

Friends of Taylor County Camp.

In just a few weeks, TCC will begin. Prayers will be offered. Songs will resound from the Tabernacle. The Word will be opened, declared and responded to with faithful commitment.

The last time I spoke (2019), I sent a letter of introduction because to most of you, I was a stranger. I wanted to begin that camp meeting with a sense of transparency and honesty.

This year, I pray that as Angie and I return, we have your trust and confidence to lean into the word as it is taught and preached. So, I thought it might be helpful for you to know what texts will be my focus this year. That way, if you so desire, you can familiarize yourselves with the Biblical passages. May I encourage you to ponder this as a possible preparation plan.

1. **Pray.** First and foremost, for your own heart and mind to receive a fresh word from the Lord. Also, for you to be willing to commit to unwavering obedience and allegiance to the King of Kings.

2. **Read.** Below you will find the Gospel passages I will be leading us through. I might encourage you to use these texts as your devotional focus each day as you prepare you and your families to gather together at TCC.

3. **Read it again.** Yes, I know I am being a bit pushy. But it would be a gift to me for you to be familiar with the contents of these passages. I desire to take us as deep as we can go. If you come to camp knowing “what the text says”; you will have laid the groundwork for me to tell you “what the text means” to both the first century followers of Jesus and for us today. My goal at TCC is never to simply give you more information so you can win a Bible Trivia game around your dining room table. No, I want to take you before the throne of our reigning King to be radiantly transformed to look and sound like Him.

4. **Listen to it.** Do not be surprised when I tell you that the Word in the First Century Church was always read aloud. It was not read silently the way we read in our private devotions. It was read publicly within a believing community. Possibly, spouses can take turns reading the word aloud over one another; baptizing your lives and your homes in the Word. If you have the YouVersion app on your phone, you can have these passages read “over you” as you follow along in the same translation. Make your eyes engage. Force your ears to be active and alive. If you read it aloud yourself, your lips are speaking the Good News and entering into the practice of “gospeling.” Sorry to say, we have no single English verb for the word “proclaiming the Good News.” We may not have a single word but you can practice it anyway, as you declare the Gospel aloud in preparation for TCC.

5. Finally, **Agree to it.** Maybe this should have come first. PLAN TO OBEY. Before we read. Before we interpret. Before we apply. We all agree to be faithful to the voice of the Lord. When You speak Lord, my only response is “Yes!”

OK. With that as a preface, what passages will we be studying during Taylor County Camp? The overall theme I have been prayerfully focused upon this summer is, “**The Gospel According to the Four Gospels.**” I will define the term “Gospel” as it is clearly laid out in the Scriptures; both Old Testament and New Testament. Then we will focus our attention on how the Apostles carefully house the term “Gospel” within each one of the Four Gospel stories. Now, that is way too much material for our 9-day camp. So, I will be selecting Jesus’ *first* words and His *last* words in each Gospel. Let’s put it this way, we will let Jesus “introduce” us (His First Words) to His Gospel in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Then we will read/listen as Jesus describes the “climax” of the Gospel message from each of the Four Evangelists.

These are the texts which will get our attention in the days ahead. Ponder their meaning and significance as you Pray. Read them. Read them again. Listen to them. Obey them. See you all July 6th.

The First Words of Jesus:

- The Gospel Introduction According to Matthew 3-4.
- The Gospel Introduction According to Mark 1:1-20.
- The Gospel Introduction According to Luke 1-2.
- The Gospel Introduction According to John 1:35-51.

The Last Words of Jesus:

- The Gospel Climax According to Matthew 28.
- The Gospel Climax According to Mark 15:25-39.
- The Gospel Climax According to Luke 24.
- The Gospel Climax According to John 20-21.

In Jesus’ joy,
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