**Imagination and Desire**

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**A. Seeing Heaven Now Open: the Mystery of Worship**

**1. Introduction: our Jacob’s ladder**

* Story of Jacob’s ladder in Genesis 28:10-22
* Vision of heavenly stairway
* Angels as God’s courtiers
* Descent of the Lord to Jacob to speak to him and bless him
* Reversal of expected order: heaven to earth rather than earth to heaven
* Foundational story for Bethel: God’s house as the gate of heaven
* Luther (*EA* 5, 244: ***Wherever the Word is heard, where Baptism, the Sacrament of the Altar, and absolution are administered, there you must determine and conclude with certainty: “This is surely God’s house; here heaven has been opened.”***
  + Jesus as our heavenly stairway in John 1:51: ***Jesus then added, I tell***

***you (pl) the truth, you (pl) shall see heaven opened, and the angels***

***of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.***

* Jesus as the real Jacob’s ladder
* Son of Man: Jesus the man as our human representative
* Opening at the baptism of Jesus
* Trinitarian event
* Culmination in the tearing of the temple curtain at the death of Jesus: see the use of the verb “split” in Mark 1:10 and 15:38
* Opening of heaven for us by our baptism
* Luther on an open heaven (*EA* 22, 201-201): ***Before the advent of Christ heaven was closed, but in and through Christ heaven stands ajar again. Now Christians see heaven opened. The Heavenly Father still addresses these words to us: “This is my beloved Son!” When you are baptised, partake of Holy Communion, receive the absolution, or listen to a sermon, heaven is open, and we hear the voice of the Heavenly Father; all these works descend on us from the open heaven above us. Still we hear God speaking to us from heaven; we call and cry to Him, and He answers us.***

**2. The mystery of the Risen Lord**

* Georg Hamann: ***Speak that I may see you.***
* Human self-disclosure through speaking
* Paul on the disclosure of Christ through his word in Col 1:25-27: ***I became its servant (of the church) by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in all its fullness – the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations but is now disclosed to the saints. To them God chose to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mys*tery*, which is Christ in (among) you (pl), the hope of glory.***
* The difference between a mystery and a secret
* Commission: *oikonomia* = housekeeping, temple management
* Church as God’s house/temple
* Paul as temple keeper and mystagogue
* Mystery: hid from outsiders but revealed to the saints
* Disclosure by the full presentation of God’s word
* Mystery as presence of risen Lord in the assembly
* Foretaste of hidden riches: our participation in God’s glory

**3. Our access to God the Father through Jesus**

* Restricted access to the Lord at the temple in Jerusalem
* Hidden presence in the Holy Of Holies: glory cloud
* Access of Israelites to the altar in the courtyard
* Access of the priests to the Holy Place in the daily service
* Annual entry by the high priest to the Holy of Holies
* Bodily consecration by sprinkling with blood
* Washing of whole body with water
* Entry through double layered curtain
* Entrance with blood from the sin offerings
* Our access to the heavenly sanctuary in Heb 10:19-22: ***Therefore, my brothers, since we have confidence for entry into the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he inaugurated for us through the curtain, that is, of his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us come near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled (clean) from a bad conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.***
* Greek noun for ***confidence***: *parrêsia*
* Right of speech by a free person in a public assembly
* Frank, bold speech in public
* Unrestricted access to a person
* Confidence in approaching and addressing a person
* Use in Hebrews: privilege of access for audience with God (Heb 4:16; 10:35; cf. Eph 3:12)
* ***Come near*** = liturgical term for approach of God by priests and people at the tabernacle
* Jesus: high priest in the heavenly sanctuary
* Church as God’s house/temple
* Contrast: restricted access v open access to God
* ***The*** ***sanctuary*** = holy things/holy places (Heb 8:2; 9:8, 12, 24; 10:19; 13:11)
* Open access to the heavenly places/holy things together with Jesus
* Our approach through the flesh and blood of Jesus in Holy Communion
* Our qualification for entry: clean conscience
* Washing of bodies with water in baptism
* Sprinkling of hearts with the blood of Jesus
* Gift of clean conscience: Heb 9:13-14
* Faith: assurance of favourable reception in Holy Communion
* Access to the Father’s presence through the divine service here on earth

**5. Seeing what’s happening in the divine service**

* Our involvement in the heavenly liturgy inHeb 12:22-25: ***But you have come near to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the blood for sprinkling that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel. See that you do not refuse him who is speaking… from heaven.***
* Key liturgical term: ***come near***
* Our vision of seven invisible realities in the divine service
* Mount Zion: heavenly city where God meets with his people on earth
* Angels who assist us in praising the triune God
* Worldwide assembly/church: first born sons with full rights of inheritance
* God the Judge who pardons penitent sinners
* Departed saints who surround us like a cloud around us (Heb 12:1)
* Jesus who mediates a new covenant in Holy Communion
* Blood for sprinkling that speaks pardon, cleansing, and holiness
* Jesus speaking to us from heaven in the divine service: 12:25
* Luther’s remarks on the vision of God and his Son in the divine service based on the words of Jesus in John 14:10: ***The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does His works*** (*EA* 24: 65-67): ***Christ did not bid you soar heavenward on your own and gape to see what God is doing in heaven with the angels. No, this is His command (Matt. 17:5: This is my beloved Son; listen to Him. There I descend to you on earth, so that you can* see*, hear, and touch Me. There and nowhere else is the place for those to encounter and find Me who desire Me and who would like to be delivered from their sin and be saved…If you want to see Me or My work, look to Christ; if you want to hear Me, hear his Word.”…Thus apostles and pastors are nothing but channels through which Christ leads and transmits His Gospel from the Father to us. Therefore, wherever you hear the Gospel properly taught or see a person baptized, wherever you see someone administer or receive the Sacrament, or wherever you witness someone absolving another, there you may say without hesitation: “Today I beheld God’s Word and work. Yes, I saw and heard God Himself preaching and baptizing.” To be sure, the tongue, the voice, the hands, are those of a human being; but the Word and the ministry are really those of Divine Majesty Himself. Hence it must be viewed and believed as God’s own voice resounding from heaven and as though we were seeing him administering Baptism or the Sacrament with His own hands.***
* Luther’s remarks on the angelic vision based on the message of the angels to the shepherds (*EA* 22:203): ***Before Christ’s incarnation heaven was closed indeed. But now the Child Jesus was born, and the angels preached their nocturnal sermon about the Child to the shepherds before the town of Bethlehem…From that time on heaven is now open; and now we, too, have citizenship among the angels, as St. Paul tells us in Ephesians (2:19)…There we find the true city and true Jerusalem, where we are citizens and members of the same household as the angels, fellow countrymen of those who live and have their being in heaven. The angels look down upon us, and we in turn gaze up to them. Christ wants to say: “You are now celestial citizens; you hold citizenship up there in the heavenly Jerusalem; you are living in the company of the dear angels, who incessantly descend on you and ascend on you. Now heaven and earth have become one.” It is just as if the angels were serving you, for you are one body with your Lord. The angels wait on you, they converse with you, and you with them, employing the same words and speech. They sing Gloria in excelsis Deo to our God; and you also sing the praise…that you have become God’s children and heirs, co-heirs with His dear Son, partakers of the Holy Spirit and of all gifts. Surely this does not indicate a closed heaven, but it implies that (the) door and lock have been removed and that heaven is now open permanently. Even if I do not see this with my physical eye, as a cow looks as a door, that does not matter. I can still behold it with my spiritual sight of faith.***

**B. Seeing What We Hear: Insight into the Mystery of God**

1. **See Luke 10:23-24: *Then Jesus turned to his disciples and said privately, “Blessed are the eyes that see what you see. For I tell you that many prophets and kings wanted to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.”***

**2. What’s the difference between these translations?**

* Ps 34:8: ***Find out for yourself how good the Lord is*** v ***Taste and see that the Lord is good*.**
* Luke 11:27: ***How happy is the woman who bore you and nursed you*** v ***Blessed is the womb that bore you and the breasts that you sucked.***
* 1 Pet 4:10: ***Each of you has been blessed with one of God’s many wonderful gifts*** ***as good stewards of God’s many-colored grace***

**3. Speech that appeals to our imagination**

* Close connection between hearing and seeing
* Imagination as the capacity to form a mental picture
* Distinction between receptive, perceptive imagination and creative, inventive imagination
* Perceptive imagination: seeing what is there for us in the past, the present and the future
* Imagery: the use of words as pictures for what is perceived by one or more of the five senses: eg. a thunder clap
* Use of imagery to show us what is said, so that we see what is said.
* Helpful modern understanding of language as metaphorical: words do not just identify things but also compare one thing with another
* The use of imagery in the Bible to show us what is otherwise unseen: the things of God
* The need to see what God says to us in the Bible: vision of God in relation to his world and us
* Luther on the incarnation of God’s Son as his presentation to us in our five senses (*EA* 3, 109): ***God in His divine wisdom arranges to manifest Himself to human beings by some definite and visible form which can be seen with the eyes and touched with the hands, in short, within the scope of the five senses.***
* Ancient teaching of three kinds of God-given senses or sensibilities
* Physical perception: hearing, sight, smell, taste, touch
* Mental perception: understanding, insight, discrimination, enjoyment, feeling
* Spiritual perception: see Heb 5:14: ***the mature…who have their powers of discernment (senses) trained by constant practice (through their disposition) to distinguish good from evil.***
* Five spiritual senses
* Spiritual hearing: a hearing heart (1 Ki 3:9), the hearing of faith (Gal 3:2)
* Spiritual sight: the eyes of the heart (Eph 1:18)
* Spiritual “smell”: life-giving fragrance of God’s grace though the proclamation of the gospel (2 Cor 2:14-16)
* Spiritual taste: tasting the heavenly gift, the goodness of God’s word, and the powers of the age to come (Heb 6:4-5; cf. Ps 34:8; 1 Pet 2:2)
* Spiritual touch: a heart of flesh (Ezek 11:19; 36:26)
* By attending to God’s word we hear what it says to us, see what it offers to us, sense its fragrance, taste its goodness, and feel it as we are touched by it.

**4. The restoration of our spiritual imagination through the Holy Spirit**

* See Luther on the Third Article*:* ***I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, My Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit has called me through the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith.***
* Reason = the ability to understand what is perceived by the senses
* Enlightenment: imaginative understanding
* See 1 Corinthians 2:7-16: ***We (ministers) speak God’s wisdom in mystery, his hidden wisdom, which God foreordained before the ages for our glory, which none of the rulers of this age recognized... But as it is written:***

***What no eye has seen and no ear has heard,***

***and what has not dawned upon a human heart,***

***what God has prepared for those who love him,***

***God has disclosed to us through His Spirit.***

***For the Spirit searches out everything, even the deep things of God. For who knows what is in a person except that person’s spirit which is in him? Likewise also, no one recognizes the things of God but the Spirit of God. Now we ourselves did not receive the spirit of the world but the Spirit that is from God, so that we might know the things that have been graciously given to us by God. We also speak of these things with words taught by the Spirit rather than words taught by human wisdom, explaining spiritual things to spiritual people. But the unspiritual person does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; indeed, he cannot know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But the spiritual person discerns everything, while he himself is discerned by no one. For “who has known the mind of the Lord, so as to advise him?” We, however, have the mind of Christ.***

* Mind as the mental capacity to perceive, receive, and understand who is presented to the five senses
* Limitation of human imagination to the experience of five senses
* Basic analogy: the hidden working of human mind with its consciousness of itself
* Known only to that person
* Disclosed to others through speech
* Understood by a person with a similar mentality
* Hidden from a person with a dissimilar mind, such as speaking about emotions to an autistic person
* Basic issue: God’s disclosure of His invisible gifts to us
* How could you communicate with the ants?
* Becoming an ant, learning ant language, and speaking in ant language
* Giving them a human mind with human imagination
* Paul’s preaching of Christ crucified and glorified for the delivery of God’s gifts to his hearers
* By words taught by and inspired with God’s Spirit
* By the power of Holy Spirit who discloses what God is giving through His word
* Purpose of preaching
* The conformity of human minds to the mind of Christ for the reception of God’s gifts
* The gift of the mind of Christ, so that by faith we perceive spiritual things: Spirit-given ability to see what is said and imagine what is otherwise beyond human imagination
* Contrast between spiritual people with the mind of Christ and unspiritual people with the mind of the flesh (cf. Col 2:18)

**5. The exercise of the imagination in meditation and in exegesis**

* Basic question: who, or what, is compared with whom, or what, how, and why?
* Luther on how to meditate on a story in the gospels
  + Picturing the story in my imagination
  + Noting the interaction of Jesus with the people in the story
  + Identifying myself with one or more of them
  + Trusting that Jesus says and does the same things to me as them
* The imagery of justification: my trial in God’s court
  + Supreme court of law: God’s judgment now and the final day of judgment (Rom 2:5-6; 14:10-12)
  + The judge: God the Father, the heavenly King (Heb 12:23)
  + Legal basis for the trial: God’s law as summarized in the Decalogue (Rom 3:19-20)
  + The accused: I and every descendant of Adam (Rom 3:9,23)
  + Charge: rebellion against God the heavenly King by transgression of the first commandment (Eph 2:1-2)
  + Mandatory sentence for rebels: death (Rom 5:12; 6:23)
  + Two possible pleas with their consequent legal process
  + Not guilty
* Reason: self-confidence based on a conviction of innocence (self-righteousness)
* Counsel for the prosecution: accusing conscience as prompted by God’s law and people whom we have abused (Rom 2:14-15; Matt 5:25-26)
* Counsel for the defense: excusing conscience as prompted by Satan, the deceiver (Rom 2:14-15)
* Verdict from God: guilty as charged (Rom 3:19-20)
* Sentence: condemnation to eternal death (Rom 6:23)
* Present result: bad conscience with fear of exposure, condemnation and death (John 3:19-20; Heb 2:15)
* Guilty
* Reason: faith in Christ based on the conviction of the Holy Spirit (John 16:8-11)
* Counsel for the prosecution: Satan, our adversary and accuser before God (1 Pet 5:8; Rev 12:10)
* Counsel for the defense (advocate): the risen Lord Jesus (Rom 8:31-34)
* Verdict from God the Judge: guilty as charged
* Appeal by our advocate Jesus to God the King: prerogative of mercy (1 John 2:1-2)
* Ground for his appeal: his observance of God’s law and his death on behalf of all sinners (Rom 3:25-26; 5:15-19)
* Sentence: pardon for eternal life with God the Father = justification by the grace of God the Father = absolution (John 5:24; Rom 3:21-24; 1 John 1:8-9)
* Present result: good conscience before God and access to his grace with freedom from condemnation by him (Rom 5:1-2; 8:1)

**6. My basic aim in reading God’s word**

* To see what God says, does, and gives to me
* My prayer in Ps 119:18: ***Open my eyes, I may behold wondrous things from your law/instruction.***

**C. The Desires of the Heart: The Unholy Imagination**

**1. Introduction**

* Luther: man as a creature of desire rather than a rational person
* Our thoughts governed by what we desire and how we feel
* Our desires governed by what we imagine is good for us
* Our feelings and desires governed by our physical senses
* The power of desire as evident in advertising
* Link between imagination and desire: eg. sexuality
* Psalm 37: 4: ***Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of the heart.***
* Reorientation of enjoyment from the creature to the Creator
* Unusual word for desire: something that you ask for and receive as a gift

**2. The role of imagination and desire the fall of Adam and Eve**

* Root of sin: mistrust of God and His word
* Sequence of events in Gen 3:6
* Seeing that the fruit was good to eat
* Seeing that the fruit was pleasing to the eyes
* Seeing that the tree was desirable for contemplation: being like God in knowing good and evil
* Act: eating of fruit
* Ironical opening of eyes: shame from nakedness
* Result: decay and death instead of health and life
* Echo of this in 1 John 3:15-16: ***Do not love the world or the things of the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world – the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions – is not from the Father but from the world.***

**3. The effect of original sin on imagination and desire**

* God’s view of man after the fall in Gen 6:5: ***every inclination (imagination) of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time*** and 8:21: ***every inclination (imagination) of his heart is evil from childhood.***
* Inclination = shape, disposition, inclination, imagination
* Translated by διανοία in the Greek Bible: the mind with its ability to understand what is perceived with the five senses, a habitual way of thinking
* Use of this term by Paul in Col 1:21 and Eph 2:3; 4:18 for the fallen mind that is darkened, alienated from God and hostile to him, and set on getting what it desires
* C. S. Lewis on the perversion of the imagination so that imaginary evil is attractive and imaginary good is unattractive
* Affective definition of original sin in AC 2 as concupiscence: wrong desire, lust
* Discussion on concupiscence in Apol 2: 3-41
* Result of inability to fear, love and trust in God
* Misplaced, disordered desire that contrary to God’s Word seeks and loves carnal things as ends in themselves
* Prohibition of wrong desire in the ninth and tenth commandments
* Note the use of the same verbs as in Gen 3:6
* Sexual desire for neighbour’s spouse rather than enjoyment of God-given spouse
* Possessive desire for neighbour’s property rather than enjoyment of God-given possessions
* Ironical effect of this prohibition: arousal of passions by God’s law to reveal the nature and extent of sin (Rom 7:5, 7-13)

**4. The teaching on disordered desire in the New Testament**

* Desire as God’s gift to us
* Good if rightly ordered: God’s will for us and gifts to us
* Bad if wrongly ordered: the misplaced, disordered, distorted desires of the fallen world
* The nature of disordered desire (ἐπιθυμία)
* Human desires (1 Pet 4:2)
* Desires of the flesh (Rom 13:14; Gal 5:16, 24; Eph 2:3; 2 Pet 2:18; 1 John 2:6) or fleshly desires (1 Pet 2:11)
* Desires of the mortal body (Rom 6:12)
* The desire of the eyes (1 John 2:7)
* Worldly desires (Tit 2:12; cf. 1 John 2:7)
* Many-colored desires (2 Tim 3:6; Tit 3:3)
* Evil desire (Col 3:5)
* Unholy desires (Jude 18)
* The devil’s desires (John 8:44)
* Other terms for disordered desire
* Pleasures (Luke 8:14; Tit 3:3; James 4:1, 3; 2 Pet 2:13)
* Passions: sinful, shameful desires that take over and control us (Rom 1:26; 7:5; Gal 5:24; Col 3:5; 1 Thess 4:5)
* Covetousness/greed: the desire to have more than God has given us (Mark 7:22; Luke 12:15; Eph 4:19; 5:3; Col 3:5; 1 Thess 2:5; 2 Pet 2:3, 14)
* The ways that we are influenced by wrong desires
* We are enticed by them (James 1:4; 2 Pet 2:18).
* We follow them (2 Pet 3:3; Jude 16, 18) and become obedient to them (Rom 6:12).
* We are led by them (2 Tim 3:6).
* We carry them out (Gal 5:16).
* We do the wishes of the flesh and its thinking (Eph 2:3).
* The bad effects of misplaced desires on us
* They deceive us with the promise of a better life (Eph 4:22; Tit 3:3).
* They defile us (2 Pet 2:18; cf. Rom 1:24).
* They drag us away from God and His good gifts (James 1:14)
* They corrupt us so that we decay (Eph 4:22; 2 Pet 1:4).
* They enslave us, so that we become controlled by them and addicted to them (Tit 3:3; 2 Pet 2:18-19).
* They war against our souls by killing them (1 Pet 2:11).
* They produce a deadly harvest in our bodies (Rom 7:5).
* The desire-driven way of life
* Living in the flesh for the gratification of human desires rather than doing God’s will (1 Pet 4:2-3)
* Mark of a pagan life style
* Result: uninhibited indulgence in desires, sexual orgies and social drunkenness, lawless idolatry
* Pursuit of a way of life that is lived in accordance with desire (Eph 2:3; 4:22; Col 3:5-7)
* Provision for the indulgence of desire (Rom 13:14)
* Conformity to a culture governed by desire (1 Pet 1:14)
* Greed as idolatry: enjoyment from having people or things rather than from receiving God’s gifts through people and things (Col 3:5; cf. Eph 5:5)

**5. God’s reaction to a life driven by desire**

* Wrath: disapproval and judgment (Col 3:5-6; 1 Pet 4:3-5; cf. Eph 2:3)
* God’s frustration of the wicked with their desires (Ps 112 :10; 140:8)
* Handing over to their desires and the penalties of them (Rom 1:24-31)
* Addiction to them
* Futile thinking from the folly of trusting in a lie that defiles, debases us, a lie that produces mental and emotional chaos
* A mind that is unfit and unable to assess experience accurately because it disapproves of God and is hostile to his mentality (1:28)

**6. The paradox of indulgence**

* Diminishing enjoyment from unfettered and disordered indulgence in Eph 4:17-19: y***ou must not walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds, being blinded in their perception, alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them from the harness of their hearts, who, having been desensitized, surrender themselves up to uninhibited indulgence in greed to practice every kind of impurity.***
* Arousal of desire without satisfaction: futile thinking
* Desensitization with increased sensual indulgence
* Artificial arousal of desire as an end in itself so as to feel physically and emotionally alive

**D. The Desires of the Heart: The Sanctified Imagination**

1. **Problem**

* Picture: rebuilding as house while it is still standing
* How can you fix up a ruined person with a ruined body, mind and spirit who lives a ruinous way of life in a ruined world with ruined relationships with others and God?

1. **The incarnation as God’s remedy for our disordered desire**

* See 1 Pet 4:1-2: ***Since therefore Christ suffered (death) in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking, for whoever has suffered (death) in the flesh has ceased from sin, so as to live for the rest of time in the flesh no longer for human passions (desires) but for the will of God.***
* Christ’s reversal of the deadly results from the human pursuit of sinful desires by his life in the flesh
* His life in the flesh to suffer and die to put an end to our sin: redemption from slavery to desire by his death
* Our sin-free life in him
* God’s gift of Christ’s mentality for us to live well-armed lives on earth according to his good and gracious will for us
* See Titus 2:11-13: ***For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us, so that, by renouncing ungodliness (impiety) and worldly desires, we may live sound-mindedly and righteously and piously, as we wait for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ..***
* Greek verb ***appear*** (ἐπιφαίνω) = use in ancient world for visits by kings who put in a physical, visible appearance for an audience with their subjects
* Incarnation of Jesus as God’s physical appearance/epiphany to people on earth as their benefactor
* Purpose of his gracious appearance: Christ’s practical training of his disciples in a new kind of good piety for those whom he has saved from death
* Practical help to renounce wrong kind of piety based on worldly desires
* Practical help to live a godly life in anticipation of our future life of glory
* Three characteristics of living heavenly lives on earth
* Living sound-mindedly
* Living righteously
* Living piously with evangelical devotion
* See Eph 2:3-7: ***we all once walked among them (the sons of disobedience) in the desires of our flesh, carrying out the wishes of the flesh and its ways of thinking. So we were by nature children of wrath like the rest of mankind. But God, who is rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ…and raised us with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming age he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.***
* Our present restoration together with Jesus
* Reviving us with him
* Raising us to life with him in the heavenly realm
* Enthroning us to reign with Jesus
* Purpose: demonstration of his grace by enriching us
* See 2 Pet 1:3-4: ***His (Christ’s) divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness (the life of piety)...he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of desire.***
* Our participation in the divine nature of the Lord Jesus
* Our escape from corruption by desire through him
* See Gal 5:24: **those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires**

1. **The renewal of the whole person through baptism**

* See Tit 3:3-6: ***we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions (desires) and pleasures…But when the goodness (kindness) and loving kindness (philanthropy) of God our Savior appeared, he saved us…by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.***
* God as the lover of humanity
* His epiphany to us in baptism
* Salvation from slavery to desire through baptismal regeneration
* Renewal of the whole person and the church as a new humanity by the Holy Spirit through baptism
* New person ►new status ►new hope ► new desire
* See Eph 4:21b-24: ***you were taught in…Jesus, to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in spirit of your minds, and to put on (have put on) the new self, created after the likeness of God in true (real) righteousness and holiness.***
* Two ways of understanding the infinitives: fact and requirement
* Note the baptismal allusions: imagery of undressing and dressing
* Undressing: old self ► corrupt old way of life
* Dressing: new self that is recreated in God’s likeness
* Change from the inside: new sanctified self ► new sanctified spirit ►new sanctified mind ► new sanctified way of life
* New self that is like God’s self, new spirit that is like God’s Spirit, new mind that is like Christ’s mind, and new way of life that is like the life of God

1. **Living the new baptismal way of life**

* Ongoing renunciation of worldly desire (Tit 3:11)
* Mortification of evil desire as people who have been raised with Christ and have access to heavenly things: setting minds on these things in meditation and seeking them in prayer (Col 3:1-5)
* Abstention from fleshly desires (1 Pet 2:11): role of fasting
* Reliance of the Holy Spirit in Gal 5:16-17b***: But I say, walk by the Spirit, so that you do not carry out the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh…***
* Guidance by the Spirit through meditation on God’s word and prayer for the Holy Spirit
* Prayer for self-control as the fruit of the Spirit: control of imagination with thoughts, emotions and desires (Gal 5:22)
* Living a holy life of obedience to God in 1 Pet 1:14-16: ***As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions (desires) of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct (way of life), since it is written, “You shall/will be holy, for I am holy.”***
* Our call to holiness: like father, like children
* God’s promise: ***You will be holy, as I am holy***.
* God’s gift of his own holiness to us in Jesus
* Our participation in God’s holiness through faith in his holy word
* God’s demand: ***You shall be holy, as I am holy***.
* God’s call for us to be holy in our conduct
* Being holy by doing his will in obedience to his holy word
* Our redemption from the futile way of life in conformity with desire (1 Pet 1:17-19)
* God’s call for non-conformity to a desire-driven way of life in a consumer society

1. **Conclusion**

* The incarnation of our Lord as God’s remedy for our corruption
* Engagement with our five senses
* The renewal of our whole self by the incarnate Lord Jesus in Holy Communion: our spirits with all their powers, our minds with all their faculties, and our bodies with their five senses
* Preview and foretaste of heaven

**E.** **The Use of the Imagination in Exegesis and Preaching**

1. **Chosen text: Ephesians 2:1-22**
2. **My approach**

* Aim: to see what Paul is saying here
* Purpose: clear sight like bringing a blurred film into clear focus
* Analogy: TV commercial with its sequence of shots
* Problem: eclipse of the imagination by the triumph of abstraction that regards general ideas as real entities
* Questions: who or what is compared with whom or what, how, and why?
* Kinds of imagery
* Background: images that provide the setting for what is seen
* Foreground: images that are the focus of attention
* Dominant: key images or metaphors

1. **Key actors**

* You: Gentiles, members of the congregation in Ephesus
* We: Jews, members of the church, the congregation
* Triune God: God the Father, Christ Jesus, the Spirit

1. **Sequence of imagery in each section**

* Eph 2:1-2 **And you (pl) who were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience**
* The congregation (you)
* Former corpses
* Dead travellers: dead men walking
* Disciples of the devil
* Devil
  + - * Prince who leads a rebellion of royal sons against their royal father
* Eph 2:3 **among whom we all at once lived (had our way of life) in the passions (desires) of our flesh, carrying out the desires (wishes) of the body (flesh) and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath like the rest of mankind.**
* We Jews
  + - * Travellers on a common journey with all the human race
      * Children who have angered their father
* Desires of the flesh
* Road mapped out by our own flesh and mind as our way of life
* 2:4-7 **But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with the Christ – by grace you have been saved – and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.**
* God
* Rich benefactor, royal patron who demonstrates his wealth and power by his benevolence to his clients
* Lover of humanity
* Life-giver to dead corpses
* Waker of sleeping people
* King who enthrones someone as his co-regent
* We Christians
* Former dead corpses
* Revived and awake people
* Honorary co-regents with Jesus (royal status)
* Richly rewarded royal clients
* Eph 2:8-10: **For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one can boast. For we are his workmanship (artefact, work of art), created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.**
* You Gentiles
* People rescued from certain death
* We (the church)
* Work of art
* Co-workers with God in doing what he gives us to do as we travel with him
* God
* Creative artisan
* Employer
* Eph 2:11-13: **Therefore remember, that at one time you Gentiles (were) in the flesh, called “the uncircumcision” by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh with hands – remember that you were at that time separated from (without) Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who were once far off have been brought near by the blood of Jesus.**
* You Gentiles
* Once people without God and Christ (religious deprivation)
* Once aliens who do not belong to the city state of Israel (lack of citizenship in a royal city/imperial city like Rome or temple city like Ephesus or Jerusalem)
* Once foreigners without the privileges of citizenship (lack of legal, economic status)
* Once people far from God but now near to him (liturgical relocation as defined by access to the temple)
* Eph 2:14-18: **For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in (with its) ordinances, that he might create in himself a new man (humanity) in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. And he came and preached peace to you who were far off (from God) and peace to those who were near (to God). For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.**
* Temple with the wall that excluded Gentiles from entering the inner courts
* Jesus
* Peace maker
* Unifier
* Wall breaker
* Creator of new humanity
* Agent of reconciliation
* Killer
* Herald of good news
* Mediator who provides access to a king
* We Jews and Gentiles
* Once hostile enemies
* Now members of the one body of Christ
* Royal children with access to our royal father
* Eph 2:19-22 **So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but are fellow citizens with the saints (holy ones) and members of the household of God, built (like a house/temple) on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure (house/home), being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.**
* You (the congregation in Ephesus)
* No longer foreign residents in an alien land
* Co-citizens with the angels in the heavenly city
* Members of God’s extended household like adopted children and servants
* Building blocks
* God’s holy temple that grows larger and larger (see Acts 19:35: allusion to the great temple of Artemis and the city of Ephesus as its guardian)
* God’s residence/palace rather than the temple of Artemis
* Apostles and prophets
* Foundation stones of God’s house/temple
* Jesus
* The cornerstone of the temple
* Spirit
* The temple builder

1. **Questions**
2. What are the key images in this passage?
3. What is the key image/metaphor in 2:1-10?
4. What is the key image/metaphor in 2:11-22?
5. How does the imagery in 2:10 sum up the first part and how is it developed by the liturgical imagery in 2:11-22?
6. What is the connection between 2:7 and 2:19-21?
7. Which image would you use imaginatively in a sermon on this text?