

I'm currently reading Andy Stanley's book, *Deep & Wide: Creating Churches Unchurched People Love to Attend* for the second time. I'm much closer to Andy's father's age group than to Andy's, but I enjoy his "in your face" style and am learning some helpful ideas.

Andy's father, Charles Stanley, is one of the preeminent preachers of our time, and Andy's book gives insight into Charles's relationship with his only child. The two of them are very different, but they have found ways to bless each other and the ways in which God is using their lives.

I don't know Charles Stanley personally, but one of his first cousins is a good friend of mine and was in fact the Chair of the Deacons during part of my tenure in Bristol, Virginia. While Dr. Stanley and I understand some things differently, I have great respect and appreciation for his continuing service to God's Kingdom. I recently came across a page on his website that lists "30 Life Principles" that have guided his ministry, and would like to share those with you. You can find out more about each one at www.intouch.org/You/30LifePrinciples.aspx.

1. Our intimacy with God—His highest priority for our lives—determines the impact of our lives.
2. Obey God and leave the consequences to Him.
3. God's Word is an immovable anchor in times of storm.
4. The awareness of God's presence energizes us for our work.
5. God does not require us to understand His will, just to obey it, even if it seems unreasonable.
6. You reap what you sow, more than you sow, and later than you sow.
7. The dark moments of our lives will last only so long as is necessary for God to accomplish His purpose in us.
8. Fight all your battles on your knees and you win every time.
9. Trusting God means looking beyond what we can see to what God sees.
10. If necessary, God will move heaven and earth to show us His will.
11. God assumes full responsibility for our needs when we obey Him.
12. Peace with God is the fruit of oneness with God.
13. Listening to God is essential to walking with God.
14. God acts on behalf of those who wait for Him.
15. Brokenness is God's requirement for maximum usefulness.
16. Whatever you acquire outside of God's will eventually turns to ashes.
17. We stand tallest and strongest on our knees.
18. As children of a sovereign God, we are never victims of our circumstances.
19. Anything you hold too tightly you will lose.
20. Disappointments are inevitable, discouragement is a choice.
21. Obedience always brings blessing.

22. To walk in the Spirit is to obey the initial promptings of the Spirit.
23. You can never out give God.
24. To live the Christian life is to allow Jesus to live His life in and through us.
25. God blesses us so that we might bless others.
26. Adversity is a bridge to a deeper relationship with God.
27. Prayer is life's greatest time saver.
28. No Christian has ever been called to "go it alone" in his or her walk of faith.
29. We learn more in our valley experiences than on our mountaintops.
30. An eager anticipation of the Lord's return keeps us living productively.

Changing subjects, I'm pleased to report that your Strategic Planning Team hopes to get their proposals to you later this week. Stay tuned!

The next page gives the sermon plan through the end of the summer, followed by the "verse for the week."

Blessings to you!

Dave



Preaching schedule May - August

May 4 Communion L.O.V.E. Tea	<i>Miracles Today</i>
May 11 MOTHERS' DAY	<i>A Tale of Four Mothers</i>
May 18	Neville: Graduate Recognition
May 25 Memorial Day	<i>Fruitful Congregations: Passionate Worship</i>
June 1 Communion	<i>Fruitful Congregations: Radical Hospitality</i>
June 8 PENTECOST	<i>Fruitful Congregations: Intentional Faith Development</i>
June 15 FATHERS' DAY	<i>Because I Said I Would</i>
June 22 Summer begins	<i>Fruitful Congregations: Risk-Taking Mission & Service</i>
June 29	<i>Fruitful Congregations: Extravagant Generosity</i>
July 6 Communion	FREEDOM SUNDAY <i>Character that Counts: Dependence</i>
July 13	<i>Character that Counts: Vulnerability</i>
July 20	<i>Character that Counts: Humility</i>
July 27	<i>Character that Counts: Righteousness</i>
August 3 Communion	<i>Character that Counts: Mercy</i>
August 10	<i>Character that Counts: Purity</i>
August 17	<i>Character that Counts: Reconciliation</i>
August 24	<i>Character that Counts: Integrity</i>

The Joshua Code: Fifty-Two Verses Every Believer Should Know **O.S. Hawkins (Thomas Nelson, 2012)**

Week seventeen: Is Jesus still Weeping?

Jesus wept (John 11:35).

We now come to the shortest verse in all the Bible. Without question, it is the easiest to memorize. It contains only two words, three syllables. However, these two words offer incredible insight into the heart of our Lord. For those of us who attended Vacation Bible School as children, more than likely this was among the first verses we put to memory—*“Jesus wept.”*

There are two passages in Scripture that reveal our Lord actually weeping. Ironically, both of them take place on the Mount of Olives opposite Jerusalem. On the eastern slope of the mountain, in the small village of Bethany, we find Jesus weeping over our sorrows at the grave of Lazarus (John 11:35). On the western slope of the mountain, we find Him on Palm Sunday weeping over our sins (Luke 19:41). One can't help but wonder when we read these words if Jesus is still weeping today. Tears have a language all their own. The tears of our Lord speak volumes to us in this dispensation of grace.

JESUS WEEPS OVER OUR SORROWS: HE IS TOUCHED BY OUR BROKEN HEARTS

The event was the funeral of His close friend Lazarus. With poignant brevity, John simply states, *“Jesus wept.”* He did not weep because Lazarus was dead. He knew that in a moment He could restore life to him—and those who know the Bible know this is exactly what He did! Jesus wept when He saw Lazarus's sisters crying. Tears touch the heart of our God. Mary's heart was broken. Her brother was dead, and it seemed Jesus had arrived too late. She held no hope. She was hurting. She was weeping with deep sobs and wails. She was pouring out her soul to the Lord. When Jesus saw her, He wept with her. This great God is touched by our own hurts and broken hearts.

JESUS WEEPS OVER OUR SINS: HE IS TROUBLED BY OUR BLINDED EYES

Most messages related to the Palm Sunday event have to do with the crowds, the shouts of the hosannas, the parade, the pep rally. But all that was a sham. And our Lord knew it. Within a few short days, those same crowds would disappear, and their cheers would be turned to jeers. Can you picture Him that day, on the back of a donkey, riding over palm branches to the praise of the people? He was the center of attention. He must have been smiling from ear to ear and waving at the adoring crowds like He was sitting in a convertible on a parade route. But look closer: *“Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it”* (Luke 19:41). Hear Him through His tears as He says, *“If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes”* (v. 42).

Sadly, those of us in the Western church today do not seem to be weeping over the sins of those around us or even our own sins. We are hardly troubled by blinded eyes. We are watching the decay of a civilization before us. This is America in the twenty-first century, and Jesus is still weeping . . . but many of us are not. Many of us have lost our tears, but tears speak so much louder than words.

The Lord Jesus is still touched by our broken hearts and troubled by our blinded eyes. Is our Lord weeping *with* you or *over* you today? There is, after all, a huge difference between the two.