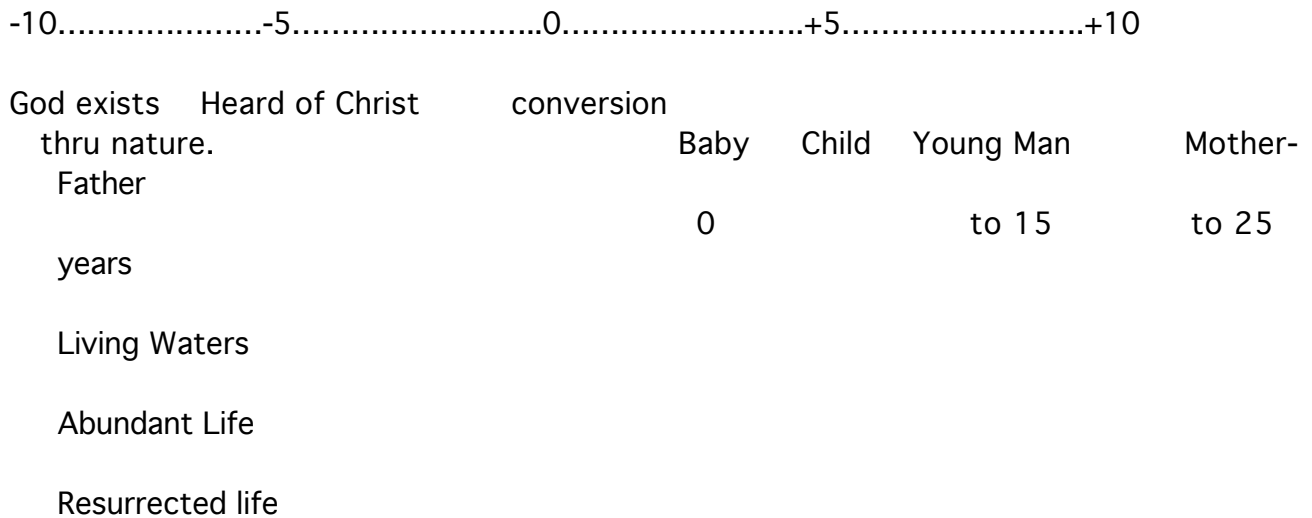


Closing The Gap Series #1
 No One Can Do It Alone
 Dr. Roger Barrier
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 S-1671

Today Glenn and I will begin a new series on what it means to close the gap in our spiritual journeys from where we are to where God would love to see us be. Casas is called by God to help us “close the gap” in our relationships with God. This series will last for the next eight Sundays. Please don’t miss a one. We are outlining God’s present and future call upon our church.

SLIDE #: OVERHEAD: Let’s Graph What Closing The Gap Might Look Like.



The Abundant Life, The Living Water, The Resurrected Life Is The One We Want To Experience.

SLIDE #: John 5:26: For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself.

Relationship with Christ

SLIDE #: John 5:39-40: You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, 40 yet you refuse to come to me to have life.

Possible to have the bible and know the scriptures and miss the life

SLIDE #: John 7:37-39: On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. 38 Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him." 39 By this he meant the Spirit, ...

Living waters; fresh life
Greek word is running water versus still, stagnant pool of water
Victorious spirit-filled life

SLIDE #: John 10:10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

Satanic battles. Satan is out to destroy our abundant lives.

SLIDE #: Philippians 3:10: I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection ...

The resurrected life.

The Fruit Of The Spirit Describes The Personality Of Christ Himself—The Same Personality That He Wants To Mold Into Our Lives.

SLIDE #: Galatians 5:22-25: But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. 24 Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. 25 Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

This is the kind of live I want to have.

TESTIMONY WITH RAY EDWARDS

ROGER: Found Christ here at Casas two years ago. Now an altar counselor helping new Christians find Christ. Along with Carol Gowler leads our new Christians class.

ROGER: How did you find Casas?

Ray: drove by and saw sign: "Get your butt in there."
Glenn's sermon spoke right to me—third week found Christ

ROGER: Tell me about your life before you found Christ.

RAY: Divorced eight years ago
Struggled and angry

ROGER: What is it like now that you have found Christ?

RAY: contented and at peace

Children get along

Daughter a different person

Influence of Christ in my life has influenced my children

Started tithing: business failing, have faith, that week God answered my prayer.

Big difference: “You’re not good enough.” Report card: Dad yelled: “You’ll never amount to more than a ditch digger.” Made me go out in yard and dig ditches to strengthen my back for the time when I grew up.

Casas: Never felt worthy

Discovered that God really loved me and wants to be my friend. It changed my heart.

Sp growth class

SLIDE #: YOU CAN’T CLOSE THE GAP IF YOU THINK THAT: ... SERIES

These sermons are to define what we perceive is God’s call for the Casas’ way.

It is not the only way. This is not the way everyone has to do it; it is the way we feel God is leading us to do it.

SLIDE #: YOU CAN DO IT ALONE AND ISOLATED FROM OTHERS

SLIDE #: RIGHT DOCTRINE AND RIGHT LIVING IS ENOUGH

Abiding in Christ instead of continuing to Labor, Pretend or Quit the Christian life.

Believe and behave not enough

SLIDE #: YOU KNOW WHAT IT IS WHEN YOU DON’T

SLIDE #: YOU CAN KEEP THE STREAMS OF LIVING WATER ALL TO YOURSELF

Allowing streams of living water to overflow out of your own soul to quench the thirst of others instead of just allowing them to fill you up. We don’t come to church just to get fed. Ministry and service to others is the outflow of the life of Christ in us.

SLIDE #: YOU ARE LIVING LIKE AN OWNER INSTEAD OF LIKE A MANAGER

This is also the concept of service. Not all of Christianity is for me. I have resources that God wants me to steward well with others.

SLIDE #: YOU CAN FIND INTIMACY WITH GOD WITHOUT FOLLOWING THE PRINCIPLES OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH

Hope is the key to this sermon. Many have given up believing that there is more to the Christian life than what they could ever possibly experience. We can

become more intimate in our relationship with God through the process of spiritual growth.

SLIDE #: SATAN IS NOT DELIBERATELY SABOTAGING YOUR CHRISTIAN LIFE

All Christians are under demonic attack, what the attacks might look like and what to do about it.

SLIDE #: CORPORATE WORSHIP IS OPTIONAL

True worshippers are the kind of people the Father seeks (John 4)! Our value for a multi-generational church will grind to a halt unless we make a priority of embracing both Gen-exers and Millennials.

SLIDE #: YOU CAN'T CLOSE THE GAP IF YOU THINK THAT YOU CAN DO IT ALONE AND ISOLATED FROM OTHERS.

SLIDE #: Even Jesus Needed Intimate Friends.

•SLIDE #: Jesus shared one of the greatest moments of his life with Peter, James and John on the Mount of Transfiguration. He needed His friends.

•SLIDE #: “Will you go away, too?”
Do you feel the loneliness in those verses.

•SLIDE #: Before Jesus goes to Jerusalem, knowing he was going to be crucified; he goes to see his good friends Mary, Martha, and Lazarus.

•SLIDE #: Jesus was struggling in the Garden the night before the crucifixion. He pleaded with Peter, James, John. “Can you not pray with me one hour?”
Most of us would say to Jesus: “Why do you need them? Just go pray!”
He needed their prayers. They went to sleep and broke His heart.

•SLIDE #: He couldn't even carry His cross alone.

Jesus needed friends. Jesus needed those to whom he could open his heart and reveal his mind.

SLIDE #: Jesus Never Let Anyone Do Anything Alone.

•SLIDE #: Mark 6:6-7: Then Jesus went around teaching from village to village. 7 Calling the Twelve to him, he sent them out two by two and gave them authority over evil spirits.

•SLIDE #: The only one who did anything alone was Judas.

•SLIDE #: Jesus Ministered To Different-Sized Groups And Based His Involvement On His

Intimacy Level Ministry With Each Group.

- SLIDE #: The Multitudes

Matt 5:1-2: Now when he saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, 2 and he began to teach them, saying:

Taught in parables.

- SLIDE #: The Seventy-Two

Sent out two by two: returned rejoicing as a group

- SLIDE #: THE TWELVE

- SLIDE #: Matthew 10:1-4: He called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness. 2 These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon (who is called Peter) and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; 3 Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; 4 Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

JESUS DIVIDED HIS DISCIPLES INTO SMALL GROUPS

As to the order in which they are arranged, on closely inspecting the lists we observe that they contain three groups of four, in each of which the same names are always found, though the order of arrangement varies. The first group includes the best known, the second the next best, and the third the least known of all, or in the case of the traitor, known only too well.

Peter, the most prominent character among the twelve, stands at the head of all the lists, and Judas Iscariot as the foot, carefully designated, as already observed the traitor.

- SLIDE #: FIRST GROUP

Simon Peter....Andrew....James and John....

- SLIDE #: SECOND GROUP

Philip....Bartholomew or Nathaniel.... Thomas....Matthew....

- SLIDE #: THIRD GROUP

James the son of Alphaeus [James the Less?.... Thaddaeus (Lebbaeus, Judas of James).... Simon The Zealot; Judas

- SLIDE #: OVERHEAD

Multitudes: Corporate worship

Seventy-Two: Bible Fellowship
The twelve: smaller groups

No One Has To Try To Close The Gap While They Are Isolated And Alone. Besides, It Is Not Possible To Close It That Way Anyway.

1•SLIDE #: 1. Jesus placed the highest priority on His small group.

Jesus could have chosen any number of methods for his ministry and personal relational network. He could have decided on just one other person to meet with and transfer his ministry to.

He could have refused all personal relationships and concentrated on mass teaching only. He could have chosen a different twelve every year and multiplied his ministry by thirty six rather than twelve. He could have held classes for any wanting to attend.

But the fact is that Jesus chose the long-term, closed, small group as His primary strategy for personal community and ministry.

•SLIDE #: 2. The only valid form of the Christian life is the one lived in community.

You cannot make a case in the New testament for the Christian life lived privately and alone with occasional or even regular forays into crowds of people listening to sermons.

•SLIDE #: Keith Miller said it this was. “Our churches are filled with people who outwardly look contented and at peace but inwardly are crying out for someone to love them... just as they are: confused, frustrated, often frightened, guilty, and often unable to communicate, even with their own families. But the other people in the church look so happy and contented that one seldom has the courage to admit his own deep needs before such a self-sufficient group as the average church.”

•SLIDE #: 3. A Casas Bible Fellowship is one of the best places for Christians to learn about Christ and to love one another.

•SLIDE #: 4. A Casas’ Bible Fellowship is one of the most practical and efficient settings to give and receive personal ministry.

•SLIDE #: 5. A Casas’ Bible Fellowship is one of the most effective ways to close the gap in our spiritual lives from where we are to where we’d like to be.

•SLIDE #: TESTIMONY WITH DARIN

Darin has closed the gap a long way in his Christian life.

Unique, not the average teenager. Searching for God’s call in your life.

You were a legalist.

DARIN: I grew up in a legalistic church. I was a good legalist. I could put my list up against anyone.
But God has brought me into grace.

ROGER: You were pretty uptight, all right. I remember one summer at camp when you were a teenager. I was trying to help loosen you up. Do you remember the advice that I gave you?

DARIN: Go find a girl and get behind a tree and kiss her.

ROGER: But, you found Lisa.

You and Glenn made a pact to minister together. Got Glenn, and we got you. One of the best things to happen to Casas—now and for the future.

Associate Pastor over a number of our Adult Bible Fellowships.

You see the value of solid Bible Fellowships.

Tell me about that lady who became a Christian in her 70s.

DARIN: more friends in BF than 70 years in a small town.
People reached out.
Read Bible at home;
People saw the changes, lost the anger and began to love.

ROGER: Tell me about, Don, also raised in a legalistic church

DARIN: problem with kids
ABF socials: expressed love and fellowship in BF
Affected his kids—learned to communicate how much he loved them
Shared Christ with others.

ROGER: Tell me about couple in the Sawyer's class

DARIN: Without family in Tucson, wife pregnant
How Casas got involved
Meals from perfect strangers ABF
Altar counselor: How did you become a Christian? No answer. Led to Christ
Celebrate recovery; marriage counseling

ROGER: Tell me about Randy and Lisa Costolo

DARIN: 2 teen daughters, all the problems
Business struggles, affected marriage: ABF encouraged them to stick with it; going to make it. They are not alone.

Truth is: I can't think of one person who has not been changed from his being within a community.
We make the Xn life much more difficult than it needs to be.

Teen: burned the midnight oil trying to figure out how to please Him. Now trying to absorb the fact that He is already pleased through Christ.

God's rest.

Do: Make your ABF the most special place in your life
Go to an ABF