [slide 24]**
- f. Teaches us - **1 Corinthians 2:13 This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. [slide 25] John 14:26 But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. [slide 25]**
- g. Now discussing the Holy Spirit is a whole teaching in and of itself. I don't believe I'm doing justice now, but I do want us to consider how much the Holy Spirit should be a part of our spiritual life.

(2). Second area will be discussed in a future teaching - what we would call the spiritual disciplines and how they help us in our spiritual and physical walk on this earth. I would need to take more time to cover these adequately and discuss the impact on our lives in the Shadowlands.

- 6. Responsibility with teaching involves equipping of the saints. I have struggled to understand what it means to walk in the Spirit. But I also must pass on what God has given me, to equip me.
 - A. Reading from **Luke 15:25-32**. The older brother is unhappy when he finds out a celebration is going on for his derelict brother. Why don't I get a party? Listen to the father's words – **verse 31 – “My son,” the father said, “you are always with me, and everything I have is yours.” [slide 26]**

Communion: I Corinthians 10:23-26.

1. Introduction – Today we are going to celebrate communion together. As we've discussed what we receive from God, we can celebrate this communion that was also passed on from the Lord. We are celebrating the Lord's death till he returns. We are celebrating our communion with Jesus who sits at the right hand of the Father, using elements of bread and juice that are seen to celebrate that which is unseen.
2. In **I Corinthians 11:23** it says: **For what I received from the Lord, what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me. [Break the bread, keep a piece, give rest to Ronnie.]**
3. **In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "this cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." [Pour into a glass, then give small complete this verse.] For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.**
4. Pray – Thanks to God revealing himself, letting us see from the Holy of Holies, letting us participate in proclaiming his death, resurrection, and what is coming. Thank you for giving your Holy Spirit to comfort us, to lead us, to empower us, to allow us to see into eternity, to see into your kingdom while we live life on this earth.
5. Announce - open communion to those who know Christ and are visitors.
6. After elements have been passed out, pray over bread and cup.
 - A. Pray over bread – thanks that we do not just live off of physical bread, but from the bread of life, Jesus. This is the bread that gives us spiritual life and life more abundant. **[Take and eat.]**
 - B. Pray over the cup – Father, we do not enter into the Holy of holies through the blood of goats and bulls, but through the blood of Jesus, your son. We give thanks Jesus for your paying the price for our sins, with your blood so we might freely enter and commune with you and the Father. **[Take and drink.]**
 - C. Final prayer – Father, we thank you for all you have given us to live in this world until we come to you. Because of your son, Jesus, we can have a living relationship with you. In your love, you make known to us the riches of heaven. And you do not leave as orphans, but give us your Holy Spirit to live on this earth.
7. Final benediction – sing the Lord's Prayer.