

# SANCTUARY OF THE SOUL

Dealing with Everyday Difficulties – Part 2



# SANCTUARY OF THE SOUL

Based on the book:

*Sanctuary of the Soul: Journey into  
Meditative Prayer by Richard Foster,  
InterVarsity Press, 2011.*



# Opening Prayer

"We try, as best we can, to live by bread alone"

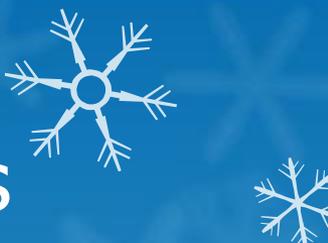
"We try, as best we can, to live by bread alone", from: Awed to Heaven, Rooted in Earth, Walter Brueggemann.



# Jesus' Temptation as a Model for Us

- ❖ Matthew 4:1-11
- ❖ Mark 1:12-13
- ❖ Luke 4:1-14
- ❖ Foster focuses on Matthew's telling of the temptation story
- ❖ The Spirit sends / leads / throws (Jesus) out into the wilderness
- ❖ Jesus fasts for 40 days
- ❖ Then Satan comes to tempt Jesus when he has been strengthened through fasting and prayer
- ❖ Likely that Jesus encounters the same temptations he faced while working in his father's carpentry shop

# The Three Great Temptations

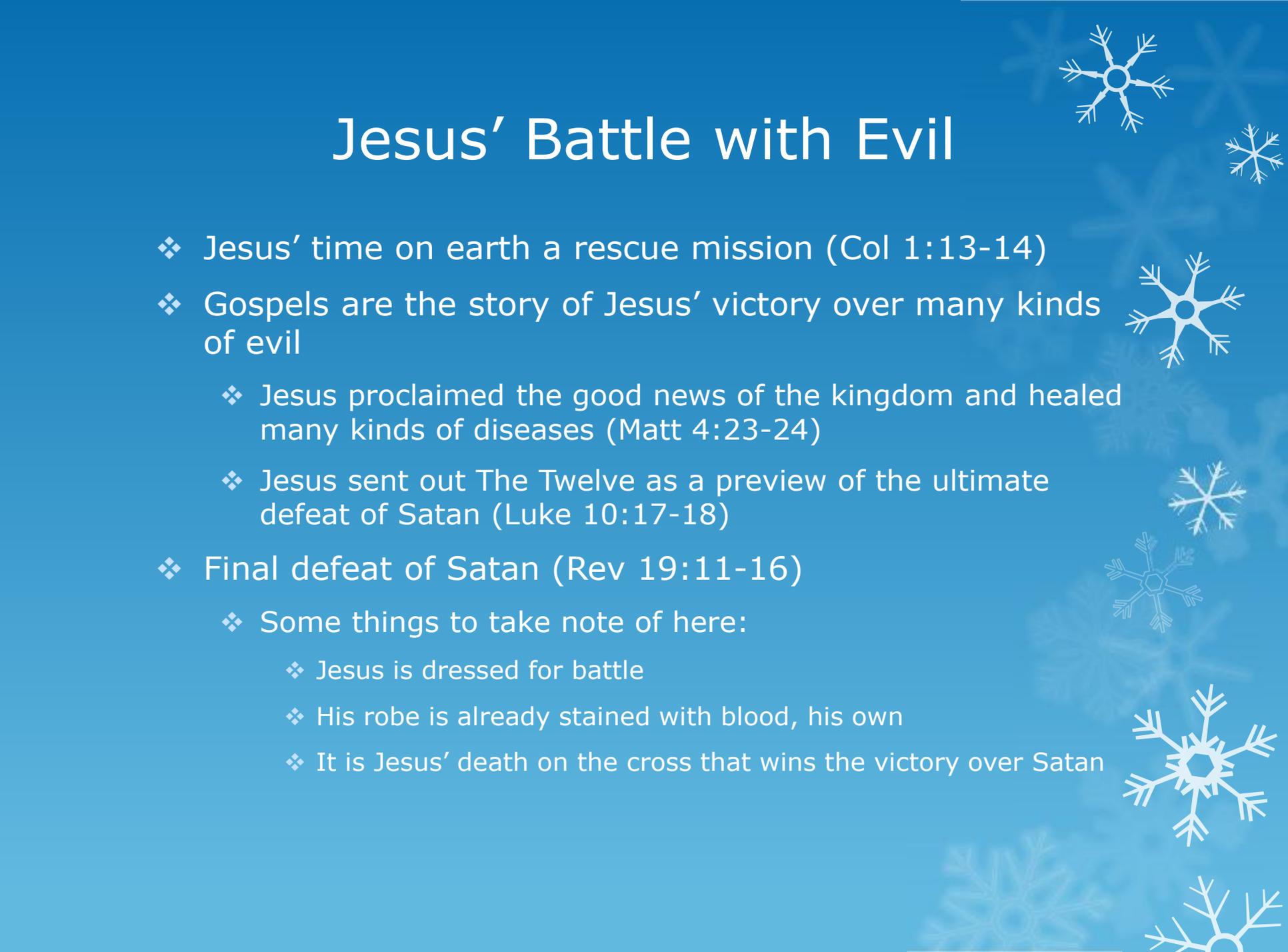


- ❖ To acquire and wield power through the 3 primary cultural institutions
    - ❖ Economy
    - ❖ Religion
    - ❖ Politics
  - ❖ Temptation to wield economic power
    - ❖ What would it have meant if Jesus had decided to co-opt the market for bread, for himself first?
    - ❖ Jesus' response: Deut 8:3
  - ❖ Temptation to wield religious power
    - ❖ If Jesus had thrown himself off the high point of the Temple, who would have been impressed?
    - ❖ Jesus' response: Deut 6:16 (on Massah see Ex 17:1-7)
  - ❖ Temptation to wield political power
    - ❖ If Jesus had sought political power, by what means would he have acquired it (assuming it was Satan's to give)?
    - ❖ Jesus' response: Deut 6:13
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# Following the Way of Jesus

- ❖ Jesus rejects all forms of coercive power
- ❖ Jesus chooses instead the way of “serving, suffering, and dying”
- ❖ *He undercuts the leverage of the three great social institutions of his day...and of ours—exploitive economics, manipulative religion and coercive politics. We too must learn to defeat Satan precisely in these realms. (p. 116)*

# Jesus' Battle with Evil

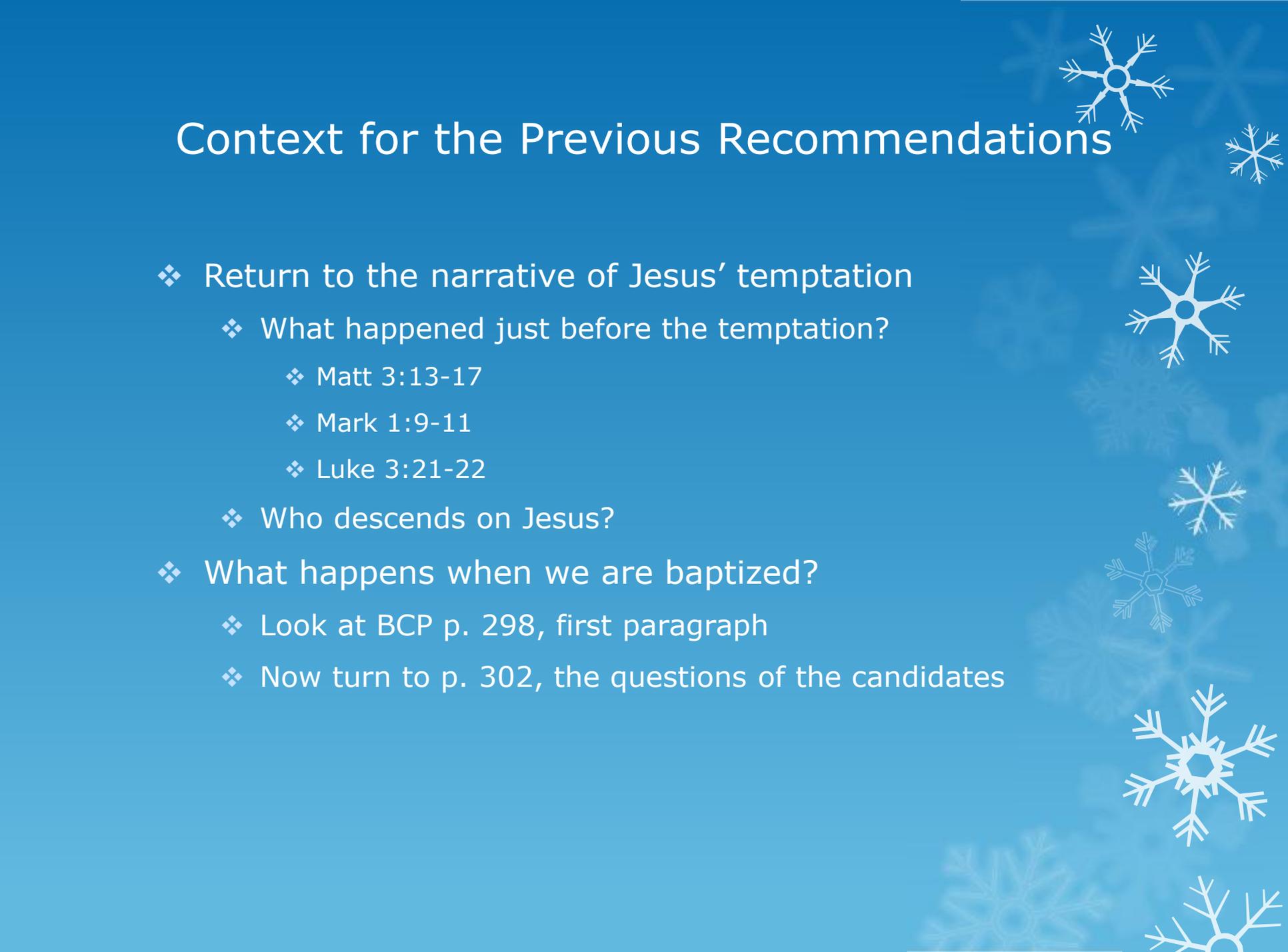


- ❖ Jesus' time on earth a rescue mission (Col 1:13-14)
- ❖ Gospels are the story of Jesus' victory over many kinds of evil
  - ❖ Jesus proclaimed the good news of the kingdom and healed many kinds of diseases (Matt 4:23-24)
  - ❖ Jesus sent out The Twelve as a preview of the ultimate defeat of Satan (Luke 10:17-18)
- ❖ Final defeat of Satan (Rev 19:11-16)
  - ❖ Some things to take note of here:
    - ❖ Jesus is dressed for battle
    - ❖ His robe is already stained with blood, his own
    - ❖ It is Jesus' death on the cross that wins the victory over Satan

# Encounters with Evil

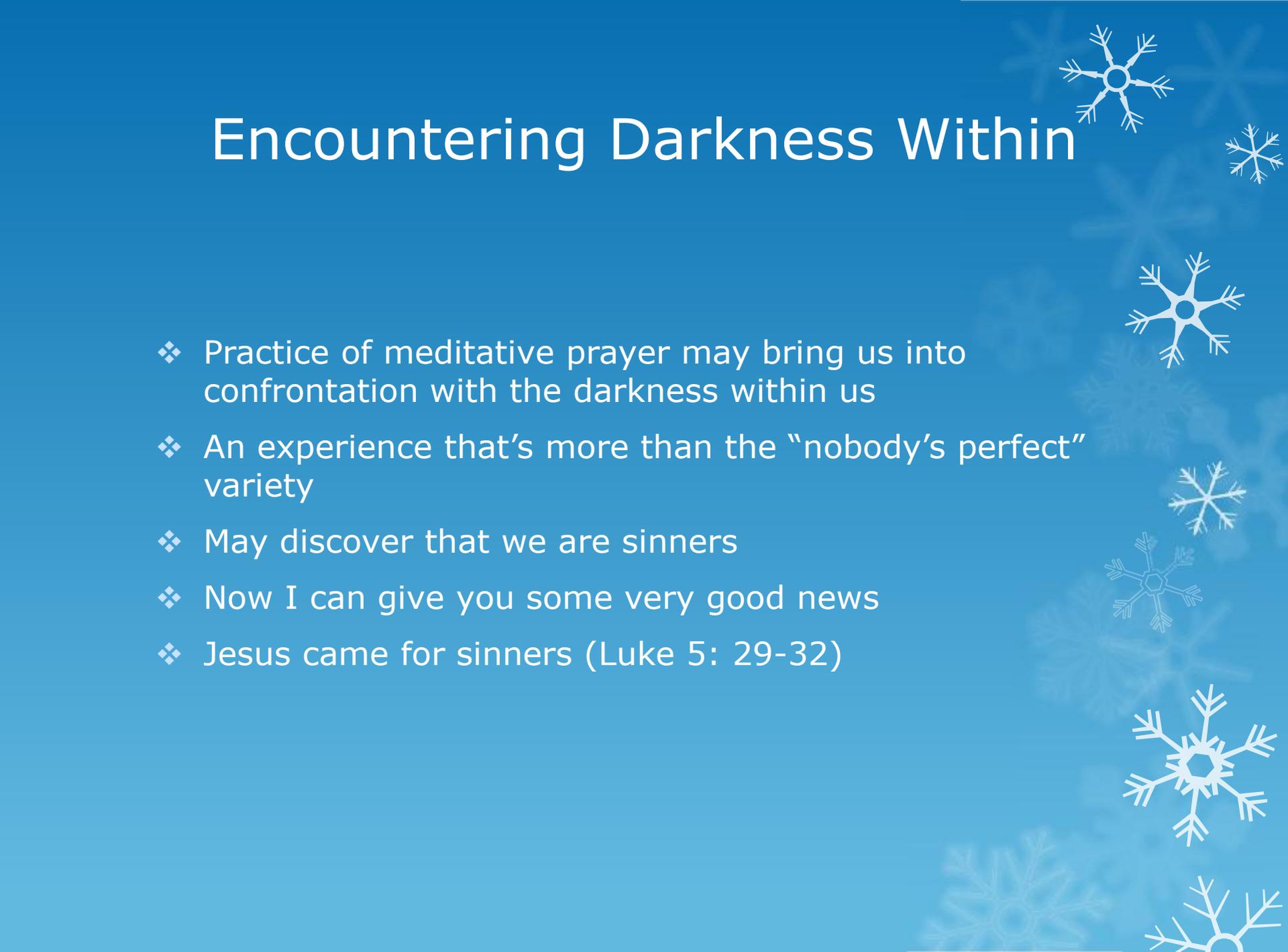
- ❖ Certain popular occult practices are forbidden to Christians
  - ❖ This most explicitly includes consulting ghosts, spirits, and the dead (Deut 18:10-11)
- ❖ Practice of exorcism should be approached with great caution
  - ❖ Remember that this involves someone's soul
  - ❖ Foster recommends
    - ❖ A simple prayer expressing trust in the love of Christ
    - ❖ Dismissing any troubling spirit
    - ❖ Commending the person into the tender care of Jesus
    - ❖ A prayer that the light and love of Christ fill the person
  - ❖ Don't give Satan too much credit
  - ❖ Keep in mind that many of our fears along these lines are self-induced

# Context for the Previous Recommendations



- ❖ Return to the narrative of Jesus' temptation
  - ❖ What happened just before the temptation?
    - ❖ Matt 3:13-17
    - ❖ Mark 1:9-11
    - ❖ Luke 3:21-22
  - ❖ Who descends on Jesus?
- ❖ What happens when we are baptized?
  - ❖ Look at BCP p. 298, first paragraph
  - ❖ Now turn to p. 302, the questions of the candidates

# Encountering Darkness Within

The background is a solid blue color. Scattered across the right side and bottom right are several white snowflake icons of varying sizes and orientations. The snowflakes have a central point with six main branches, each ending in smaller sub-branches, creating a complex, crystalline pattern.

- ❖ Practice of meditative prayer may bring us into confrontation with the darkness within us
- ❖ An experience that's more than the "nobody's perfect" variety
- ❖ May discover that we are sinners
- ❖ Now I can give you some very good news
- ❖ Jesus came for sinners (Luke 5: 29-32)

# Simple Definition of Meditative Prayer

- ❖ Prayer is a conversation between a person and God
- ❖ Meditative prayer highlights the listening aspect of this communication
- ❖ *We are bringing both mind and heart into the presence of God and then we listen to the Lord. (pp. 123-124)*

# How do I get started?

- ❖ Begin by reading a single verse 2 – 3 times, then simply listen for any instruction God might be giving you
- ❖ Foster's own practice of meditative prayer
  - ❖ Read a short Psalm ( $\leq 15$  verses) aloud
  - ❖ Quiet for a while
  - ❖ Read again using a highlighter to mark verse or phrase that speaks to his condition
  - ❖ Quietness for a while
  - ❖ Read only the parts of the Psalm highlighted, giving attention to any verse or phrase that stands out among the highlighted ones

# Can new parents practice meditative prayer?

- ❖ A time of focus on caring for a newborn
- ❖ Nursing mothers might wish to “breathe a prayer to receive life from the Lord”
- ❖ Resume meditative prayer when your child does not need such intense attention

# What should I do about falling asleep?

- ❖ Don't berate yourself as you probably need the sleep
- ❖ *Those who have been breathed on by the Holy Spirit move forward even while sleeping.* Brother Lawrence

## What are your favorite passages for meditation?

- ❖ Recommends using each passage for a week
- ❖ Might like to begin with the “I Am” verses of John
  - ❖ John 6:35-40 – bread of life
  - ❖ John 8:12-20 – light of the world
  - ❖ John 10:1-10 – the gate
  - ❖ John 10:11-18 – the good shepherd
  - ❖ John 11:17-27 – the resurrection and the life
  - ❖ John 14:1-14 – the way, the truth and the life
  - ❖ John 15:1-17 – the true vine

# How do I know I'm hearing God's voice?

- ❖ *Satan pushes and condemns, God draws and encourages.* (p. 127)
- ❖ We see God best in Jesus
  - ❖ Become deeply acquainted with him through the Gospels and your life
- ❖ Use Phil 4:8 as a guide for where to find God

# Is meditation required to be a Christian?

- ❖ Uses example of being someone's child
  - ❖ Does conversation with your parents make you their child?
- ❖ Don't need to converse with your parents to be their child, but don't you want to

## What is the best time & place for meditation?

- ❖ You will need to find the time of day when you are best able to give your full attention to God
- ❖ While the whole earth is full of God's glory, there are places that facilitate your ability to meditate on God
- ❖ Some find jogging and swimming the best time in which to meditate
- ❖ For a while, Foster used his commute time on the bus

# How long should I meditate?

- ❖ Will develop over time
- ❖ Begin with 5 – 10 minutes
- ❖ Many people find that they settle into a practice of spending 30 – 40 minutes in meditative prayer

# Best Posture for Meditative Prayer

- ❖ Find what fits you best
- ❖ Kneeling with our body may reflect and inner spiritual discipline
- ❖ Foster suggests sitting in a straight chair with back in good posture and feet on the floor
- ❖ Hands on knees with palms up may help us internally to take on a more receptive posture towards God

# Two Last Questions

- ❖ Is an active life excluded by meditation?
  - ❖ *True Godliness does not turn men out of the world, but enables them to live better in it and excites their endeavors to mend it.* William Penn
- ❖ Does personal experience of meditative prayer have anything to do with gathered worship?
  - ❖ The simple presence of just a few people who have developed a deep, ongoing practice of meditative prayer will change the atmosphere of gathered worship
  - ❖ Those gathered for worship will find themselves desirous of a deeper, more substantive worship practice

# Concluding Words

- ❖ Meditative prayer is a long journey of transformation
  - ❖ Our hearts and minds will be changed gradually to reflect the Spirit of Christ
  - ❖ Love will permeate our lives more and more
  - ❖ The Spirit will give us new power to overcome evil and to do the right thing
  - ❖ Compassion for the battered and broken of this world will grow in us
  - ❖ We will begin to yearn for holiness
  - ❖ We will live our lives as those “owned by God”
- ❖ God wants us to come home
- ❖ Jesus is the doorway to the heart of God
- ❖ Prayer is the key (by grace through faith) to open the door (Eph 2:8 – salvation is the gift of God)



# Meditation on Psalm 32

- ❖ Foster's own practice of meditative prayer
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