

Ministers:  
the congregation

Kenny Chumbley  
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Sunday:  
8:00 AM: WGCY  
9:00 AM: Worship

Wednesday:  
7:00 PM: Bible Study

[gibsoncitychurchof  
Christ.com](http://gibsoncitychurchofchrist.com)

**This Past Week:**  
Worship—23  
Wednesday—  
Contribution—\$580

**For meditation:**  
Ecclesiastes 5.18–20  
Does God mean for  
us to enjoy life?  
What sort of things  
rob life of its joy?  
Can you say you're  
enjoying everyday  
to the fullest?

Radio program:  
WGCY FM, 106.3  
Sundays at 8 AM

## *The forgiveness text* **Matthew 18**

Is there any expression of Christian love greater than forgiveness? God forgives our sins out of His great love for us, and He expects us to pass loving forgiveness along. The parable in Matthew 18.21–35, one of Christ's longest parables, leaves no doubt about this. The passage has three paragraphs; I'll say a few words about each.

### **18.21–22**

How many times ought we forgive another? Peter asked (v 21). Based on Amos 1.3,6,9, 11,13; 2.1,4,6, Jewish rabbis taught an obligation to forgive another three times, but Peter knew Christ wasn't bound by that standard and asked if seven times was enough.

Jesus said to forgive seventy times seven. This doesn't mean we stop at 490 times but is an idiomatic way of saying forgiveness is unlimited. Love doesn't keep track of how many times it forgives another.

### **18.23–27**

A servant stole/embezzled 10,000 talents from the king. A *talent* was the largest denomination of coin the Jews had, and 10,000 was the highest number for which the Greeks had a word (*myriad*). Because of several variables, we don't know how much ten thousand talents would be today, but it would be astronomical. To owe 10,000 talents meant you had an unpayable debt. When the servant's crime was discovered, he pled for patience and promised to repay all, but in this, he was delusional. The average wage for a laborer was one denarius. Google says there were 6,000 denarii in a talent—at this rate, it would have taken 60 million days to work off a debt of 10,000 talents.

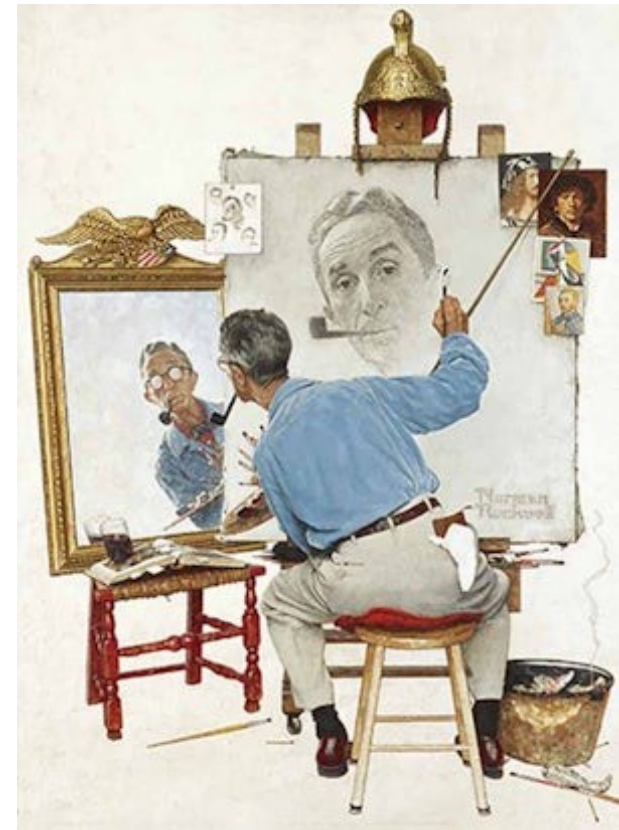
We'll pick it up here next week.

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# Gibson City church of Christ

Highway 47 South, Gibson City, IL

## *Self-portraits* Norman Rockwell



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Sermon: Hebrews 11.8

## Abraham the amazing

17 August 2025

## Self-portraits

### Jesus Christ

Hanging on the wall of my study is the famous painting (given me by my daughter Kelly) of Raphael's *The School of Athens*. Nearly sixty famous philosophers, going back to Plato and Aristotle, are depicted. At the extreme right is portrayed a young man wearing a black beret who is looking directly at you, the viewer. The young man is Raphael; it's a self-portrait. Self-portraits by great painters (e.g., Rembrandt, Rockwell, et al.) are always interesting to artists and lovers of art.

The greatest self-portrait of all, however, is the one painted by Christ in the Gospels. It wasn't created with paint and a palette consists of short word pictures in which we see Christ as He saw Himself. Christ's self-portraits give us a picture of Him through His own eyes, and they are one of the most comprehensive ways by which God revealed Himself to man.

Here's a partial listing of "selfies" Jesus left us as: physician, bridegroom, the One stronger than the strong man, the sower, the judge, the bread of life, the light of the world, the door, the good shepherd, the resurrection and the life, the man who went on a far journey, the servant, the way, Master and Lord, the vine, the King, the Son of Man. In studying all these, two generalizations emerge.

First, Christ was conscience of no sin in Himself. Unlike me, His heart didn't condemn Him (1 Jn. 3.20). He confesses to no shortcoming, flaw, or misstep. He saw nothing in Himself needing forgiving. "Which of you convicts Me of sin?" (Jn. 8.46). "The ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me" (Jn. 14.30). Either Christ is Lord or He was completely unhinged.

Second, Christ was conscious of His greatness. More than simply seeing Himself as great, He saw Himself as supreme. Was He just Jesus of Nazareth the son of Mary? Was he just the carpenter? No, when we look at Him through His eyes the humble Galilean is transfigured to where His cross is a crown, and His great stature dominates time and space. By studying His self-portraits, His greatness and supremacy become clear, which is precisely why we should study them.

If Christ is not the person He believed Himself to be, there is nothing in all the Bible of which we can be certain, and we are left with nothing but darkness, falsehoods, and utter confusion.

To be continued . . .

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## Christ's conversation with Peter, John 21

John 21.15–17 is a short scene full of significance, when before six other disciples Christ asks Peter three times, "Do you love Me? The threefold repetition suggests the three times Peter denied Jesus in the courtyard of the high priest. This terrible failure humbled Peter and he refuses to overstate his case. He affirms his love for Christ, by appealing to the fact that Jesus, who knew what was in man (Jn. 2.25), thereby knew he (Peter) loved Him.

Peter's threefold appeal to Christ's omniscience is a significant mediation. In 1 John 3.20, John writes, "For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things." There's a higher judge than ourself. The heart is deceitful above all things, said Jeremiah, and the devil can use it to falsely accuse us (see Zech. 3). God's judgment of us, based on His complete knowledge of us, the good and the bad, is what counts, not what we think about ourselves.

As proof of his love, Peter couldn't appeal to his actions, for he was guilty of the very thing Christ said would cause Him to deny a man before His Father in heaven (Matt. 10.33). Twice Peter answered, "You know that I love you," and he concluded with, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love you" (v 17; I wonder if John remembered Peter's words when he wrote 1 Jn. 3.20?).

Actions usually speak louder than words, but not always. We can do things out of character, things inconsistent with the general tenor of our life. When this happens, we can do as Peter and appeal to the Lord's loving omniscience, confident He knows us for who we really are and takes all extenuating circumstances into consideration (Ps. 103.104).

Three times Christ asked, "Do you love Me?" and three times Peter answered, "Lord, you know that I love you," and three times Christ said, "Feed My sheep." Does anyone think Christ would give the care of His flock to someone who didn't love Him whom He couldn't trust? He commissioned Peter as a shepherd of His church precisely because He *knew* Peter loved Him. Better a loving amateur like Peter to care for my children than a treacherous expert like some trained childcare or nursing home employees.

Note that Christ didn't pray that Peter not to fall but that his faith not fail (Lk. 22.32)—so long as Peter's faith survived, he could return to Christ and strengthen his brethren.

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