Luke 2:1-20

At that time the Roman emperor, Augustus, decreed that a census should be taken throughout the Roman Empire. (This was the first census taken when Quirinius was governor of Syria.) All returned to their own ancestral towns to register for this census. And because Joseph was a descendant of King David, he had to go to Bethlehem in Judea, David's ancient home. He traveled there from the village of Nazareth in Galilee. He took with him Mary, to whom he was engaged, who was now expecting a child.

Luke 2:1-20

And while they were there, the time came for her baby to be born. She gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped Him snugly in strips of cloth and laid Him in a manger, because there was no lodging available for them.

That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep. Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them. They were terrified, but the angel reassured them. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people.

Luke 2:1-20

The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David! And you will recognize Him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger."

Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God and saying,

"Glory to God in highest heaven,
and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased."

When the angels had returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, "Let's go to Bethlehem! Let's see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

Luke 2:1-20

They hurried to the village and found Mary and Joseph. And there was the baby, lying in the manger. After seeing Him, the shepherds told everyone what had happened and what the angel had said to them about this child. All who heard the shepherds’ story were astonished, but Mary kept all these things in her heart and thought about them often. The shepherds went back to their flocks, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen. It was just as the angel had told them.

Series Goal

To call out spiritual problems in our culture that are wreaking havoc on our mental health! Then, from a pastor’s perspective, equip you with the spiritual truths to beat back the despair and anxiety of life that is intensified during the holidays.

- 1 in 5 US adults experience mental illness each year
- 746,000 adults in KY have a mental health condition
- Percentages of adults with mild, moderate, or severe symptoms of both anxiety and depression are highest among adults ages 18–29
- 64% of people w/mental illness say the holidays make things worse
- 3 in 5 Americans feel their mental health is negatively impacted by the holidays

Wk 1 – Hope over Despair
Wk 2 – Confession over Concealment
Wk 3 – Perseverance over Fragility
Wk 4 – Local Presence over Omnipresence
Wk 5 – Doctrine over Desire
Wk 6 – Spiritual over Secular
Wk 7 – Self-Denial over Self-Indulgence
Wk 8 – Meaning over Meh
Wk 9 – Gospel over Grief

"At first, I didn't recognize the symptoms that we all had in common. Friends mentioned that they were having trouble concentrating. Colleagues reported that even with vaccines on the horizon, they weren't excited about 2021. A family member was staying up late to watch "National Treasure" again even though she knows the movie by heart. And instead of bouncing out of bed at 6 a.m., I was lying there until 7, playing Words with Friends. It wasn't burnout — we still had energy. It wasn't depression — we didn't feel hopeless. We just felt somewhat joyless and aimless. It turns out there's a name for that: languishing ... Languishing is a sense of stagnation and emptiness. It feels as if you're muddling through your days, looking at your life through a foggy windshield. And it might be the dominant emotion of 2021."

-Adam Grant

Emotional/Spiritual Meh

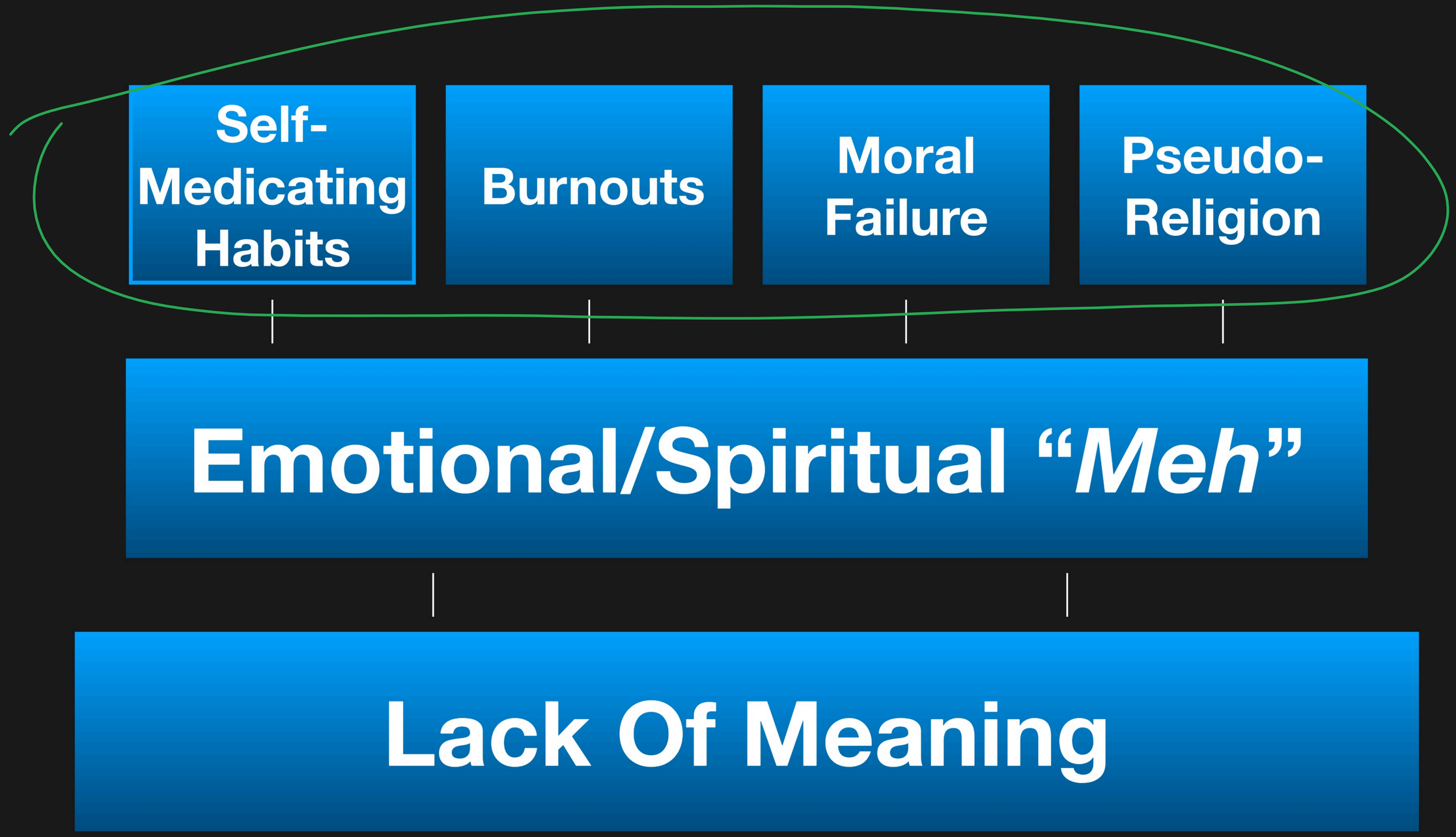
Apathy. Languishing. Emptiness. Boredom. Indifference. Lethargy. Detachment. Disinterest. Passivity. Idleness. Sluggishness. Fatigue. Numbness. Paralysis. Restlessness. Demotivation. Sloth.

"We know what is good, right, and life-giving, but cannot seem to lift a finger to do anything about it. We know that a bit of quiet reflection would do us some good, but we hit “Play” on that fourth consecutive episode of whatever show we’re into. We’re aware that spending some time in worship with other believers might inspire us, but we’d rather sleep in (especially after our previous night’s Netflix marathon). I am calling this the “curse of apathy,” and many of us have been stricken by it … For too many of us, life feels like a show about nothing. It feels unworthy of our serious attention. We are citizens of a Seinfeldian society, where only inconsequential things matter.”

-Uche Onizor

“Slop has a way of taking up valuable space while simultaneously shortening our attention span, making it harder to do things like read books or other activities that might actually fulfill us. Brain rot doesn’t hurt; it’s dulling, numbing, something more like a steady drip … Rotting brains crave more slop.”

-John Hendrickson


Self-Medicating Habits
Burnouts
Moral Failure
Pseudo-Religion
Emotional/Spiritual "*Meh*"
Lack Of Meaning

Philosophy of Meaning from Scripture

1. Something has purpose when it has a greater reason for which it exists.
2. In the same way, for a human to have purpose, we must find a greater reason for which we exist.
3. Scripture teaches that in our self-centeredness, we live as if our own power, pleasure, or significance is our purpose in life. That is a shallow purpose that often gives short-term meaning but long-term pain.
4. Scripture teaches that we were made for the dual purpose of loving God + neighbor. This is a satisfying purpose that often gives short-term pain but long-term meaning.
5. The payoff of living for God's purposes is long-term meaning.
6. The price tag of meaning is sacrifice.

Philosophy of Meaning from Scripture

We move:
from purpose
to meaning
through sacrifice

The Shadow Purpose of Good Feels

1. In the positive, it looks like pleasure-seeking. (“I want to feel good!”)

2. In the negative, it looks like pain-avoidance. (“I don’t want to feel bad!”)

The “Great Commission” is the greatest expression of the “Great Commandments”.

Zechariah	joy, gladness, uncontrollable praise	Lk 1:14, 64
Elizabeth	favor, rejoicing	Lk 1:25, 58
Mary	soul-level blessedness, rejoicing, favor	Lk 1:47-48
Shepherds	urgent excitement, contagious wonder	Lk 2:15-16, 20
Simeon	hopeful anticipation, death-defying contentment	Lk 2:25-26, 29
Anna	redemptive gladness, chatty enthusiasm	Lk 2:38

Mary – Luke 1:35

The angel said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; He will be called Son of God."

Elizabeth & Baby John – Luke 1:41-42

When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb."

Zechariah – Luke 1:67

Then his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke this prophecy …

Simeon – Luke 2:25-28

Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah. Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God …