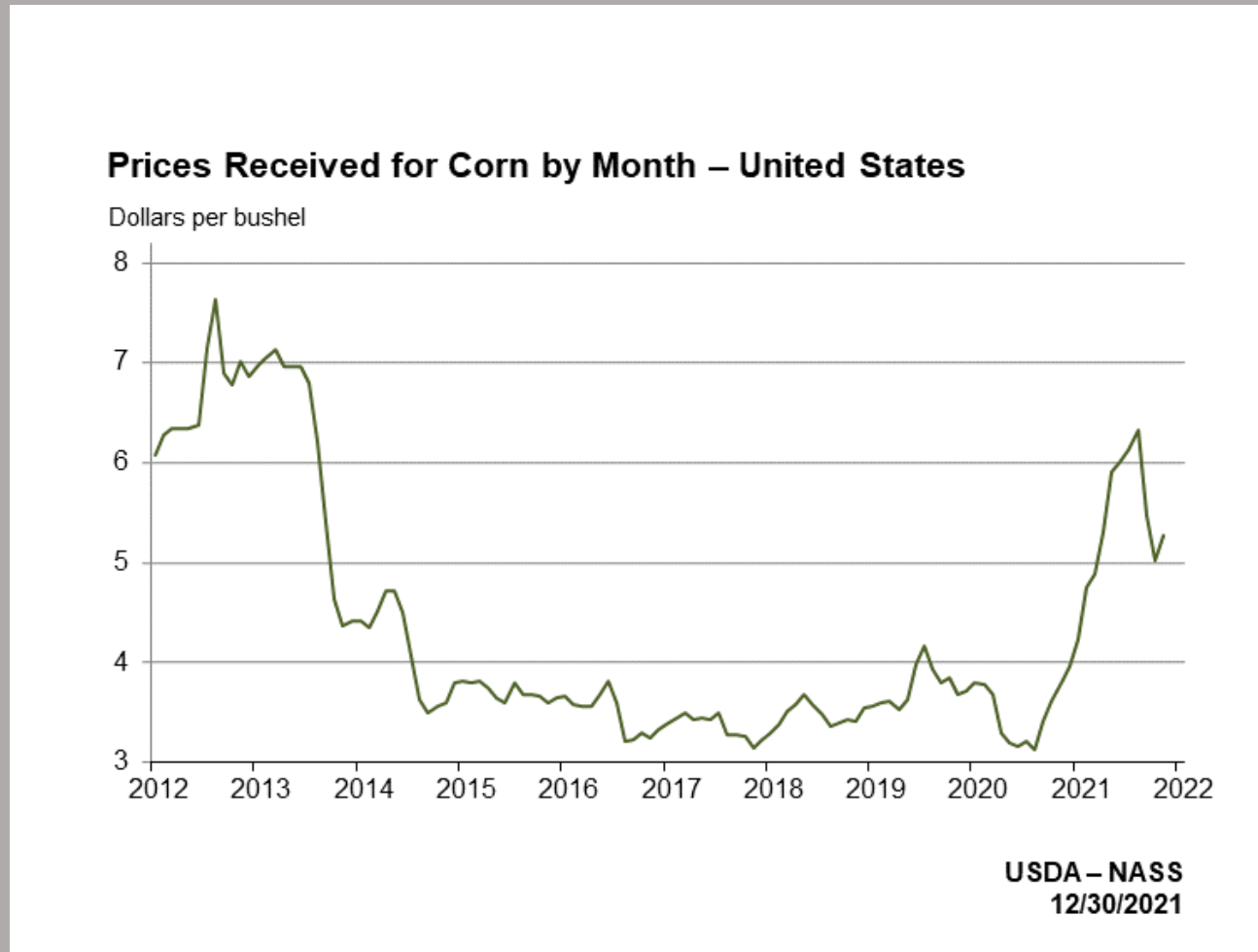




# **The Center Holds: A Review of the Series**

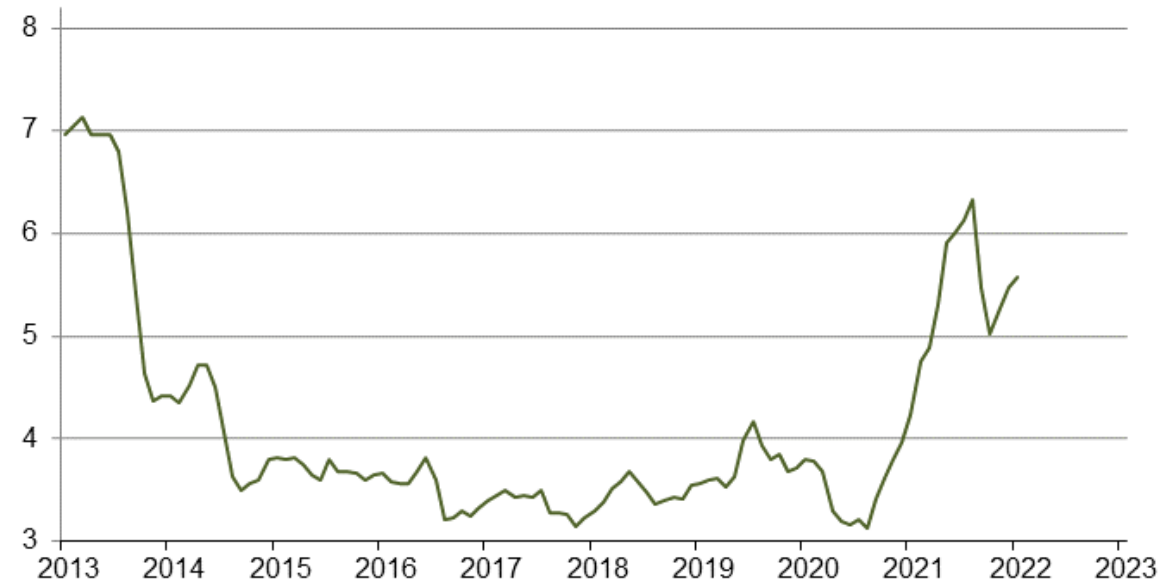
# What is a bushel of corn worth?



The corn price, at **\$5.57 per bushel** [28 Feb. 2022], is up 10 cents from last month [Jan. 2022] and \$1.33 from January 2021. The price shown is in U.S. Dollars per bushel. . . The current price of corn as of March 18, 2022 is **\$7.4175 per bushel**.

### Prices Received for Corn by Month – United States

Dollars per bushel



USDA – NASS  
02/28/2022

# What is fashionable?



# Glitter Beards



# How good is Randolph Basketball?



**DIVISION 5**



**2022 STATE CHAMPIONS**



**2022 STATE CHAMPIONS**

# TWO STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS!!!





# The Central Idea

- *So much of our lives are in flux, unpredictable, or relative to something or someone else.*
- *In contrast, Jesus Christ is unchanging and faithful; therefore, our lives have greater stability—and thus greater happiness—when we live a Christ-centered life.*



# Sermon #1: Thanksgiving and Prayer

- Be specific! (Chuck Swindoll)
- Thank you for \_\_\_\_\_
- Pray for \_\_\_\_\_

# **Sermon #2: A Definition of “Christology”: It answers two main questions**

- Who is Jesus? (The question of his identity)
  - What is the significance of what Jesus accomplished in the incarnation? (The question of his work)
- [Creates opportunity for us to be reconciled to God]

# **Sermon #2: Who is Jesus? (“Jesusises”)**

## **Colossians 1:15-20**

1. Jesus is God (1:15, 19)
2. Jesus is the Creator of the universe (1:16)
3. Jesus is “The Center-that-Holds” (1:17)
4. Jesus is the Head of the Church (1:18)
5. Jesus is the Reconciler (1:20)

## **Sermon #3: “Sarx”**

- Human proclivity/tendency to sin: our “default setting”
- Jonathan Edwards: human beings cannot not sin

# **Sermon #3: The Physical Body of Christ as Old Testament “Sacrifice”**

- **Christ physically died**

Colossians 1:22

- **Christ’s blood sacrifice “washes away the sins of humanity”**

I John 1:7

- **Refutes “Colossian Heresy”: Jesus fully human AND fully divine**

Council of Chalcedon (451 A.D.)

Contrary to Greek philosophy that humans are “icky”

# Sermon #4: “Syncretism”

- Taking bits and pieces of different religions to form a hybrid religion that is more to one’s liking. However, this practice tends to create “easy theology”: you only select those components that you already like.
- Example: The Jefferson Bible
- Application: which components of orthodox Christianity are you tempted to discard in favor of something from another religion or culture that is more to your liking?



# Sermon #4: Freedom and Fullness in Christ

|                             |   |  |
|-----------------------------|---|--|
| <b>Human-improvement</b>    | Human “sarx” cut out by Christ’s work             | A small group gains “secret knowledge” for growth                  |
| <b>Spiritual trajectory</b> | Baptism: share in Christ’s death and resurrection | Transcend to cosmic levels   |
| <b>Source of growth</b>     | Christ’s work                                     | Human effort   |
| <b>Sin-ledger</b>           | Zeroed out by Christ’s death on the cross         | Continual human effort required to achieve spiritual enlightenment |

# Sermon #4: Ezekiel 36:26-27

(New Living Translation)

- . <sup>26</sup> And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you [a heart of flesh] a tender, responsive heart. <sup>27</sup> And I will put my Spirit in you so that you will follow my decrees and be careful to obey my regulations.

# **Sermon #4:**

## **The Colossian Heresy**

Secretive (“esoteric”) teachings may be:

- Overly complicated
- Prone to error
- Cause excessive Pride
- Used to intimidate other believers

# **Sermon #4:**

## **Real Spiritual Growth (“Sanctification”)**

- Spiritual growth (“Sanctification”) is the slow process of becoming more and more like Christ
- It requires first being rooted in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord of one’s life, and holding fast to this faith
- Additional spiritual growth occurs by setting deep the roots of your faith through: worship, prayer, studying Scripture, service, and stewardship

# **Sermon #5:**

## **Problems with the Colossian Legalisms**

- The visions are not tethered by reason or God's Word (2:18)
- Focused on the "shadows" (methods) and not the "substance" (Christ) (2:17)
- Ineffective to curb human vices ("sarx") (2:23)
- Used to manipulate others via shame (2:16)

# **Sermon #5:**

## **Problems with legalisms in general**

- A tendency to puff ourselves up (2:18)
- An “us vs. them” mentality (2:18 “let no one disqualify you”)
- Lack of joy and spying on your neighbor
- “acedia”: a “restlessness” in our souls
- An inner emptiness without a personal relationship with God

# Sermon #5

## The Alternative: Freedom in Christ

### What to do:

- Accept Jesus as Lord and Savior of your life
  - Focus on the “substance” not the “shadows” (2:17)
  
- Follow God’s directions for your life:
  - The Holy Spirit “lays it on your heart”
  - Consistent with Scripture
  - Surround yourself with godly counselors to confirm your calling
  - Make haste slowly
  - Pray continually

# **Sermon #5: Freedom in Jesus**

Legalism is limiting . . .

Jesus is liberating!



# Sermon #6: Spiritual Maturity

- “Spiritual Maturity” is “other-centeredness” (Love)
- “Spiritual Immaturity” is self-centeredness (A bent back)
- Augustine’s list of three primary vices:
  - Ambition (the most dangerous)
  - Avarice (greed)
  - Lust (obsessed with physical pleasure)

# Sermon #6: Growing Mature in Christ

- I. *Re-View* our perspective (3:1-4)
- II. *Remove* earthy vices (“Sarx”) (3:5-9)
- III. *Recommit* to spiritual virtues (3:10-17)
- IV. *Reap the Rewards*

# **Sermon #6:**

## ***Recommit to spiritual virtues (3:10-17)***

- **Fruits of the Spirit (3:12-13a)**
- **Forgiveness (3:13b)**
- **LOVE (3:14)**

## Colossians 3:12-14

- <sup>12</sup> Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, <sup>13</sup> bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. <sup>14</sup> And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

# Sermon #6:

## IV. *Reap* the Rewards

Spiritual Maturity and Virtues (Arete) →  
“Human Flourishing” (Eudaimonia)



# **Sermon #7: Christ-Centered Homes**

## **A. Wives and Husbands (3:18-19)**

1. Wives RESPECT your husbands
2. Husbands LOVE your wives

## **B. Children and Parents (3:20-21)**

1. **Children** RESPECT your parents
2. **Parents** ENCOURAGE your children

# Colossians 3: 18-21 (ESV)

## Rules for Christian Households

<sup>18</sup> Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

<sup>19</sup> Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them.

<sup>20</sup> Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.

<sup>21</sup> Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.



# Ephesians 5:25

<sup>25</sup> Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her,”

# Jesus commands us to be Servant Leaders

## Matthew 20: 25-28

<sup>25</sup> But Jesus called them to him and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. <sup>26</sup> It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, <sup>27</sup> and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, <sup>28</sup> even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”



# Moving Out Wider: The Workplace

## Employees **RESPECT** your bosses (Colossians 3:22-25)

- Respect your boss—even the bad ones—by doing good work
- Work unto the Lord and not unto men (3:23)
- Sincere effort is liberating

# Moving Out Wider: The Workplace

## Employers **BUILD-UP** your employees (Colossians 4:1)

- Be just (reward good work)
- Be fair (treat everyone equally)
- Correct, but then build up
  - The One Minute Manager*
- You also have a boss: the Lord
- Your boss (the Lord) evaluates you by heavenly standards

# **Sermon #8: Moving Out to the World**

We had a special message and update from Chris Pollasch, a missionary supported by New Life Fellowship who is serving in France through “Youth with a Mission” (YWAM)

## **Colossians 4:3**

“pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ”

# Sermon #9: “Fulfilling Your Ministry”

- A. A wall of pictures of children
- B. The Body of Christ is interconnected (Colossians 4:7-16, 18)
- C. “You want me to do WHAT???” (4:17)



# An Example of “Fulfilling Your Ministry”

We had a special presentation by Jenny Landowski of Joyful Journeys-India and how God has used their ministry in powerful ways for helping the poor, spreading the Gospel, and providing educational opportunities to the children of Madhavapatnam, India.

Web page:

<https://joyfuljourneys-inc.org/>



## I Corinthians 3: 5-7

<sup>5</sup> What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. <sup>6</sup> I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. <sup>7</sup> So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.



# Conclusion

- Looking backward: we covered a lot of theological ground!
- Looking forward: plenty of “post-Covid” work to do (pray!)
- God provides the means and opens the doors
- God has already laid out His plans for us (Ephesians 2:10)
- So “Fulfill Your Ministry”

# Ministry Begins with the Firm Foundation: Jesus

<sup>25</sup> And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock.

Matthew 7:25 (ESV)

Have you accepted Jesus as Savior and Lord of your life?

**The Center Holds**