

Fear and Fears - Part 1: The Fear of Being Fake

Luke 12:1-3

Well, in an old Peanuts comic strip, Charles Schultz has Lucy exclaiming, "I hate everyone! I hate everything! I hate the whole wide world!" To which Charlie Brown responds to the wannabe psychiatrist, "But, wait a minute. I thought you had inner peace." To which Lucy retorts, "I do have inner peace. I just have outer obnoxiousness." (1:01)

Well Jesus often said, as Charles Schultz was cleverly trying to point out, it just doesn't work that way. You see, outer obnoxiousness, it comes from inner obnoxiousness. That's where it comes from. Although Jesus was also quick to point out that the inverse is often true. A lot of people have a depiction of outer peace, but they have a lot of inner obnoxiousness going on. That's a sad reality, and one, unfortunately, it will wreak all kinds of devastating effects in life. It's why Jesus denounced it so often. Because Jesus came to do something in his followers' lives that would be radically different, that would change all of that. But there's not a manufactured hope that the outer can be something great while the inner's in chaos. He does this thing we study under the title "regeneration" that it changes the interior of our lives. As Ezekiel looked forward to, a new heart, a new spirit. He puts his own spirit within us, and then there's something organic, and something authentic, and something from the inside that makes it way to the outside so that we can have not only outer peace, but we can have inner peace. (2:18)

Now it's not always easy. To have a real, sincere love for God, and a real, sincere love for people, and doing the right thing, and serving God, and growing in holiness. That's not always an easy thing. The interior is often attacked, even as regenerate people to where we're struggling with the passions of the flesh that make this hard. But there will be, as we grow in Christ, an increasing consistency that won't feel like we're being fake. That fakeness, the Bible calls it hypocrisy, and Jesus says it's a bad thing. It's so bad that he denounced it probably more than any other trait of people that were in his generation, that he said, man, make sure that you do not fall into this category of being a hypocrite. (3:03)

As we turn to our twelfth chapter in our study of Luke, we find that Jesus is going to speak specifically in the first three verses to the problem of hypocrisy, and it will have devastating effects. But when you read this, you may be coming off of Chapter 11, either in our study or as you read through this quickly, and think, Oh, he's talking about the Pharisees. He's talking about those scribes that the passage in Chapter 11 ends with. He's talking about those lawyers or teachers of the law. Read this real carefully. He is not speaking to them. Yes, they are phonies. They had, as we saw in the end of Chapter 11, a kind of, we call it cultural Christianity, where on the outside they were concerned about appearances but on the inside they let their lives run wild, and that was the problem of a complete phony. And there's people that often come to church, carry Bibles, sing Christian songs, they read the Bible, and they are cultural Christians. They're not real Christians. They're phones. But the direction of Jesus' exhortation in Luke 12:1-3 is not to the Pharisees, it's not to the scribes, it's not to those that are complete phonies. It's to his insiders. He turns to his disciples. (4:09)

Now note the context in verse number one. If you haven't turned there yet, please do. Luke 12:1-3. Watch how Luke sets this up with what's happening here. And then, notice very carefully that these things that are said in the first three verses are directed to his inner core, his team, those that would be titled his followers, his disciples. (4:30)

Verse 1: In the meantime, when so many thousands of people had gathered together that they were trampling one another, he began to say to his disciples first, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy." Then he gives some motivation.

Verse 2: "Nothing is covered up that will not be revealed, and nothing is hidden that will not be known. Therefore whatever you've said in the dark shall be heard in the light, and what you've whispered in private rooms shall be proclaimed on the housetops." (5:02)

Wow. That's big. It's scary. It's the kind of thing you would think he would direct toward these complete phonies. But this is instruction and motivation given to his very disciples that would be considered his closest followers, his most devoted disciples, his apostles. And he says, Watch out. Now those complete fakes out there, what they do can



become in your life—look at the bottom of verse 1—like, like leaven. Now this is a great illustration for a group of people in the first century that all bake their own bread. And unless you're an overachiever, you probably go to the store and buy yours. But in their day they all knew what it was like. Save a little lump of that dough that had that yeast in it, and be able to use that in the next one. It's like magic. It just keeps on going, and you can reuse it, take a little pinch of that lump. And you have these little microorganisms there that continue to multiply, and continue to live, and they're activated by the warm water and by the ingredients, and they can keep producing that CO₂, and they make bread the way we like it, nice and fluffy and all of that. Now that's something that he says is much like this problem of hypocrisy. (6:07)

Hypocrisy, by the way, is a great visual word because it paints a word picture in its original, which is a Greek word that is just transliterated into English. It comes from a compound word: *hupokrinomai*. *Hupokrinomai*. And that becomes the word "hypocrisy". *Hupo* is the Greek preposition, "underneath", and *krinomai* comes from the Greek verb *krino*, which means "to judge or make an assessment". And that is, that you'd have to get under the façade to make an assessment about the reality of things. That's a hypocrite. That's why verse 2 is just such a great response to the word hypocrisy, and that is it's something that's covered. It's the art of concealing things; I don't want you to see the reality, so I'm going to put some kind of mask on. And that's hypocrisy. And he says, you know, hypocrisy is not something that kind of is loud and brash, and some revolting coup d'état of a sin. It's subtle, it's insidious. It's quiet. It's incremental. It's a little bit at a time. (7:07)

And just with that image of yeast or leaven being the association of this sin that he's just denounced in the eleventh chapter as these complete phonies, now he says to his disciples make sure it doesn't start creeping into your life. And that should give us a sense that it's, uh, it's subtle. Let's put it this way. Number one, if you're taking notes: ***We need to fear***—and that's a good word, we'll talk a lot of that in this series—***fear the lure of hypocrisy***. It is an alluring sin. It's a quiet sin. It's an insidious sin. It's something that you start to find in your life well after it's already started to take root in your life. (7:42)

Now let's think that through, just practically. Since we've all experienced it, and we all know what it's like to have some level of hypocrisy at some point in our Christian life, if not every week in our Christian life. Let's see the ease with which this takes root in our lives. Let's just start with the way we can often do the right thing with the wrong motive. We talked about that in Chapter 11. You're all here at church this morning, and you should be because God commanded us all to go to church and not forsake the assembling of ourselves together as is the habit of some. So you're doing the right thing. The question I suppose would be, is anyone doing the right thing here for the wrong reasons? That's easy to do. It's easy to do it out of just habit, it's easy to do it 'cause, you know, I'm getting someone off my back who tells me I gotta be there, easy to do just to keep you appearances 'cause I can't just blow off church every weekend. There's lots of reasons to do that. Or to pray before a meal, or to pray at all. Or to study your Bible. We can do the right thing for the wrong reason, and no one would ever know it. (8:36)

That's the kind of the first thing that's so easy to see that we can easily do, and then it starts to become that I can say a particular thing that's expected, or I consider to be right. But in my mind I'm thinking differently. Now I'm expressing myself, maybe on the patio when I have a conversation out there and I start to say things but I don't really mean those things. And it's not just a skewed motive. Now it's like I'm thinking the opposite but I'm going to say this, 'cause it's expected of me, and there's the, well, there's a distance now. There starts to be a divide between what I say and what I really think. (9:09)

Then there, you can have just, duplicity. When it comes to my words in private, and my words in public. It's more than just my thoughts. Now I'm going to talk to my friends in my inner circle, and I'm gonna say certain things and have certain value assessments of certain things. But if I'm going to go talk to other people, then I'm gonna say different things, and here's a growing chasm and distance between the reality of who I am, and the mask that I put on. (9:35)

And I tell you it doesn't take long until words become actions, and then I'm going to start to do things under the cover of darkness, or behind closed doors, or things I wouldn't want other people to know in certain settings. So I'll do things here in this situation, but in another situation I would act differently because that's just, that's the appropriate way to keep my out of trouble or keep people from criticizing me, or to fit in in a certain situation. So we can see how this grows until you have some people, and it's as irrelevant as the headlines, that can claim a certain life but behind closed doors they're living a completely, radically different, corrupt life. That's the kind of hypocrisy



that Jesus said can start like a little pinch of dough, and it just starts to expand and infect the whole thing. (10:21)

Watch out for the lure of hypocrisy. Because the motivation is there from the very beginning of every action that we act, and every word that we say. It is easy for us to allow there to be a gap and a distance, and it just grows. And by the way it's a warning, is it not? Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees. And that's what they're all about, but it can insidiously get into your life. Beware. (10:41)

Jesus doesn't waste his warnings. I mean, he only had time to say so much in the three year public ministry that he had designed—it was designed by the Father for him to have. And then the things that were recorded, clearly that wasn't everything that he said. But know that when God has inscribed before us here in our Bibles, beware of this thing called hypocrisy, you can know that it's something we should all be vulnerable in. I can quote this verse, and I know many of you know it. 1 Corinthians 10, when it speaks about the problems in people's lives that can creep up on them. And then he pictured, I'm assuming, humanly speaking, Paul picturing the Corinthians and some of them saying, "Aw, that's not my problem." And you may sit here this morning, and well, I'm not a hypocrite. I'm authentic. I mean, there's no big gap between, you know, my reputation or my external self. And well that's great. But Paul added this verse: To those of you who think you stand—remember this verse?—you'd better take heed lest you fall. No one is more vulnerable in any given sin [than] when they really think they're not vulnerable to it. We are no more vulnerable to the sin of hypocrisy than we are when we think, "I'm not a hypocrite. That's not me. I like being authentic and real, and I mean, I wouldn't want to live a duplicitous life." And you may sit there and think that because, you know, I've really grown a lot in my Christian life. Maybe when I was a young Christian. (12:02)

Here's the thing about hypocrisy. Hypocrisy is something where I would argue the increasing temptation for hypocrisy comes along with our accelerated Christian growth, with our progress in sanctification. As we become more and more accustomed to God's word, and accustomed to God's people, and serving in ways that we look back and say that's the right thing I should be doing. That's when I think when the temptation of hypocrisy becomes even greater. And that may be why Luke gave us the setting. Take a look at the beginning of verse 1: "In the meantime when so many thousands of people had gathered together that they were trampling over one another, well then Jesus sat down and he began to say to his disciples, "Well, let me say this to you first. Before I speak to the crowd, I gotta talk to the team. And I gotta tell you to be careful" (12:47)

Now why is this? Well he just denounced the Pharisees, and the lawyers, and the scribes at the end of Chapter 11. And they were the ones that if crowds were going to gather in a religious context, they were at the front of the group. They were the ones that loved the seats in the synagogue, the prominent seats, and the respectful greetings, 'cause they were important. You want to know about God, well you went to the lawyers and the Pharisees and the scribes. The crowds went to them. But now, Christ has hit this southern Judean area, and the outskirts of Jerusalem. Now all the bigwigs were coming there, and now we had thousands—think about this—many thousands gathering together, and they, you know, they were all scurrying to find the front row seat. And now, all of a sudden, the pressure's on the disciples. Now they're looking to them as leaders. Now the expectations are multiplied. You're not leading a small group bible study anymore. Now you're looked to as real leader in a big setting, and now all of a sudden, now the temptation for hypocrisy is even greater than when I just a new Christian, you know, and people don't expect much from me. (13:45)

Let me illustrate this for you by way of example in Galatians 2. Take your Bibles and turn there, if you would. Keep your finger in Luke 12, we'll be right back. But in Galatians 2 you have someone who's described as a hypocrite that you wouldn't think would be one. As a matter of fact, when you read this story in Galatians 2, beginning in verse 11, you're gonna say, now wait a minute. This is Peter. Peter, if you read the first ten chapter of Acts, is the, I mean, he's the star of this thing. I mean the first half of the Book of Acts, he is the pastor in a church where he preaches a sermon and thousands of people come to repentance. I mean that, this is big. I mean, he's the first pastor of the first mega-church in downtown Jerusalem, standing on the Temple Mount, preaching there in the shadow of Solomon's colonnade, and he's got everyone riveted as he preaches the truth about Jesus. Not only that, he's been endowed with apostolic gifts, including miracle working, and people, man, he's a bigwig. Thousands of people, goes from three thousand to five thousand, to uncountable multitudes there in Jerusalem, and at the front of that parade is the head honcho, Peter. (14:57)

Look at verse 11. Paul's gonna say something about Peter, senior pastor, preaching pastor of the mega-church, Peter. Interesting, isn't it, that the third word in this verse is Cephas? Do you know where that comes from? That's his old



name. That's his old name. That'd be like something coming to Paul, or to talk about Paul, and call him Saul. That's your old name. Kind of a little backhanded dig on the fact that, hey, he's acting like you know, he doesn't even know Christ in this regard. Why? Because he's compromising, he's being a hypocrite. Let's read it. (15:34)

Verse 11 But when Cephas—Peter—came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face. Now, that's where Paul was. Peter shows up, and he's going to confront him. Why?—because he stood condemned. He was wrong. He was in the wrong. What did he do?

Verse 12: For before certain men came from James—now the half-brother of Christ, this important figure and thoroughly Jewish of course, and this group was thoroughly Jewish that came. They're going to be described as those who are believing in the importance of the Jewish ceremonies, including circumcision and dietary laws, and they came. Now—he was eating with the Gentiles—Peter was—but when they came he drew back and separated himself. Because he feared that group, the circumcision party, that group of envoys from James. (16:20)

Now picture this. If you know your Bible, in chapter 10 of Act he had that vision of the sheet coming down when he was being called to witness to Cornelius, the Italian soldier. And when that sheet came down there were all those animals. They were not kosher animals. And here in this vision he was told to rise, kill, and eat those non-kosher animals. And at first he protested, "No, never. I've never eaten anything unclean." And God says, "Do it, do it, do it. What I've called clean, you don't call unclean anymore." And right there, Peter had, in the most vivid way, the demolishing of the ceremonial laws of dietary laws. All of those dietary laws were out the window. That division between Gentile and Jew, in a very practical way when they sat down to eat, that's not going to be there anymore. And you need to understand that this is all a part of you reaching out to the Gentiles, not to make them become Jewish but for you to realize God has made a new thing, this one new man called the church, and Jew and Gentile come together without any reference to not only dietary laws but circumcision; that's not important. (17:18)

But he feared what they would think. He's a bigwig. He's important. Lot of people coming to look what he thinks, and he says, "Euuuh, I'm afraid." Then it says in verse 13: "And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him." There's our word: hypocritically. He put on a mask. He knew the right thing but he wasn't willing to do it. On the outside. It's almost an inverse of how we illustrated hypocrisy to start with. Sometimes we just think of hypocrisy as trying to put on a good face on a, on a bad heart or bad interior motives. Outer peace, inner obnoxiousness. But you know, often it works the other way as well. To be inauthentic, sometimes in our Christian life, is to have in our lives a commitment in our own heart that we're all about the truth. But in a certain context, if I'm all about the truth here that won't be good for me. I mean, these people won't approve of me. I'm gonna be shunned, or I'm going to get into an argument, so I'm going to have a little external, manufactured obnoxiousness even though I've got the inner peace. In other words, I'm going to compromise when it comes to the truth of the gospel of what God wants to do, but inside I'll still adhere to that. That's hypocrisy. (18:25)

Verse 13: They acted hypocritically along with Peter so that even Barnabus was led astray by their hypocrisy. That's a little backhanded jab as well. Okay, Peter might, I might expect that from Peter, but Barnabus? I mean, Barnabus was now influenced by Peter's hypocrisy. But when I saw that their conduct—now here's the bottom line. Verse 14—was not in step with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas"—that's Peter—before them all, "If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile"—by God's command no longer having kosher, you know, restrictions, here. He says, "If you, a Jew, live like a Gentile and not a Jew, how can then you then force these Gentiles to live like Jews?" How is it that you can in one setting hold to the truth that God has broken those dietary laws down, and now, all of a sudden you get some pressure from the outside world and people that aren't a part of what you've seen and experienced, and you're going to compromise the truth of the gospel? Uh, that's hypocrisy. (19:24)

You gotta fear the lure of hypocrisy, because I don't care who you are, matter of a fact the more spiritually mature you are perhaps the more pressure you're going to have in your life to be hypocritical. To have one conviction inside and express something else outside. And the only way to solve that problem, at least one of the ingredients of it, is found in the chapter previous. Galatians 1:10. Certainly Paul knows where he's going in this letter to condemn the hypocrisy of Peter, or at least describe when he did that, when Peter came to Antioch, but he says this is verse 10. Here's the anecdote. Here's the solution. Here's the safeguard. He says this, verse 10, Galatians 1: "For am I now"—he speaks rhetorically— "seeking the approval of man or of God?" Am I trying to please people or am I really living before God? Am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man—interesting he even throws himself under the bus in that, because as a Pharisee, which is what he was before his conversion, An up and coming Pharisee



and leader amongst the Pharisees, and probably part of the Sanhedrin even, or at least next in line to it. What's the point? I tried to please people. I cared about what people thought. I was willing to adapt the interior of my life, or at least I should say the expression of the interior of my life, I was willing to put up a front and I'm not doing that anymore. Because as a Christian, here's how we should live. I'm not trying to please men. Because if I were trying to please man I would not be a servant of Christ. (20:45)

And that's what you and I are called to do. We're called to live not for the audience of those from whom we seek their approval, but the audience of God. Audience of one, as some have said. I live before an audience of one. You know what that does? That makes my life much more authentic, much more consistent. That makes me realize that what God wants from the interior of my life is what he wants from the exterior of my life. And though there's a lot of pressures—and you should think through that in your own life. What are the pressures that make you the kind of vulnerable person for hypocrisy and duplicity?—those are the kind of things that I'm willing to put aside because I'm focused on the singular approval of God. Fear the lure of hypocrisy. (21:29)

Why? In their case, perhaps because there's a direct correlation perhaps between the growing crowds and the leaven of the Pharisees which certainly dominated their lives. Don't do that. Now, motivation. Verse 2. Luke 12:2, it's printed on your worksheet. You've got your finger there in that passage. Go back to that. It says here's one of the reasons you should fight the temptation of being one person on the inside and someone else on the outside. Why? Because nothing is covered up that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be made known. (22:01)

Now again, if you read this too quickly from the end of chapter 11, you may think, "Oh, yeah, that's it. Those Pharisees are going to be exposed one day." Is he speaking to the Pharisees? No, he's speaking about one of the traits of the Pharisees, and he's concerned that the disciples might engage in it. And one of his safeguards is, "Listen, you need to know this. If you live a duplicitous life, if you have an exterior that's different than the interior. If you're living with that increasing distance between your thoughts and your words, your private words and your public words, your private acts and your public acts. Listen, it's gonna be exposed." And this isn't the same concept as, "Hey, be careful; you need to know your sins will find you out." We're not necessarily talking about this life. We're talking about the ultimate uncovering of all things, because that's the ultimate concern that we should have. Is that we are going to have to stand before God when everything that's secret and hidden then be exposed. (22:51)

Here comes the uncomfortable part of this sermon. Oh, I thought it was already uncomfortable. It's gonna get more, okay? Here it comes. Number two on your outline, let's jot it down: ***We need to often envision our future accountability.*** We need to often, regularly, envision that I'm gonna stand before God in my accountability and then everything is going to be exposed. Right now you have no idea why I'm preaching this message. I have no idea why you came to church. But why I do these things, and why you do your things, they're all important to God. As a matter of fact, a good deed is invalidated in my account when I do it for the wrong reasons. It's wrong for me to have a certain kind of exterior that does not match the interior of my life, and you know what? You won't know that until the day we all stand before God when everything will be laid bare before him with whom we have to do. That is the teaching of the Bible, as difficult as that is, and it's important for us to catch. (23:48)

And that's why we need to take a little extended sidebar in this second point and talk very specifically about what the Bible teaches, the doctrinal teaching of our coming accountability. And the only way to do that—now follow me please on this—the only way to do that is for us to contrast the two primary accountabilities on God's on eschatological calendar. There are two categories. Two primary judgments where God is going to call all people to account in two different settings. So let's take a little time to make sure this is crystal clear in your mind. It's the only way we can rightly understand our future accountabilities if we're disciples of Christ is if we understand the distinction between the two that are described in the Bible. (24:31)

Let's call the first one this, because the Bible calls it this. The Great White Throne Judgment. Put next to that Revelation 20. Great White Throne judgment. Great White Throne judgment in Revelation 20 is a judgment for non-Christians who have not trusted in Jesus Christ, who will stand at the end before God. God will evaluate their lives based on the truth, and then he will with perfect justice, which is the last installment of our series in Luke 12, something to be feared for sure. Perfect justice. With perfect justice, looking at every sin against the violation of a holy and eternal God, will then respond accordingly, according to their deeds, and as we learned in Romans according to their knowledge, and according to their responsibility, God will take their actions, and then he will respond with perfect justice. (25:23)



You and I have trusted in Christ. We don't want God's perfect justice. We want God's mercy. We want God's grace. So we cried out in repentance with a contrite heart for God to grant us that grace that's promised in the gospel, and we cling to Christ. Great. You will not be in line if you're a Christian at the Great White Throne judgment. Whew! No accountability. There will be no accountability. (25:46)

Here's the other category. Let's call it this, because Christians have tended to call it this, and you'll find this out and about in Christian writings, so let's give it this name though you'll be hard-pressed to find the word in your English Bibles. But here it goes. In contrast to the Great White Throne is the second accountability, and it's called the Bema Seat Judgment. Jot that down. B-E-M-A. Bema Seat judgment. That's the other judgment. And that's the judgment you will be a part of if you are a follower of Christ. You've trusted in Christ in repentance and faith in the finished work of Christ. You will go to the Bema Seat judgment. (26:19)

Now, once you write that down we gotta figure where that word came from. Let's go to 2 Corinthians 5, and let's visit the passage, one of the many passages, where we have this word in the Greek New Testament, and we'll see how it's translated into English, and we'll go that's the judgment we're talking about for Christians. It's an accountability of all of my life. No, not all of my life, all of my Christian life. Let's make that clear. The Great White Throne judgment, I'll make this distinction, is about the entirety of someone's life. All of his deeds, all of her deeds, brought up before God, exposed to God, and God then responds with perfect justice. The Christian, according to 1 Corinthians 3 has a foundation that's laid in Christ, and from that point on their relationship with the living Christ, now all of a sudden they're building on that foundation an edifice called the Christian life. And there are things that they are doing that are righteous, and good, and rightly motivated that he describes as gold, silver, and precious stones, and then other things that are described as worthless things elsewhere, those things are analogized by wood, hay, and straw. At the accountability of the Bema Seat there will be a judgment on that, an evaluation on that, an accountability for that, and that will be how the person is then enumerated, or compensated, or rewarded. (27:42)

Now notice, if it starts with the foundation of Christ then what is judged for me is my Christian life. My old life pinned to the cross. But when I became a Christian I started building as a steward. Not that's going to be evaluated. So my Christian life's going evaluated at the Bema Seat of Christ, the entirety of the non-Christian life will be evaluated at the Great White Throne. 2 Corinthians 5 is where we find the word tucked into the text which we'll have to highlight here. One Greek word, "Bema", translated with two English words. Let's start in verse 6; we'll read through verse 10. (28:14)

2 Corinthians 5:6: So, Paul says, we—that means we, we all of us; and he's talking as a Christian to Christians is Corinth—we are always of good courage, at least we should be, because we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. 2 Corinthians 5:6. Do you see that? Now let's just take that and start with that, and I hate to get too far off on any tangent here, but it's helpful for us to think through what exactly that means. To be home in the body, and he started this passage talking about our body as this tent, and it's here and we live in this, but we're going to leave this tent, this body, and we'll be with the Lord. But right now we're at home in this body and that makes us away from the Lord. Now I know that you say, well, you know, Christ in you, the hope of glory, Christ lives in me, I'm not an orphan, I'll be with you always and I'll be with always even to the end of the age. I know know all those passages. And I understand them. But when he said you're not going to be left orphans, you're going to have the Spirit, it is not what you have going on when you stand before the living God and you stand there before the resurrected Christ. That will be the kind of reality that will have hardly any comparison to what you experience now. (29:28)

In other words, as I like to say and I get criticized for saying, but let me say it again. We live, in a sense, in a long-distance relationship with the Triune God. He exists and dwells in unapproachable light—1 Timothy 6. His Son is seated at his right hand—Hebrews 1. I live here on earth, and my contact with the living God is third person of the Godhead, the Spirit who lives in me. He convicts me, he lives in me, he motivates me, he energizes me. All of that is true. But one day I'm gonna die, and I'm going to stand before God, and no longer, as the Bible says, am I gonna see through a glass dimly, but then I'm going to see face to face, and that's going to change everything. So right now, in a sense, I need to see in phase one of the Christian life which is here on earth, it's nothing compared to what it's gonna be. So right now, in a sense, I can say, as it rightly says here, I'm away from the Lord. (30:06)

It is much like you sitting there—let me analogize it a little bit this way. That you are in the eighth grade in junior

high school, and the teacher—Jesus, in this analogy—is there and has called you out as one of his students, and you are different now than the other students. And let's just say, to stretch the analogy, he's put his Spirit in you as Ezekiel said, and you now are a new person, a new student. And then he says this, as it does in Acts 1, "I'm leaving. Now I'll come back, but I'm leaving." So he leaves. But he doesn't leave us without his Spirit, and he doesn't leave us without instructions. It's called the Bible, the work of the apostles and the teachings of Christ, and it's all up on the board. So the instructions are on the board and I'm sitting there in the classroom, and the teacher walks out. Now what happens in the eighth grade when the teacher walks out of the room? (30:51)

Chaos. Chaos. But you know, even though the teacher is gone, his Spirit is in you, which is more poignant than conscience, and you're convicted when spitballs come out and paper airplanes are being made, and everyone is sitting on their desks and talking. You know the teacher said do these assignments, and you should sit their at your desk, and you know you should do the right thing even though the teacher's not there. That's the picture here. Away from the Lord in the present state of being here in this fallen body on earth. Now we walk by faith, verse 7 says, and not by sight. So he's not at the front, he's not tapping his, you know, pointer at the screen going "here's what you need to do next". You have to trust that the God that you commit yourself to is the one that you're gonna have to obey, but you don't see him. Yes, we are of good courage, verse 8 says, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. It would be great for us to get out of this classroom, go down the hall and be with the teacher. That would be great. Here's the thing though. Whether we're in the classroom, or whether we're down the hall. Whether we're with him or whether we're away from him, verse 9, home or away, we make it our aim—this would be a good one to underline—to please him. We want to please him. And we know what pleases him. And that is to sit there and recognize who he is, and out of love, and respect, and honor for him, I'm going to do what's on the board. (32:14)

And it's not just those things, by the way. Let's add the word of our series. How about a little biblical fear. And if you don't think that's what the intention of verse 10 is, I don't know of any other way to understand it. He is out of the room, so to speak. Yes, he's left his Spirit. Yes, he's left his word. But it says in verse 10 we must all appear before, here's our word, *bema*. Those next two words, judgment seat, translates one Greek word. B, long E, M, A. Bema. The bema seat of Christ. The judgment seat of Christ. So that each one may receive what is due for what he's done in the body, whether good or evil. So away from the Lord I've got instructions, I've got his Spirit, I'm supposed to do what he asks, I want to please him. That's the good Christian motivation, and that's a good Christian life. But there's another motivation that's added to it. Oh, you do know there'll be accountability. You do understand that we're going to see him again, and when we see him he's gonna come back as the grader of the tests. As the evaluator of the assignments. As the one who's going to look at your life, and look with accountability at what you've done or have not done. (33:22)

As a matter of fact, that last word "evil" there, is not the word *kakos*. There's a few words in Greek for "evil" that are common, but this is a word that's translated often, "worthless". *Phaulos*. *Phaulos* in Greek is the idea that this is worthless, and that sounds like the picture that we have in 1 Corinthians 3 that you're going to have wood, hay, and straw. It's worthless. It's not what you should have done. And what happens? It goes away. The Bema Seat. (33:45)

Bema, by the way, is something that means a raised platform. It was a place where you would put a throne. You'd come before a magistrate, or some leader in the Roman—Greco-Roman world, and you would have that person with authority over you be able to adjudicated a problem or assign blame, or to sentence you in a criminal case. You stood before the bema seat. (34:06)

Now with that it sounds a lot like the Great White Throne. Well, it's not, and here's why. Here's the difference, and you former Catholics need to takes notes at this point. Because you didn't take notes in the Catholics Church, I understand. But one of the things you were taught, unfortunately, is that there is, perhaps, for you has a Catholic. Yeah, the death of Christ on a cross, that solved your major problem of a long-term expulsion from the school. You're not gonna get expelled, but you are gonna have to do some detention. So you're gonna look at those tests, and the teacher's going to grade them, and then you're off to a place called purgatory. And you have to spend some time there, and I can't tell you how long, and the priests don't tell you how long, but you're going to have to deal with your issues there because there's punishment that you have to have and purge the evil from your life. Jot this reference down if you would: Romans 8:1. I could quote a slew of passages for you, but let's just deal with one that should be the end of the discussion. (35:04)



There is therefore now no condemnation for those in Christ. I am not going to be expelled from the family of God, and I'm not going to do detention. That's the truth of the Bible. This is a make-believe doctrine that has no foundation in scripture. There is no purgatory. And you as a Christian will not incur the suffering and penalty of your sins after you die. You're going to be ushered into presence of God. You're not going to go to jail before you see God. There's no purgatory. You're going to stand before the living God, and you will be accepted in Christ. (35:38)

Who! No accountability then. No, no, I didn't say that. The Bema Seat of Christ is not about condemnation, or punishment, or retribution for sin. It has nothing to do with that. It has to do with the exposure of your life, the revealing of your works. As it says in 1 Corinthians 3, we're going to find out what sort of work you did. And it will be made manifest. You're in 2 Corinthians 5. Turn if you would to 1 Corinthians 4. Turn back to the previous book, Chapter 4, verse 5, and see how this is described. The coming of Christ for Christians is a standing before God, and a full disclosure of the things that I have done in the Christian life. As uncomfortable and as unpleasant as that is, and I know some people want puppies, and rainbows, and clouds, and I want a Christianity with a lot of kittens, and I don't want any feelings that are going to make me uncomfortable—well then, you need to pick a different religion. Because when it comes to your relationship with God, even as a redeemed, regenerate, forgiven Christian, you're still going to be faced with the evaluation that's coming for every Christian. That's according to the Bible. You want to make up your own religion, you can say whatever you want. But if you want to follow Christ, here's what he's taught through his apostles, and here's what he's taught even if our verse, verse 2 of Luke 12. Nothing is going to be covered up that won't be revealed. Nothing is hidden that will not be made known. (37:06)

Verse 5, 1 Corinthians 4. Context again, you got to remember, there's factionalism in the church at Corinth. And they were saying, oh, I'm of Paul, I'm of Apollos, I'm of Cephas. And they were all arguing, you, you're better, and I don't like that, and these guys are messed up. Well within the church these little intramural, factional things that were going on, he says this in verse 5. Don't pronounce judgment before the time. Don't do that. Not before the Lord comes who will—so therefore when the Lord comes he's gonna do this. He will bring to light the things now hidden. Now the thing I don't know about a lot of the people that are all about that Bible teacher, or this particular group who exalts that Bible teacher, I don't really even know what's going on in their hearts. So that's a problem. I can't make a definitive judgment about those kinds of distinctions within the church because I can't see their hearts. The Lord's going to bring the light the things now hidden in darkness, and he will disclose the purposes of the heart. We're going to see motives. We're going to see everything. There will be a full disclosure. Then each one will receive not his condemnation, notice the spelling. What? Commendation. He will receive his commendation from God. See, the Great White Throne is about condemnation for those who reject Christ. And here's the thing about the Christian Bema Seat judgment. It's about commendation. (38:23)

Who! Well, it's an accountability, but at least there's no, I mean, no hard feelings there. No, no, no. 1 Corinthians 3, let me quote it again. It'd be a good passage for you to study on your own. It's all about the Bema Seat judgment. It uses the word "suffer" to describe those who build in their Christian life and they're left with very little to no gold, silver, and precious stones. When the commendation comes, you will have suffered loss, the Bible says. Now, that's not condemnation. That is not being tossed into the lake of fire. That's not retribution. That's not perfect justice. That's God looking at your Christian life and saying, "Man, a lot of missed opportunities. Lot of things you did. Maybe sometimes you did the right thing for the wrong motive, man, I can't credit you with that. Sometimes you prayed but you prayed to be seen. Sometimes you evangelized but you did it out of pressure, and you know, someone told you you had to. Whatever it is, the motive of interior life did not come out organically as fruit in your life, and because of that we've got problems and I can't reward you for that." That will be a day of suffering. (39:25)

Oh, no, no, no. I know I say this all the time, but some of you are going to say, "I'll just be glad I'm here. I don't care about rewards. I read that passage in Revelation. They're all throwing their crowns before God anyway." Yeah, and he's scraping them up and putting them in a storeroom. No! You can see the utter grace of God even in reward and say, "Oh, I would just want to give all glory to God," and you will. But trust me. You will certainly suffer in your heart over squandered opportunities to store up treasure in heaven. There's no doubt about it. You need to recognize—and if you don't believe me look me up in a hundred years; we'll talk about it—there's nobody that's gonna say, "You know what, I don't care. I'm just glad I'm here." No, you will be glad you're there, and I get that. But you will not be glad you're there if you squandered your opportunity to do what God has asked us to do, and motivated us to do, by living a kind of Christian life that will receive his commendation. (40:15)

One more on that. It's just because I know people are going to leave this auditorium, and they're going to go, "Oh, I don't believe that. I just think God's too loving to evaluate my life." Romans 14. Let me give you another. Another reference to the Bema Seat. This time it's called the Beam Seat of God. Romans 14:10-11. Again, the context here which you need to understand, is Christians looking askew at other Christians because of matters of conscience. These are matters of conviction and conscience, and someone says, "Well that guy's messed up 'cause look what he's doing and that person messed up." It's not about bible verse quoting, it's not about the fact that they're doing something biblically prohibited. It's about Christian issues of preference, and conscience, and conviction, and he says this.

(40:59)

Verse 10. Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Why do you write him off and think that's completely all right? Or why do you despise your brother? Now this is interesting. You can see two levels of reality here. Passing judgment is probably happening with my words. It starts with my mind, I know, but certainly something the idea of despising someone it really is a matter of my heart. Why would you pass judgment? Why would you despise? For we will all—here's the motivation not to do that—stand before the judgment seat of God. There it is again. *Bema* translates these two words: judgment seat. You'll stand before the judgment seat of God, the *bema* of God. For it is written as I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me and every tongue shall confess to God. So then, each of us—now here's one to underline or highlight—each of us will give an account of himself to God. (41:47)

Now don't let some poster or bumper sticker, or post on Twitter, make you dismiss the truthful word of God. This is either true or it isn't. And I hate to sound so defensive on this doctrine, but I get attacked on this all the time. "Aww, God wouldn't do that." You're going to have to answer to God for your Christian life. You'll be exposed before God. It is as we read back there on our daily Bible reading in Ecclesiastes 12:14, after all the discussion about all of life, he gets down to it. Listen, it's all about you and your relationship to God, and he says it's because God will bring every deed into judgment and every secret thing, whether good or bad. (42:27)

One more passage on this. 1 Peter 1. Because I know you're thinking this, and we might as well just say, well, that's the right thought to have. Because you're going to say, well there's a form of Christianity out there that make me feel just like this would no issue and no problem. But what you're teaching, Pastor Mike, if this is the truth it makes me feel uneasy. Well, it's more than uneasy. Scripture describes the appropriate feeling as fear. Now not the fear of being condemned, but the fear of not being commended. There's a difference there. Very important for us to catch. And look at how it starts inverse 14. (43:08)

1 Peter 1:14. As obedient children, and that's the hope, certainly. I'd like to be an obedient child. We're talking about Christians here. Do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance. Passions are something that goes on inside. It's fueled by my fleshly desires, and sometimes they come in conflict with my redeemed life, my redeemed heart, my regenerate heart. So I got a battle going on. As Peter says elsewhere, it's waging war inside my soul. But I'm not going to be subject to the dictates of my passions. That's the resolve, at least. But as he who called you as holy—here should be your resolve—you also be holy in all your conduct. Since it is written, Old Testament text repeated many times in the Bible, you shall be holy, for I am holy. (43:53)

Great. Notice the conjunction at the beginning of verse 17. We're really not done with the thought yet, because here comes the conjunction. And, to remember this guys as you think about your holiness and your sanctification, if you call on him as father, call out to God in prayer as father, who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, speaking to Christians now here, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile. (44:21)

Now I'm supposed to have fear. You're going to quote 1 John 4, perfect love casts out all fear. Look at the rest of that verse. We're dealing with the fear of the judgment of the Great White Throne for those who are going to be condemned. We're not going to be condemned. But the kind of fear I should have is the kind of fear of the approval and commendation of God that should drive me to live my life with a certain circumspect concern about whether I give in to temptation this week or whether I don't. This is a kind fear that is very appropriate. (44:51)

As I've often told you, my dad was a Long Beach cop. And when people heard my dad say in uniform, during his work day, "Hey, you," they felt a little differently than when he walked into my bedroom and said, "Hey, you." Both invoked fear, but a different kind of fear. My mom had worked for the L.A. bar. I talked about this before, being raised with law and order, judge and cop. Wow. But when my mom disapproved, there was a concern there in my



heart but different than when she was in her work adjudicating a dispute. Well, when they saw my mom disapprove there, different kind of fear. When my dad burst onto the scene in one context with a criminal, different than when I was being a little criminal in my house and dad walked in. We both had fear. I did not fear that I was going to go to jail. Only on a couple of occasions. But I had fear that I was not an obedient child, displeasing my father, grieving my mother. (45:57)

I give one question on the back of the worksheet, I didn't mean to kind of wedge this one in, but I talk about the problem of permissive parents in our generation. I'm telling you, give some thought to that. And I'm telling you, you've got to recognize that we are not dealing with an indulgent, Orange Country father that you pray to. We're dealing with a father who's the kind of father, who was like good fathers and mothers that raised kids with boundaries, and rules, and consequences. And so there will be a calling to account. He's left the room. He'll come back. He'll look at the board, he'll look at our work, he will evaluate it. And you ought to, as you're sitting there as spitballs are flying past your head toward the board, and people are wadding up wet paper towels and throwing at them at the assignment, saying "I don't care about the assignments." That's the culture we're living in, is it not? And we're going to say, "I fear. I fear my father coming back into this room and saying, 'What are you doing?' I fear that." It's a different kind of fear than the fear of the lake of fire. But it's a kind of fear that leaves me unsettled, nevertheless. You want a Christianity that never leaves you with unsettled feelings? It's a—you're gonna have to opt for something else, a religion of your own imagine. But biblical Christianity calls us, look at it again, to live with fear throughout the time of your exile, and now is the time we feel like it's an exile when it seems like everybody in our culture is going up trying to erase the board. It's gonna be harder and harder for us. But the thing that should hold us steady is a view of our coming accountability to God. (47:35)

That may sound morbid to you. That may sound like a negative motivation to you. But just watch people that have adopted that, and watch how they live for God. Watch some of the richest, most productive and fruitful Christians we've seen. I think of Jonathan Edwards. Right? One of the most brilliant and fruitful thinkers in American Christianity. He was a teenager when he sat down and wrote his 70 resolves, and resolve number nine, I've read it to you before: "Resolved to think much on all occasions of my dying. Resolved to think much on all occasions of my dying." Now, if your teenager wrote that down in his journal and you happened to open it, you'd probably want to schedule a therapist appointment. He's gonna go Goth on is, he's gonna wear black all the time. But you know, that's the resolve of a teenager who grew up to be one of the most productive, fruitful, and brilliant Christian thinkers we've had in America. Why? Because he thought often about I'm going to stand before God and give an account for my life. He thought of it often. That's why I worded it this way. Often envision our future accountability. Why? Because nothing's covered up that won't be revealed, nothing hidden that won't be known. The reality of your Christian life will be on display at the coming judgment. Did I drive that home enough? More passages on the back of the worksheet for you to work through this week. (48:54)

Verse 3. Let's end with this. Luke 12:3. Therefore, whatever you've said in the dark shall be heard in the light. Whatever you've whispered in private rooms shall be proclaimed on the housetops. And certainly that's the case. What you've done behind closed doors and under the cover of darkness will be put in the full, beaming light of the judgment and evaluation of Christ. Now we can just drive home the second verse with the third verse and think more specifically about it. But let's flip it over. Let's take that concept and say now, how can this motivate us? Let me put it this way. If I know that what I'm saying in private will be heard in public at the coming judgment of God, then how about I work right now to say things in private that I would only want to have heard in public? Matter of fact, let me now try and live a life in the privacy of my own mind, in the privacy of my own home, in the privacy of my own close circle of friends, let's live that life as though it were openly exposed. That's called integrity. That's called transparency. As a matter of fact, let's shove those two words together and make that our aim, based on the fact that it's already gonna be that way. (50:05)

Number three: ***Let's do everything with transparent integrity.*** Let's make that our goal. I want to live my life in a way that is authentic, that doesn't have duplicity or gaps between what I'm thinking and doing in the internal part of my life, the interior of my life, and what I'm doing on the outside. Let's live consistently. And I must take a quick sidebar and say this for those of you, and I've met them and I don't understand how you justify this. But some people come and say, well that's fine then. If I don't feel like going to church, I ain't going to church. If I got a bad thought about another Christian I'm just gonna say it, 'cause I want to be authentic. (50:35)

No. It's why I used the word integrity. Integrity has that sense, not just of consistency. It has that sense of moral

virtue, the thing that God wants to see in our lives. He wants us to bear good fruit. Now that means, let me make some implications here, there is going to be within your heart the passions of the flesh assaulting your regenerate heart, that are going to saying all kinds of things that make you feel and think things you know you should not express. And when you feel those things, I don't want you to say, "I want to be a non-hypocrite so I'm gonna say whatever I think. I'm gonna do whatever I feel. I ain't gonna go to church until I feel it. I'm not going to share my faith until I feel it." That's not how this works. What you need to do is work on and focus on what's going on in the cogitation, the rumination, the thought process, the meditation of your heart, and say I'm going to make sure to police the interior thoughts and imaginations of my heart. Because I do want the interior of my life to fuel the exterior of my life. I want my thoughts to be honestly expressed through my words. I want my private life to really be the kind of life I live publicly. But that means I'm going to have to do some work, and give some focus, and do some policing to how my heart works and thinks. And when it's free to think about whatever it can think about, I want it to make sure that I'm fighting the temptations of thinking and harboring thoughts that I know I would never want to express. (52:02)

And the Bible says this so often. This would be a good study. Take your Bible software and start looking at the ideas of plotting evil, about those in the minor prophets who plot evil on their beds. That's a good example. They're just sitting there thinking. They can think about whatever they want, end of the day, and they're thinking about bad stuff and what they would do, and how they would do it. And that, we know, because of the fallen passions of our flesh, we can start to think that way. We should fight that. See, the battle of temptation, it really is about something that begins in our hearts as we let our imaginations and our thought-life stir on that. You see yourself starting to plot revenge, payback. When you see yourself starting to think about things that you know you should never do as a Christian, you got to eradicate those thoughts. The focus needs to be on your heart. (52:44)

Here's what the Bible says. Proverbs 4:23—Keep your heart, guard your heart, with all vigilance for from it flow the springs of life. One of the books I've added on the back this week, I think it's like the third one down. I forget the editor's name, but the book really is mostly the writings of John Flavel, which, who was a puritan pastor, seventeenth century. I think in Chapter 8 is where I captured this quote that I wrote down this week for you. (53:12)

When it comes to the interior of our lives—now note this; this is puritan speak, I understand, but it's very short. He says this—the eye of God is, and the eye of the Christian ought to be, principally fixed upon the Christian's heart, because it is the seat of principles, and it is the fountain of action. (53:33)

That's a great statement. The eye of God is, and the eye of the Christian ought to be, principally fixed upon the Christian's heart. It is the seat of principles—there's my values, there's my virtues—and the fountain of action. And then I see things creeping in there, mm. I'm going to sound the alarm. Little motion detector there that, when something walks in that doesn't belong there, I need to ring the alarm. I'm fixed and focused on that interior life of mine. Not so that whatever I feel I can just blurt out. Not just so whatever I think or whatever passion strikes me I'm just going to live that and be consistent. No. So that I make sure and keep that clean and filtered, and policed. (54:10)

By the way, the passage says whatever you've said in the dark shall be heard in the light, whatever you've whispered in private rooms shall be proclaimed on the housetops. Now let's think about that. We're thinking that when we say it in the dark and when we whisper it in the private rooms, well then it's not being heard. Well, you're right. On a human scale it's not. Only to the people you whispered it to. But, as Flavel just said, the eye of God is already fixed on that. And don't we know that? Here's two great passages. I think this is how I end your discussion questions this week, is just pondering these. And I ask you the question how can you keep these in the forefront of your minds. Here they are, jot these down: Hebrews 4:13, Proverbs 15:3. Proverbs 15:3, Hebrews 4:13. (54:54)

Now, you know verse 12. Word of God, living, active, sharper than any two-edged sword. Not it ends with this. After thinking about the instructions that are on the board from the teacher, it says this: And no creature is hidden from his sight but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give an account. Now it ends with we're gonna have to give an account. And that's when we think about exposure. But here's what he says. Everything right now is exposed to him. His eyes see it all. And there's the second verse, Proverbs 15:3: The eyes of the Lord are in every place keeping watch on the evil and the good. So while Point number two in this sermon was focused on our future accountability when the secret things become light, well, you need to think this now. When you whispered something behind closed doors, God was hearing it right then. When you were thinking something, and



pondering something that you should not have, God is right there actively seeing it. (55:47)

Let's add one more item to our illustration. Eighth grade classroom, teacher walks out, instructions on the board, chaos breaks out. You know you should do the right thing, spirit of the teacher is within you, you know you want to please him so you're going to fight the temptation. Remember this last layer. There's a huge camera sitting in the corner, pointed right at you. And by the way, if this is going to be an illustration about God, it doesn't just look at your actions as your head's down and you look like you're working. It looks right into your brain to know exactly what you're thinking, and exactly what you're doing. (56:18)

Everything's laid bare before God. He sees it all. The motivation isn't just a future accountability, how about the present reality of him looking into your heart and seeing it all? I mean, that's a verse that should change so much about our lives. The eyes of the Lord are in every place keeping watch on the evil and the good. And with the expanded, ubiquitous nature of cameras, and people taking videos on their phones, this has provided endless fodder for those little, cheesy little shows on TV about caught on camera and whatever they call them. And I gotta tell you, I've seen some of these, because you sit there eating Cheez-its in your recliner going, "Look at that! What an idiot! What a fool, I can't believe he did that. How outrageous." And you go through all of that hoping, of course, you haven't pocket-dialed someone, or that no one's recording your comments. Because here are people, most of them with their faces blurred out 'cause who's going to sign a release to be on TV for that ridiculous thing you just did, and they're caught on camera. And you think to yourself, that's so embarrassing. Look at you. You were in an elevator and you didn't anyone could see you. You didn't think about that little camera in the corner of the elevator, and you hauled off and did what you did in that elevator, and now everyone knows it. We've seen celebrities go down on this, athletes go down on this, and we go look at those people. Look who they really are behind closed doors. (57:39)

I want you to realize it's not just about people taking cellphone videos. You don't get caught just because someone took a picture of it or recorded what you said. It's already exposed to God. And if the audience of one really matters, and that is what God thinks and what God evaluates, man, this is important. And because we're human I know it seems like a greater exposure when it's exposed at the Bema Seat, but it's exposed right now. So let's aim for that transparent integrity. (58:10)

Now, a sermon like that discourages a lot of people. Number one because we have an expectation of the Christian life that isn't gonna make me an unpleasant in any way, and this is an unpleasant thought. And worse than that, some of you are going to leave here going, "Oh, this is impossible. I mean, this is impossible. If that's true, if all that's true, I mean, who can really even live the Christian life?" Now here's the thing. I understand if every word of yours is recorded and everything's gonna be exposed, and everything is now exposed, and you can't be a hypocrite because God is going to call it all on the carpet, it may make you a demoralized Christian thinking, "Oh, there's no use." But let me give you one last verse that may encourage you while maintaining some motivation for you. (58:50)

1 Kings 9:4. 1 Kings 9:4. This is the scene where God appears to Solomon, and Solomon is being told by God to live in a certain way, and notice the wording. You don't need to take time to turn there, but let me read it for you. God says to Solomon who of course is the son of David: "As for you, Solomon, if you would walk before me, live your life before me, as David your father walked, as he lived, with integrity of heart and uprightness doing according to all that I have commanded you and keeping my statutes and rules, well then I'll do this." Listen to that again. "If you would walk before me as David your father walked, with integrity of heart." Anyone want to throw a flag on that play? Oh, yeah. What are you talking about? I've been to Sunday school, man. Integrity of heart? Keeping the commandments? [Bbbph!] Let's ask Uriah about that. No. Guy's an adulterer, man. He's a schemer, he's a liar. No, that's, you got the right David. This is not Samuel's assessment. This is not some scribe's assessment. This is a recording here, in holy Scripture, of God's commentary on the recently deceased King David, and he says, "Hey, Solomon, you need to be like your dad because he had integrity of heart." (60:19)

I don't... God, are you forgetful? This is not about perfection. It's about a pattern. This is not about you saying, well, if I can't be perfect forget this integrity of heart thing because I've already blown it this week. I understand that. As Psalm 103 says, God knows who you are. He knows the weakness of your moral frailty. He understands the weakness of your flesh. But he has compassion on you. And those who fear the Lord are going to be those who live a distinctive kind of life, one that in a general sense—I understand, this is not in an absolute sense, but in a relative sense, he can look at you and say, "There's someone with a heart that's integrous. There's an uprightness of heart."



Not because you have no sin in your Christian life. Not because there's some things that make you swallow hard and think, Oh, I'm going to have to stand before God and *that's* going to be exposed? But because even when those things were brought to your attention, you were showing integrity of heart by being quick to confess your sins, and to forsake your sins. That's integrity. (61:23)

I thought of that when I read a story in the news about a judge in Michigan who was one of those hard-nosed judges, one of those law and order judges, who had strict rules. And one of the things he hated, his little pet peeve, was cellphones going off in his courtroom. So he had a sign constructed that sat over the bench over his shoulder that said, "Any cellphones going off in this courtroom will result in a charge of contempt of court and a fine of \$25.00." Pretty harsh. Pretty hard-nosed. Well the judge got a new iPhone. Had it in his shirt pocket under his robes. I don't know, he was setting it up probably back, you know, in his chambers, and then, all of a sudden in the middle of, whether he bumped it or he had it on the Siri to automatically come up, whatever. She starts talking. "How may I help you?" "I don't understand." Or whatever it says, right? Can you imagine the red-faced, hard-nosed, high standard judge now having his own phone go off in the middle of court? Like see there, you're a hypocrite. You're a hypocrite! It's exactly what Satan is going to say to you when you've stumbled this week. "You're a hypocrite!" (62:40)

Were the people that Jesus spoke to in this passage hypocrites? Oh, they were gonna be hypocritical. The concern was a kind of settling pattern of being to live with hypocrisy. Do you think that judge felt like a hypocrite? Yeah. And you know what he did? The next recess he formally charged himself with contempt of court, and fined himself twenty-five bucks and paid the fine. That's called integrity of heart or uprightness. It's the willingness to say, "Yeah, I messed up." That doesn't make me a hypocrite because I messed up and didn't live up to the standard that I hold up. But that I'm willing when I fail to admit it, and that's the encouraging part that God could look at David and say, "Here's a man with a heart of integrity." See, when Nathan came to him and said to him, "You're the man," what did he do? "No, I'm not." No. "You're right." Repentance. Confession. Forsaking. (63:33)

I trust that Peter was that way, too, when Paul said to him in Antioch, "You know what? You're acting hypocritically." I trust that was the response. Not that Peter wasn't going to fail. It wasn't that he was going to be perfect. He's not going to be perfect. Neither are you. I'm not going to be perfect. By the end of the day we're going to have something that we can be hypocritical about. But you stand back and remember the words of 1 Kings 9, that it's not about the fact that we periodically, more than we like to admit, we fall. But we need to admit it. And when we are hypocritical, we need to stand up before God, confess it, and forsake it. Let's leave today with a new motivation, perhaps a more clear motivation, of our coming accountability, knowing that God sees right through the externals of our lives. And let's live for his honor as exiles in a chaotic classroom that feels like we're in the eighth grade, saying, "I got to be faithful. I got to do what the teacher says." (64:35)

Let's pray. God, hold us, please, be the kinds of Christians that take our coming accountability seriously. And God, let us end our time in prayer here at least by having a profound sense of relief, that while it's uncomfortable to think about the Bema Seat judgment of Christ, that if we are Christians here today there is not a single Christian here in this room that is gonna stand in line for the Great White Throne judgment. God, thank you so much for the grace of the gospel of Jesus Christ that exempts us from that line, and prepare us for the Bema Seat, God, by being faithful. And even when we stumble let us be faithful to say that we have been sinful. And God, give us a greater success this week by the motivations provided in your word. In Jesus' name. Amen. (65:25)