



An Eternal Perspective – Part 3

Investing in Our Post-Resurrection Life

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Well there are a lot of things I assume on your various social media apps that make you angry and rightly so. There's something so blatantly unjust that if you're a normal person with a sense of right and wrong they just infuriate you. The kinds of things like maybe a ten-second clip of some group of thugs coming up to some old lady at a bus stop and pushing her down to the ground and taking her purse and running off laughing. Or maybe some teenagers coming up on a bunch of gals walking down the street, they pull out their paintball guns and start laughing and yelling as they ruin their clothes just for giggles. It's angering. If you're a normal person it makes you mad. And that's just what we would expect if you had a conscience. But then there are other videos probably why you scroll through those to get to the other ones particularly you gals because you want to see the heartwarming ones, you know, the cat and all the rest. But the one that I'm thinking of is, you know, when you see the four-year-old older brother help put his, you know, three-year old sister's sweater on or something like that, ah... Or you see a little kid who draws a thank you note, a little student at school and goes over and hands it to a janitor. I'm thinking, oh, this is heartwarming, that's sweet.

And it's true, it is heartwarming, but if you were to think about those kinds of videos, if you thought about them long enough, they could make you angry. They could make you angry for the same kind of reason that if you have a sense of justice, and particularly some of these videos, you could say, well, I want to know what happened. Here is someone doing something out of the ordinary that's good. I hope that this child was rewarded for that. I mean, did it just up the click rate of this person and monetize the video and someone's getting rich off of this other person's good work? Or let's just imagine your life with people around you who are, as I like to say, going the extra mile or staying the extra hour or spending the extra dollar being truly sacrificial, caring, doing what is right and righteous. And all the people around them, if they were just shrugging their shoulders, like, yeah, okay, good enough. I mean, we would, if we have a sense of justice, we might say, well, that's not right. And of course, you come to church, I hope you recognize this, we're going to remind you from time to time, hopefully often, that God is just. God is a just God. And you need to know that when it comes to people doing things that make you mad, so easily and quickly make you mad, you would say, well, I know there's an ultimate judge who will judge the wrongdoer. We think about people who refuse to repent and put their trust in Christ, and think, well, one day you're going to get yours because God is a God of justice. And we know it makes us mad, but we know in the end, God is going to give people what they deserve.

But on the other side, we realize that God also says, in passages like Hebrews Chapter 6 verse 10, that God is a just God, and because he's a just God when someone does go the extra mile or stay the extra hour or spends the extra dollar to use my phrase but certainly in that passage talking about Christians in a church in that sense caring and serving and sacrificing for someone, God said I would be unjust if I didn't respond to that, if I didn't do something good in that regard. And we realize that justice works both ways. Now we often



think of the former and we don't much think of the latter but we ought to. Sometimes it's our theology that gets in the way of recognizing this, and yet it's everywhere in the Scriptures. Matter of fact, we've come to a passage that should make us think of this for the time we have this morning together, and that is in Second Corinthians Chapter 5. If we can think rightly about this concept, I think it can change a lot about how we're supposed to live. Now that has been my goal in the last three weeks, and increasingly so with greater concentration each week, I want what we do this morning to make a difference in the decisions you make this week. We've been talking about having an eternal perspective. That when you think beyond the horizon of this life, can I live this week in this world to make some sort of change about this week as I think about what's coming in the future?

And to tie those two things together, we've been thinking about that with increasing specificity. We started with thinking about this resurrection body that is promised to every Christian. And in some ways that is motivating in terms of endurance and perseverance, and we can hang in there, we can be patient, and we can look beyond this life. And then we talked about last week that the kingdom of God really arriving as the dwelling place of God as coming among men, and we think about the reality of the will of God being done on earth when his kingdom comes, and we think about God reigning and ruling, and just all the things that might not just help us to endure, but even to think about the reality of that in a way that changes my priorities this week. But this week really brings it into sharp focus. If you have your Bibles, you have to look at this because this has been a real source of confusion for a lot of people. As a matter of fact, that may be a reason for a real big surprise if you happen to be a fairly new Christian. This may be the first time you've ever even heard of this. And if you have been a Christian for a while, I would think that many of you have lots of reasons to kind of sweep this to the side and to not give it much thought. And I want to take those reasons as pious as they may sound and take those out of the way so that this might have a more front-and-center kind of priority in your thinking.

So turn with me if you haven't already to Second Corinthians Chapter 5. We're only going to look at two verses today which doesn't mean a shorter sermon so don't smile, don't get excited. Two verses and two points and all we're going to do is try to think this through from the biblical perspective. My prayer has been this week is for you that you will leave with only what God would intend for you to think as it relates to this topic. Because my concern as your pastor is that a lot of people they don't think rightly about this topic and we need to think rightly about it. I know there are some very good-sounding excuses for not thinking rightly about this topic. But in doing my best work for you in thinking through church history, thinking through theology, thinking through all the text of the Bible, I just want to make sure you get this and understand it the way God would have us understand it. So having that as my prayer, let me read this short section for you and then let's just take it one verse at a time and see if we can't change our perspective as it relates to how we live this week.

Verse 9. It'll build on the vocabulary that we've already learned to define in the last two sermons, such as the phrase "at home." Look at verse 9, "So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him." Now, home, just look back up in the context, get your Bible open there, that has been the phrase he's used, like in verse 6, "while we're at



home," what does he mean by that? "In the body we're away from the Lord." And he says it again in verse 8, talking about "being away from the body and at home with the Lord." But now we're talking about the fact that as long as we're here on earth, we are a home, or even if we're there, our whole overriding concern as people who understand something about who Christ is, of course our desire is to please him. There should be no doubt about that. Now, a lot more about that in a minute. Verse 10, because here's the purpose clause, if you will. It's more than a clause, it's a whole sentence. Why? Why should we want to please him? Well, here's one reason at least, verse 10. "For we all must appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil." Now you see the word "we" there in verse 10 and some of you are thinking I want my money back because the whole point of me becoming a Christian was that I didn't want to be judged. That was the whole point. I get saved so that I don't have to go and stand before God and be judged because judgment is the thing that my faith in Christ was supposed to divert. I'm not supposed to be judged.

And yet we have this passage along with many others, Romans Chapter 14, First Corinthians Chapter 4, we have plenty of passages that remind us not to mention countless parables from Christ that remind us that say, no we as Christians are going to be judged. It's a different kind of judgment as we'll see although it does include as it says here both good and evil and we have to understand what that means. But first I think we can all agree even if verse 10 wasn't here starting with the word "for" we could take verse 9 and say well I think we get that. Just because we should know the greatness of Jesus Christ that he is the fullness of deity dwelling in bodily form, he's the second person of the triune God, we should all try to please him. We are creatures created by this triune God and of course we should want to please him. So let's start there in verse 9. So whether we're at home in this life or away, which really is a way to say, it doesn't matter. This is kind of like green eggs and ham on a plane, on a train, on the bus. I don't know it all. It's been a long time since I've had little kids, but I'll have to brush up on that with the grandkids now. But the point is anywhere, it doesn't matter. Here, there, he's been talking about the intermediate state, eternal state, this state that we're in, it doesn't matter, the overarching concern we should have is making it our aim to please him.

Now, as long as the cat is out of the bag about me and Stanford basketball, let's go back to my time on the Stanford basketball team. Sometimes when I was in the junior high gym on the Stanford basketball team, I would get fouled and have to go to the free throw line. Stanford basketball team, your Merv is on the Stanford basketball team. So I want to make sure you're impressed with that. Now, there's a special kind of pressure when you get fouled and go to the free-throw line. Am I right about that, former basketball players? Because if I miss a shot when everyone's all just jumping in my face and there are a lot of reasons I should miss that shot, but this shot I shouldn't miss, am I right? I mean, this is the shot I've taken in the driveway, the basketball hoop that's attached to the garage. I've made that shot many times. I should be good at this shot. And no one is allowed to get in my way. They're all there. The guy with the stripes is keeping everybody back. And the stands that... well it wasn't full of people, I almost said the stands were full of people, they were not full of people, but there was an eighth-grade girl who was watching and she was just kind of cute. So there were people there that I wanted to impress and I wanted to do this, I wanted to make this shot. So



just to use the word in this text, the English word in this text, is I want to aim and it's all about aiming, there's a lot riding on aiming, I want to aim seriously. Okay? But why?

Well, because I don't want to not make it. I mean, even if this isn't the game-winning free throw, there's some glory involved in this, right? I want to at least fist pump as I turn around and start running to take my defensive position. I want to make this, I want the girl in the stands at least to smile a little bit at me making this shot. I want the honor of making this shot. That, by the way, is translating an interesting Greek word which translates this phrase, "we make it our aim to please him." It's a compound word and I know you know the first part of this compound word. It's one of the words in the Greek New Testament for "love." It's the word "Phileo." Phileo is a word, one of the words for love, and it's connected with a Greek word for "honor." It literally means to "love honor." And that's weird. I feel love and honor, what in the world are we talking about here? You should love honor. Well, how is that translated into "make it our aim to please him?" Or as some translations put it, you should "make it your ambition to please him," or it's put in the first person, plural. "We make it our ambition to please him." Well, I want the honor of making the shot. But not for some eighth-grade pimply girl who is sitting in the stands. We're making our concern, our honor, is to please the king.

And I know you know this verse, it's recorded in all the synoptic gospels, and I know that you've heard it quoted, and you may have quoted it to other people. You'd like to hear at the end of your life, "well done, good and faithful servant." From whom? From whom, your old Sunday school teacher who preceded you? No, right? From your neighbor? No, you would like to hear that from the master. You'd like to hear that from the king. There's no greater honor than to be honored by the king. Now that's why this word, it's a weird word here, is you should love honor. Honor from whom? Honor from God. There's nothing better than that and that's why it goes well with verse 10 because I know you know this, when Samuel was dealing with the problem of King Saul there's a very famous line that says Samuel quotes and here is God basically speaking through Samuel saying you know what? Those who honor me, what does he say next? I will honor. "Those who honor me I will honor, and those who despise me, shall be lightly esteemed." Not interested.

So, here's the idea in this particular passage. We're going to get around to this evaluation so that you "may receive what is due." There's some kind of quid pro quo in this passage about there's a response that God's going to give, which is in essence as basic as this: You honor the Lord, he's going to honor you. Now this is something that is controversial, sadly, it doesn't need to be, but it is controversial in modern Christianity and it ought not to be. But it comes down first to this and we can detach it for just a second and some of you live with it detached. Something that was never meant to be permanently detached, but we should at least start with the first part of this. You should love to honor the king. That's the most important person you should live to honor. Which sometimes when you live to honor the king, it won't honor your boss. Maybe it won't even honor your family members. Maybe it won't even honor yourself because it'll be like Saul. You'll have to sacrifice what you are going to be seen in the eyes of the people around you. But I want to honor the Lord, so I'm willing to look silly here in the eyes of others because I want to love to honor the Lord and I even love the honor that



comes in the opposite direction. I want to love the honor of the king. I want to honor the king. I mean, that's just a good way to look at this word. Aim to please him. And I want to, as I put it, number one, I want to "Resolve to Please Christ." That's as simple in four words as I can put it. I want you to resolve. I want you to say I want to resolve or I want to be decided to want to hear from God well done.

Which by the way, as long as I'm quoting that passage in Luke Chapter 19 verse 17, you do know the rest of that text when he says, hey, "Well done, good servant! Because you've been faithful in a very little, you shall have..." More on this later. But then let's put an ellipsis there, dot, dot, dot. That's how it always works. Hey, you've done well with what I gave you to do, therefore you shall have it. It goes back to that basic axiom, that basic equation, you honor me, I'm going to honor you. Now, that's the whole concept of the whole sermon this morning. We're just starting with the first part. It would be good for you to say, I would like to please the Lord. I would like my aim to be to please him. I'd like him to be honored by the things that I decide to do. And it's put this way, and it's not a bad way to put it, it's all put throughout the Scripture this way. I'd like to please him. Now, I shouldn't have to apologize for something as simple as saying to you at church, a Christian church, talking about Christ, that I'm standing in front of you saying, you should want to please Christ. You should purpose to please him. You should aim to please Christ. I'm just reading Scripture to you basically. I shouldn't apologize for that and you should be able to accept that without any problem. You shouldn't need a tall glass of milk to get that one down. Just get it. Yes, I got it. But today we're living in a time and a place where people struggle with that.

And I guess I should put it this way. You should know that pleasing Christ is possible. You went to seminary to learn that stuff, Pastor Mike? Yeah, it is! It's possible! And I know that you know some Christians, because you've been around the block enough times, who don't believe that it's possible for one of two reasons. Let me help you with this. I'm teaching what I think is absolutely 100% biblical, and we could spend, if you let me preach for five hours, we could spend five hours talking about this topic. It's right here in the Scriptures. This is what we do. We should aim to please the Lord. On this side, there are some people who are really saying to you, do you know what? You can't please the Lord. It is impossible for you to please the Lord. No one can please the Lord. Okay, now if I said all that, devoid of any context, could you think of, Sunday School grads, any verses that could support that? I don't know. Could you think of a whole chapter say in the book of Romans that might say that? Hey, how about a raised left eyebrow if you can think of a chapter in Romans that might spend the whole time telling you that no matter how hard you try, you can't please the Lord. Anybody? Romans Chapter... good chapter about how bad you are, Chapter 3, right? No one's righteous. No one can please God.

As a matter of fact, I can go to the Old Testament and read these passages like from Jeremiah that all your righteousness is like, it's like polluted garments, "filthy rags." Don't even make me interpret that one in its original context. It is bad. So, there are people who are going to say, well, that's why all this stuff about the pastor told you on the weekend to go please God. He doesn't understand the Bible. I understand the Bible. He doesn't understand the Bible because it can't be done. I can quote this passage, this passage. I can't do it. That's the



kind of filthy, corrupted, awful, terrible worm of a person I am. I can't please him. OK. Can I address that one first? Well, I have the microphone, so let me address that one first. There is something that is happening so often in our Christian lives that is really based on where these texts are given and the context in which they are presented. Why in Romans Chapter 3 is Paul trying to tell people, whether you're a Jew or a Gentile, whether you've studied the Torah, or whether you haven't, whether you're a teacher of the law or whether you never heard of the law, why is he's trying to say we're all sinners, no one pleases God, everyone's a liar? Because we are trying to deal with what we're going to end up dealing with in Chapter 4, and that is justification. Justification by faith.

By Chapter 5, we're going to start in verse 1 by we want peace with God by faith in Christ. So this is all about justification. And you Sunday school grads, I can open up the mic, you can come up here on the stage, I can pick any one of you to come up and tell me the difference between these two categories. Justification and sanctification. I can take anyone and you can come up. No one feels nervous because you all could do that easily, right? It's like the difference between apples and oranges, you can explain it to me and you should be able to. Because justification, let's just talk about this now, I'm just saying this for the visitor because all the rest of you could explain this, but justification takes place instantaneously when God declares you righteous because you have put your trust in him. You've declared yourself as an assessment and agreement with God that you are a liar, that you can't please him, that there's no possible way you can measure up, that you fall short, which is precisely what the word sin means. And you say, I am a sinner. God have mercy on me. And God now directs you to Christ. Trust in him, "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" The moment you did that, he now declared you righteous. And he said, now you are in my Son. Christ was righteous, you're not righteous. I'm imputing his righteousness to you and I'm extracting your sin and putting it on my Son's cross. I'm considering you righteous. That's where the reformers talk about the "legal fiction." You're at the same time a sinner and the same time righteous because Christ now is your clothing. You are clothed in Christ.

Okay, now that is true, 100%. You are a sinner who now is clothed in Christ and that happened instantaneously. But what happens from that point on, and you need to read it in light of Jeremiah 31, you need it read in light of Ezekiel 34, Ezekiel 36, all the promises of the New Covenant, you're changed from the inside out. Now we talked about this two times ago. You are now having a new heart. We're going to see this in Chapter 5 verse 17 in our study coming up later. And we're going to hear that we are a new creation in Christ. He's going to make us new from the inside. He's going to now endow us with his own Spirit and he's going to move us to keep his precepts. Move us to start following his rules. This is a process now called sanctification. Justification, declaring us righteous, changing our hearts, we called it last week, the core desires, moving us into this battle with our fallen flesh which is not yet glorified, and we're going to start this process called progressive sanctification. And we're going to, as we said last week, like a stock ticker, start to try and make progress here by God's grace, by God's endowment of his Spirit drawing us on to move forward with our aggressive work, putting to death what still remains fleshly in us. We're going to battle for this. We're going to make every effort to add to our faith. We're going to put to death these deeds



in our lives. We're going to battle against these passions that wage war against our soul. We're going to work at our "salvation with fear and trembling." This is our sanctification.

Okay, now some people don't even believe what I just said about that because when I get back to where I'm going. You have put a lot of pins and thoughts so far. The whole question is can I please God? They say no because I'm a filthy sinner. Then there are people over here on the other side that say you know what? You're talking to me about pleasing God. Did your pastor teach you that this week? There's no need for your pastor to teach you that. Do you know why? Because you please God in your sleep, man. You please God every day, all the time. You can't please God more than you already do. When you belched yesterday, you pleased God. You please God when you are cutting your toenails. You please God all the time. Do you know why? Because you're in Christ. He sees you in Christ. Because this whole sanctification thing, they confuse it with justification and because they say, well you're in Christ to be adopted into his family. Well then when it comes to your sanctification, you're already pleasing him. You want to talk about pleasing him? You please him, there's no need for you to try to please him. Can the Father love the Son any more than he already loves him? Of course not and you're in the Son.

And so I don't care what you do tonight. I don't care. He's looking down at you and do you know what he's seeing? He sees his Son. So you know what? Your pastor must be a really rank, heretic, legalistic, whatever. He's telling you to try to please the Lord. Because this is insane. OK. Is anyone still following me on this sermon? That unfortunately is making it necessary for me to say this. You can please or grieve the Lord today. Let me give you some Scripture that may help you with this and maybe an analogy, an illustration that's based on Scripture. Maybe it'll help take both of these away from you to where the person who says to you, oh, you don't need all that about pleasing the Lord and trying to please the Lord, aiming to please the Lord because you can't, you're a sinner. Or you already do. I don't care what you did or what you're doing you're pleasing him because you're in Christ, you already have an A+ in heaven, I don't know what you are trying so hard for.

Okay. Colossians Chapter 1 is a good example and I can go to a lot of places. Let me preach for five hours and we can go to a lot of places in this sermon. OK? You're going to call me on that one day and we're going to be here all afternoon eating donuts for lunch, it's going to be great. In Colossians Chapter 1, look at verse 21. Let's start there. And I'm going to quiz you on this. So you're going to tell me what's going on in this passage. Colossians Chapter 1 verse 21. Colossians 1:21, "And you, who were once alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds." By the way, does that sound anything like what we see in Ephesians Chapter 2? Yeah, "you were dead in the transgressions and sins." You were just "following the course of the world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience." Yeah, that's who you were, alienated from God. "He has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death." So in his death, you can unpack this in Romans Chapter 6, you are now seen as though God's satisfaction of justice was done because the cross had finished the justice that was needed. The propitiation, to use another word from Romans, was satisfied. The completion of God's justice was satisfied. So, you were alienated and hostile



doing evil deeds, but now he's reconciled you in his body, in his flesh, in his death, in order to present you holy, blameless, and above reproach before him.

Question. Here's quiz question number one. Are we talking here about justification or sanctification? Progressive sanctification or positional justification? Justification. Because this happens when? How long does this take? Three months? Five months? Ten years? Fifty years? It takes a millisecond. You were alienated and hostile and then you weren't. Now let me lay an illustration over the top of this. The book of Romans does this really helpfully because we start talking about now in Chapter 6 of Romans, you're a slave in the slave market and let's just update that, you're in some slum orphanage, you have no money, nothing, all you're hoping on is the mercy and the riches of somebody coming in from some other country and adopting you and doing all that it takes. There's a guy there to pay for it all, to pay for your food and your future and your home, you have nothing. And so he flies in with his wife and says, I want to adopt you. And you can't do anything to earn that. But he sets his love on you, he picks you and he takes you out of that. That's the biblical word of redemption. He's now taking you out of, to use the biblical analogy of the slave market in the Greco-Roman world, which isn't an American slavery, but it's the same concept. If you don't have the ability to make it on your own, so you are now adopted out of that. You're now redeemed out of the slave market and now you become owned by the master.

So let's just picture you as the orphan in the orphanage in the slum. Now somebody from Orange County with a big mansion on the coast of the Pacific Ocean, he with his wife now adopts you. And then part of what he does is he tattoos every one of his children with his name across their forehead. So you get a brand-new tattoo and it's permanent. You get the tattoo of your dad on your forehead. So now he puts you in the home. That happens immediately. This takes place when the papers are signed and you are adopted and you have his last name. And guess what? You don't even need to be written in his will. It's the law of the land. You are the inheritor, you get all the stuff from the father's inheritance. You're now the owner in the family, right? You have a bedroom. This is your house. This is your refrigerator. This is your pantry. Do you follow all this? That's called redemption, that's called justification. That's called becoming a child of God. That is called adoption.

So, what can you do to earn that? This is where most Christians live. We think about justification. Nothing! How are we saved? Are we saved by doing good works? Titus 3:5, Ephesians 2:8 and 9. No. We're saved by grace. Why? Because here comes the rich God of the universe and says, I'm going to choose you and set my love on you and take you out of this. has all happened. "Has now reconciled his body by his flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless." How holy was the thief on the cross at the moment of his justification? "Holy and blameless and above reproach before the Father." Great. Now go back up in this passage. That's our position before God. Go up to verse 9. He obviously learns about these people's salvation, Timothy and Paul. And as he writes them, he says, oh, "so from the day we heard," verse 9, "we," that's Paul and Timothy, "we've not ceased to pray for you, asking that you be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding." Now, what pill do you take, or what sermon do you take where that happens, and how long does that take to "be filled with knowledge of his will in all spiritually?" Well,



you're all still a work in progress on that one or you wouldn't be here listening to me teach, right? Because you would have had that, or you would take the Christian pill.

When you become adopted, instantly of course you know the will of God in everything, right? You're as wise as you can possibly be. You have all the understanding. No, no, this is a process, this is incremental. "So as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord." So you learn things with increasing knowledge, with increasing spiritual wisdom, with increasing understanding, so that you can increasingly walk in the manner that looks more worthy of the Father. Now I'm living more like dad, more like the elder brother, fully pleasing to God. That's the goal. I want to please the Lord, "bearing fruit in every good work and," oh here's the word in case we missed it, "increasing in the knowledge of God." We just keep on going. Now is this justification or sanctification? Sanctification, progressive sanctification. OK. The first one, how much, just drop down to it again, how much can I please him here? What do I have to do to please him in verse 22? To be "holy and blameless and above reproach." I just trust him. That's it, that's all I can do. I trust him. I'm alienated, I am hostile, I'm doing evil deeds, and then, by God's grace, by faith, not by works, I now put my trust in Christ, and guess what? I'm made his child. By grace, I'm saved through faith, not of myself, "not as a result of works, so that no one may boast." And then, guess what, instantaneously, I'm wholly blameless and above reproach.

Now, does that mean that nothing that he said here in verse 10 is possible? No, of course not. This is the point. I want you to... I keep praying for... why do you keep praying for something that's already happened? It hasn't happened. I'm wanting it to happen. I'm pulling for you. I'm preaching for you and praying for you that you would continue to be filled with more knowledge so that you would be increasingly conformed and living worthy of Christ. Do you follow this? This doesn't seem that hard and if you've been taught here, hopefully this is nothing new to you. But you start reading books from certain publishers. You start reading certain positions from certain people or hanging out at certain Bible studies, they'll tell you if your pastor told you to please the Lord, that's impossible. Or over here, they'll say, oh man, you can't please the Lord, come on. How can A+ students please the Lord? You're in Christ, man, I don't care what you do. You're already pleasing him as much as anybody could ever please him. Not true. You can grieve the Lord. How about Ephesians Chapter 4 verse 30? Of course you can grieve him all day long. How about a verse you read this morning?

Did you read your Daily Bible Reading yet? You're in the second service this morning. Surely you had time to do that after you walked the dog and had your coffee and did your stretches and gym time and whatever you did this morning. We read Psalm 11, I think is where we ended our reading this morning, verse 7. That's the last verse of Chapter 11. Here it is, "For the Lord is righteous; he loves righteous deeds." You know what you should write in the margin after that verse is this very important theological word. D-U-H. That should just come right after that. "The Lord is righteousness; and he loves righteous deeds." DUH! Now he's saying that because he spent a lot of time in Chapter 11, if you read it this morning, talking about how much the wicked frustrate him and how he's angry and one day their judgment will come. But he ends this with, hey, "the Lord is righteous; he loves righteous deeds." No DUH, man. Of course he does. And it would be good for you to know what those righteous deeds



are and to start doing more of those righteous deeds. Matter of fact, you should love the honor of honoring the Lord. You should just make that your aim. You should make that your ambition. Every day you should care about that. You should aim above even what your boss wants, even what your spouse wants, even what your parents want. You should say I want to please the Lord. That should be your ambition. Resolve to please the Lord. There's nothing more important than that.

One more passage with this and then we can actually move on to the second half. The second half? That sounds like so much left. That's not how you feel though. Ephesians Chapter 5, let's look at three verses in the middle of this chapter. Let's start on verse 8. Ephesians Chapter 5 verse 8. See if we can just apply our little quiz to this passage. Verse 8, "For at one time you were darkness, but now you're light in the Lord." How long did that take? Was this a dimmer switch? How long does it take for you to go from darkness to light, how long? A month, 10 years? No, a second. It may have taken you a long time to hear about the light to become the light, but you became the light in a moment. Repentance and faith, BAM, by God's grace. You were dead, then you were alive. At one time you were darkness, but now you're light in the Lord. Well, how about this? "Walk as children of light." How long is that going to take? The rest of your stinking life. It's going to take a lot of time. See, justification, sanctification. That needs to be understood in almost every passage you read.

What are we talking about here? If not you're to be confused when your pastor stands up and preaches about you trying to aim to please the Lord and someone starts calling a foul that that's legalism or something strange like that. And you say whoa, whoa, whoa wait. I don't know that you understand that there are two very distinctive categories here. Is there some overlap? Well, I suppose if we're talking about God, if we're talking about God's empowerment, talking about God's grace, but we aren't talking about the same thing here. Well, OK, if I'm supposed to "walk as children of light," what is that? Well, I'm glad you asked, verse 9, "For the fruit of light," the outgrowth of what it should be to walk in the light. "is found in all that is good and right and true." OK, well, let's hear another sermon on what is good. OK, let us hear another sermon on what's right? OK, but let's hear another sermon on what's true. Sure. But then you have to go home and do verse 10 and "try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord." Well, you can't do that. Well, yes, you can! That's the whole point of passages like this. Oh, you already do. No, no, no. You don't. And if you think that, I guarantee you're going to grieve him. So you can please the Lord, and you should please the Lord, and you have to care about pleasing the Lord.

Just because you have your ticket to heaven does not mean this does not need to be your ambition. You have to care. You have to worry about aiming and say, I have to "work out my salvation with fear and trembling." Because I'm afraid I'm going to lose it? That's not the point. But the fruit of light, you have to focus on it. You have to aim at this. You have to try to discern how to please the Lord. I know this is probably way over the top for people who go like, I've heard you say this a million times. Okay. But for some people who are new, some people who are influenced by what they're reading, it's just very, very, you know, very vogue today for people to poo-poo this concept. All right, that's enough. You cried uncle and now I'll take you out of the headlock.



Verse 10, go back to our passage, Second Corinthians Chapter 5. I did wrestle in high school. Right? Now, I didn't go to Stanford in high school, but I do know how to put you in a headlock, let's just put it that way. Oh, I'm thinking of my picture in my yearbook in my wrestling outfit. (audience laughing) Two things, number one, it was obscene then, and number two, I can't fit in it now. (audience laughing) Be thankful for that. No, it was thrown away by the first year of college, so let's just... All right, did that give you enough time to get back to Second Corinthians 5? All right. So verse 9, we can preach that by itself. Whether home or away, whether you're in this world, the next world, whenever, you should always "make it our aim to please the Lord." You should always love honoring the one who is worthy of our honor, and that's good, but if you honor the Lord, do you know what's going to happen? He's going to honor you. And all that really is predicated on this basic concept, you know, we're all going to "appear before 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."

Now, judgment, that's an interesting concept, because I thought judgment was for non-Christians. I thought the whole point of Romans Chapter 8 verse 1, was that there's no condemnation for Christ. That's what happens at judgment. Well, you're right if you're talking about the judgment that's going on in Revelation Chapter 20, that's called the Great White Throne Judgment. And people in that line who are coming to be judged for their deeds, which, of course, will include how much knowledge they had and a lot of other factors, they're going to be judged if their name is not written in the Lamb's Book of Life. Now that's a different word for judgment. This is the word which is often said, and I thought there'd be a footnote in the English Standard Version. Is there? I don't know. I thought I checked and there's not. But certainly your study Bible that you paid extra for is going to say, it's going to certainly enlist this word because Christians like to talk about this as the Bema Seat Judgment, okay? And the Bema Seat is the word that's translated here, judgment seat.

Bema is a Greek word. What is a bema? I'm glad you asked. A bema, when you see your husband out there pacing off the deck that he's going to build in your backyard that he always talks about and he never does, he's figuring out like every three feet, his stride, he's trying to mark it off by his strides. Well, they've been procrastinating building decks since biblical times. And so that was very common. But when they got around to doing other things where they needed smaller measurements they would do kind of what looked like the sobriety test and they would put their toe and heel, toe and heel. The toe and heel is called the bema. Bema is you're taking just one foot, you're measuring off a foot. Okay, that's literally what the word bema means but it was morphed into the usage meaning that there was a place where something would be a step up from the rest. Now we build platforms like this one here or you guys built it for us so that we could have something as it relates to visual sight. Okay. But in a Greco-Roman world this is not the concept. It's just that we have to get this up so that when people sit out there they can see. When you went before a magistrate who was going to adjudicate something or make a decision, or you had to answer to someone, you're going to be right there. Of course you're going to be able to see. We could be on level ground but we're not going to be on level ground. You need to step up from him because you're going to sit there as someone who's going to be over him. Now it didn't mean it was just a foot off the



ground, 12 inches. But what it did mean is this guy outranks you and he has authority over you. So that's the concept of the bema.

Now, when you think about standing before someone who's going to judge you, and though the word "bema" here is translated "judgment," the idea is not the kind of judgment that you get when someone pulls down the gavel and says, off to hell you go. This is not the judgment of the Lake of Fire, judged for your deeds and you get judgment. Second Thessalonians Chapter 1, Revelation Chapter 20, that's not what we're talking about. We are talking though about what it says here "that each one may receive what is due for what he's done in the body, whether good or evil." Now, he's already written, just like the first eight verses, they assume the knowledge of First Corinthians Chapter 15. This little verse right here assumes the knowledge of First Corinthians Chapter 3. This is knowledge he already knows they have. It's like the second chapter in a humanities textbook assumes you read the first chapter. And so we know that he's already told them, this is not about you going to hell, this is not about you being lost. This is about you being evaluated, like he taught the Romans in Romans Chapter 14. If you're going to be a troublemaker in your church, you are just going around criticizing everybody, then you better be careful because you're going to have to stand before Christ and you're going to have to give an account of your life. And he quotes that famous phrase that's quoted over there in Philippians 2. "Every knee shall bow," and "every tongue shall confess." And when he says every, every, he means every. Christians are going to bow before him. He's going to be elevated in authority, and not only is the Great White Throne Judgment given to Christ because he's a human being who has fingernails, toenails, eyelashes, earlobes, he's lived humanity, but also for Christians. They're going to stand before the elevated Christ and Christ is going to judge them. In what sense? Well, First Corinthians 3 talks about it. We'll get there in a second.

But what we need to get ready for is that evaluation. I put it this way. Let's just label the second half. Number two, you need to live this week, this month, today in light of your evaluation. "Live in Light of Your Evaluation," because you as a Christian will be evaluated. If you thought you got out of evaluation then you didn't listen to all the sermons in your childhood church, either that or your pastor, I don't know, wasn't doing his job, dereliction of clergy duty, something's wrong because he should have told you, yes you get out of the Great White Throne, you don't get out at the Bema Seat Judgment. Yes, you get an evaluation to determine where you go to get punished, but you don't get out of evaluation to determine what God does with how you lived your Christian life, what you've done here in this temporal body that you live in, whether good or bad.

Okay. Let me deal first of all with the dudes who are going to come up to me after this church service is over and tell me, "Pastor Mike, I don't care, I'll just be glad that I'm going to be there, man. That's all that matters. I don't need any rewards. I'm just super glad just to be in heaven. It's all I just, I don't even deserve to be there anyway. Don't talk to me about rewards because I don't care. I don't care. Happy to be there. You're telling me I'm not going to hell. That's all I care about." Okay, if that's all you care about, you don't care about as much as you should care about. Christ tells you that you should care about more than that. Matter of fact, this whole passage is here to make you care about more than that. It should make you care



more this week about pleasing him because you know you're going to have to give an evaluation and you're going to have to have some kind of response from him if you care about his honor. His honor is going to come back in measure based on how you did. So you have to start caring about what's going to happen in the next life regarding how you live this one.

Well, what could be better? Well, I will give you this. If you are a Christian, you skip hell. I'll give you that. We'll try to figure out what it means. "Done in the body ... evil," we'll get to that. But it doesn't mean hell. Romans Chapter 8 verse 1, Romans Chapter 5 verse 1. Many passages say there's no hell and there's no purgatory. We dealt with that last time. And you get this body he's been talking about. Isn't that the whole point? I mean, the first three verses were about this resurrection body. Everyone gets that. Every Christian gets that, that's right. So I have a perfect body and I don't go to hell. So far, so good. You're making my point, Pastor Mike. OK, and you get what it says in verse 8, to "be away from the body and at home with the Lord." And then that's the intermediate state. But you're still going to be home with your resurrected body because "the dwelling place of God is with men," Revelation Chapter 21 verse 3. God is going to live among us, and we talked about that last week. The kingdom of God is going to come among us and here's the thing, that's going to be great.

So you have God reigning on the earth, you're in a perfect body and you're not going to hell. I told you so, Pastor Mike, I don't need all that other stuff. What could be better? A lot could be better, and a lot will be better. And if you want to blow off the motivation that Christ is constantly holding out in front of us, then you are a dereliction of duty in your Christian life. You are in sin, let me just put it strongly. If you want to turn your nose up at what Jesus continually says, like, would you please store up for yourselves treasure in heaven? Can you just do this? If you're going to turn your nose up when he says, if you're faithful in a little, I'll put you in charge of a lot. Or if you honor me, I'm going to honor you. Or if you think somehow this is just not appropriate, saying I don't live for the crowns. Really? It's funny. Your whole household was based on telling your kids, if they do this, then you'll do that for them. It's funny that all that foundation in your home was trying to get them to go into the adult world so that if they do enough hard work, whether it's degrees or school or training, then they'll get this grade. It's funny how you live by the sowing and reaping principle in so many areas of your life. It is the same thing. Now you're a boss. How do you give raises at your office? Isn't it meritorious? It's funny how you as a righteous Christian live by this meritorious thing all the time, but you think somehow it's not going to be that way in the next life. Really? Really.

I have a lot of passages to talk about. It's all over the Bible. You are going to be placed in the kingdom, and at least initially, and I don't know beyond that, maybe, maybe not. Maybe there's some moving around in the dominion you exercise after this beginning point. But at the beginning, at least I know with divine certainty, there is going to be a distinction among people based on how they live this life, from the beginning of their Christian life to the end of this Christian life in this temporal body. And you should care about the evaluation. Because you could say, well, this is the Hallmark movie. The credits can go if I had a perfect body with a perfect life, I can be standing in front of a trailer with a chihuahua, and I'm happy. I have it all. No, you don't really have it all you have a lot and I guarantee you have a perfect wife life, perfect body and the relationship is never going to go away. That's good. It's good. But



wouldn't you like the context to be in another place? But Pastor Mike, it sounds pretty crass, it sounds pretty materialistic, it sounds legalistic to me, it sounds like it's all quid pro quo and all about this and that and earning and meritorious and I thought it was about grace. Where's the grace in this? OK. If your doctrine of grace, if you're so allergic to the concept of everything Jesus taught about getting rewards for your service that I'm telling you you've blurred something about justification and sanctification that you've have to take back. You have to distinguish what God distinguishes.

I'm absolutely, absolutely 100% about the monergism of justification. But you have to look at the synergism, and by that I mean that you are working and God is responding to that work with reward. That is all over the Scriptures. Let me give you one example. We'll go to Luke 14. I'll give you more than that but let's just start there. Luke Chapter 14, Luke Chapter 14 verse 12. This one hit this week because I thought about just all the levels in which we need to think this through. Did I preach like I was angry with you? I'm not mad at you. I am mad at the guy who didn't come to church who I'm thinking about this week. Martin Luther said his best preaching was done when he was angry, so I was angry but not at you. I wasn't angry at you. I'm just angry at people who just blow this off. And I'm zealous at least for the honor of God who gives so much ink in his Word to this and people act like it's optional. It is not optional for you to prepare for your evaluation and care about what's coming back to you. You have to care about what's coming back to you. You should care.

You would be offended at your children if you said to them, if you do this, I'll do that, and they said, I don't care what you're going to do, right? You just wouldn't, but what if I still do those things? This is the problem. It doesn't work that way. It really does not. You may think you're so pious. You're so pious you don't need Jesus' motivation with rewards. I'm sorry. I'm not buying it for a second. This is his motivation constantly. He goes to this banquet in verse 12. Luke 14:12 and "He said to the man who invited him, 'When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return and you be repaid.'" Now I get the hyperbole of this. I understand, right? It's not like you can't have Thanksgiving with your family because you know Uncle Jim's got a job and might invite you over for coffee next week, but the principles are about to be made. "When you gave a feast," which costs a lot of money, "invite the poor, the crippled, the lame and the blind." And in those days, in particular, they couldn't hold down jobs that are paying a living wage. "And you will be blessed," not by them, "because they cannot repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just." I'm just picking one passage out of so many passages where Jesus says, when you think about how you're going to spend your money, can you not worry about payback in this world? Can you worry about getting paid back in the next world? Because you know what, if you just do this, do this for me. Be as generous and selfless as I was and I will pay you back.

I mean, isn't that really what you wanted when you were raising your kids to say, if you do this, I'll do this for you, because that principle of living will get you into adult life when I'm not giving you an allowance anymore, and it will provide for something even greater for you. Well, that's the same thing as it relates to spiritual things. Only it's not about storing up treasure on earth where moth can eat it up and rust can destroy it and thieves can steal it. It's about



investing beyond the horizon. It's all about things like the use of your money. Or go to Colossians Chapter 3 verse 22, Colossians 3:22, "Bondservants, obey in everything," at work when your masters whatever they're doing your with them, "not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord." Now the first part of that I'm thinking that's a pretty good employee or bondservant in the Greco-Roman world. If you please your earthly masters in all that they ask and every time they look at you think I'm pleased with that person and the person is pleased. That's good! I don't know, if they're going to get a good review every year. But you're supposed to go beyond that with "sincerity of heart, fearing," not your boss but, "the Lord. Whatever you do," verse 23, "work heartedly, as for the Lord and not for men." Shoot higher, aim higher, "knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You're serving the Lord Christ. For the wrongdoers will be paid back for the wrong he's done." What? Just in some kind of wholesale way, in an indiscriminate way. No, specifically, "there is no partiality." Well, it is the same way for you. Your payback at work this week, how you work this week, God's keeping a log on your work and how you were.

Matthew 10, it goes all the way down to little things. Matthew 10:42, "Whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he's a disciple, truly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward." That concept of losing reward, like in Second John verse 8, these phrases are about you will get a reward. It's stated in the inverse. You can't give a bottle of Kirkland water to someone and say here, this is a brother in Christ, I want to bless them with it. And, it's as though Christ is up there taking notes on what you just did. I'm going to pay him back for that, man. I'm going to pay him back. Christ can't wait to honor those who honor him. And you live by that even in your temporal sanctification. You teach people the very words of Galatians 6. If you sow to the flesh, you'll reap from the flesh corruption. And you also then quote that but if you "sow to the Spirit you will reap from the Spirit eternal life." There's some kind of comeback in the next life.

First Corinthians Chapter 4 verse 5, "Don't pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart." Now Paul made it a practice to give people an affirmation. He judges their work in Chapter 16 of this very same book and he says if they've done good you better praise them, just like the Proverbs say, Proverbs Chapter 31, "A woman who fears the Lord is to be praised." So praise people for what they do, acknowledge them and give them their due, and that's an act of judgment. But he's saying, you can't go all the way because you don't know their motives. But one day, God's going to reveal their motives, and it says he'll "bring to light the things hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation." The commendation comes with a reward. God will then honor them. Commendation from God. So I'm all about giving people accolades, giving them a reward, giving them a raise, give them whatever, that's good and you should. But I really can't give them the full extent of what they've earned because only God knows that.

I mean, God's looking at this sermon let's just say. I'm preaching this sermon. You don't know my motives. You don't know my motives when I say stuff that you think I wish he wouldn't have said that. God knows my motives. Now sometimes I say stuff that can't be redeemed by



a good motive but sometimes I say things that God says I know he went over the line, but his motive, that's why he's zealous for my honor. Or when I just said something, whatever, it's just neutral. But God's saying, I know what he's doing. I know why he even leaned into this sermon. I could have studied a lot this week for myself. Or just so that someone in the lobby doesn't just win an argument with me because I'm full of myself. Or God's going to say, well, here's how I'm going to reward Pastor Mike for doing what he did in the pulpit that week. God is going to reward. You honor him, he'll honor you. All the way down to the motives of your heart. And all of that's being stored up. Or it's not. Back to our passage. It says, "What is due ... in the body," in this life, "whether good or evil."

First Corinthians Chapter 3, I'll close with this. First Corinthians Chapter 3. It's the only place I have to go that I know is already under the belt of the Corinthians in understanding this concept of evil. Say evil. If I do something that is not good, it's wrong, it's evil, as a Christian, in my Christian life, I know this, I'm going to get kicked around by the Holy Spirit, because he's really good at conviction of his children. But I've been taught in every other chapter of the New Testament that my sin has been pinned to the cross, paid for, paid in full. Or I could go back to the Old Testament. When God forgives sins, how does he do it? He separated me from my sins as far as the East is from the West. Psalm 103, that's a great truth. And I'm banking on that. There's no condemnation for Christ. Oh, praise God, the great relief of forgiveness. Then how in the world is there any kind of concern about doing wrong, right? That in essence, as we'll see in this passage, is the fact that I didn't do right. And when you don't do right it's called falling short, it's called wrong. It's not right, it's the sin of omission. And it can come in varying degrees.

This passage, confessedly, starting in verse 9, is about Paul's work to the Corinthian Church. "For we are," this is First Corinthians 3 verse 9, "we are God's fellow workers. You are God's field, God's building." Now, this is about the corporate Church and his work in it. Drop down to verse 16 to prove it. "Do you not know that you are God's temple and God's Spirit dwells in you?" And you see the footnote there in the English Standard Version after the word "you," the second "you" in verse 16, and it's got the fact that this is a plural second person pronoun because in formal English at least, unless you're in the South, it doesn't differentiate between singular "you" and plural "you." Now you've learned in Sunday school that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit and you're right because elsewhere he says that coming up later in this book in First Corinthians. But here he's talking about the Church itself as a building or a temple. And the Holy Spirit dwells corporately there within that Church. And he starts by saying, you know what? I and Sōsthēnēs, we are here working among you. And he says, "According to the grace," verse 10, "of God given to me," an apostle, "like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation." You can read about it in the book of Acts. I came in, I shared the gospel. Now I left because I'm a missionary, a traveling missionary. "Someone else is building on it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it."

So the analogy is based on him coming to a city, starting a church, founding the church by sharing the proper biblical gospel, then going on to the next city and people having to come on in after him and teach that. We have some people there who we know about even in the book of Acts who start to take leadership responsibilities. By the time we get to Second



Corinthians we know there are a lot of people who have swooped in and led in really bad ways. So this is a warning. Be careful how you do that. Then he says, "For no one can lay a foundation," verse 11, "other than that which is laid, which is Christ Jesus," which he's going to boast about, saying, you know what, I'm the only one who could have started your Christian life if I was the evangelist in your life. And in a sense, you may have many mentors, but only one father in the sense that I led you guys to Christ. "Now if anyone," verse 12, "builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it'll be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done."

Now, confessedly, this is about the people who are investing in the church and it's a leadership statement, which doesn't just mean that they're the senior preachers. I mean, it can be the disciples, it can be the small group leaders, whatever. It's people who are investing in trying to speak New Testament truth in this church before even the New Testament was fully codified. So, I get that. But does the principle come all the way down to us? There was not a Corinthian who read this, or had it read to them, who wasn't thinking, ooh, gulp, that applies to me too, because I'm a father teaching my children, I'm participant trying to encourage other Christians, or I'm just thinking about how I live my Christian life, because this applies to me. So I'm just at least acknowledging the original context, but the principle, we can't wiggle our way out from it, as long as I'm talking about wrestling.

OK. Verse 13 says, so I have good things and then not good things. I have "gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw." But there's this thing, capital "D," that's an English convention, but there is a day, because it has a definite article in front of it, "the Day will disclose it." What day is that? That's the Day I'm going to stand before God. The Bema Seat of Christ, the judgment seat of Christ, and "it'll be revealed by fire." Now, when you start having your Catholic uncle say right there's purgatory, baby, you're going to get burned. You're going to suffer for a long time in this place called purgatory. Please just know this: when you do a good deed a diamond doesn't drop from your armpit, it doesn't happen. When you do a bad deed it doesn't leave a 2x4 on the sofa. That doesn't happen. This is an analogy. There's no burning of your body in the afterlife or the intermediate state. It's not going to happen. Just like the deeds themselves are not material. This is an analogy that if you had a big pile up here of 2x4s and hay and leaves and branches, and then you had within it bars of gold and silver and some gems, if you wanted to separate those two, I guess you could take a torch to it and torch it and we'd be able to see at the end of that what was imperishable and what was perishable. And just like in Revelation Chapter 1 when John has this appearance of Christ, Christ's eyes are like fire. So in that sense, we have this picture of Christ. Now, you stand before Christ, it's reminiscent of Hebrews 4:13 that's everything is laid naked before God and one day you're going to die and then comes the judgment. You're going to be seen in evaluation by Christ and what's left here are the good things.

Well, what about the bad things? Verse 14, "If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. Well that's what we've been talking about. Verse 15, "If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire." In other words, he's done some things that aren't good, aren't right.



They're burned up. Why? Well, they were burned up on the cross, not in purgatory, but "he will suffer loss." I thought there was no suffering. Well, you are going to suffer. What kind of suffering? The suffering of loss. Well, that's not much suffering. Well, it's some suffering. I had some of that suffering this week. Now, I'm not a financial guy. Don't come to me for financial advice, and this is not financial advice. But you did see what Bitcoin did this week, didn't you? It hit an all-time high. Some of you geeks saw that happen. No? Nobody. OK. Let me take a different illustration then. What illustration should I use? No, Bitcoin. Bitcoin hit an all-time high. Way back in the day... No one's with me anymore on this? Some of you..., show me really. I don't do interactive stuff. Some of your own Bitcoin, don't you? You're the one smiling right now.

Back in the day, I bought some Bitcoin only because some people in this church, this church (audience laughing) were saying, oh yeah, there's some Bitcoin. Whatever, right? The kids had moved out, it was fine, whatever. I could put a little money into this Bitcoin. Every time I've bet on anything, trust me. I remember selling a condo once, taking somebody's advice, invested it in the stock market. Just don't follow any of my investment advice. Do not. It always tanks, it's always terrible. So I put some money in this and when I did now I started paying attention to the podcasts and the stock market. And I hear ups and downs, ups and downs, of course just like it always is, it starts to go down immediately. Well, okay, whatever. But I forgot about it. I had the app, I had some money in it, whatever, forgot about and I'd hear people say well I know it's down, but you know what you should do is put 50 bucks every paycheck or if you can afford maybe 100 bucks every paycheck, at least put a hundred bucks a month and just don't worry about it going on, but just keep doing that. Well, I did this a long time ago. Well, this week when I heard the news it hit an all-time high, guess what I did? I tried to pull up my app, tried to find the password, I finally found it and I opened up the app. Woo! I was pretty excited.

Now, I'm not going to buy a new house or a new car or anything, but I was pretty excited. And I thought that was great. That's great. I started thinking about taxes and a lot of other things, but I thought, that's pretty great. And then I instantly started to "suffer loss" because I can do math, a little bit. And I started thinking about when I got this, and if I had just started at that date putting 50 bucks a paycheck into my stupid app, how much money... Let me just put it this way, we wouldn't be meeting in the parking lot under tents right now (audience laughing) had I done every week what I had been told to do. I definitely would get out right now because I would be styling right now. Now here's the thing, it's an illustration. I don't care. At the end of the day, ultimately I really don't care because I can't take any Bitcoin with me and in the end, Jesus warned me, don't worry about the stuff that can go away. But what I should care about is the stuff that can endure, the stuff where thieves can't break in and steal it and nothing can happen to this investment. It is absolutely secure, protected, as Peter put it, by the power of God, "reserved in heaven for me."

Now, here's the thing. If you spend time doing stuff that you know you shouldn't do, all you're going to do, all you going to do is miss out on investing, and you're going to get to the end of your life and you're going to say, I know I should've shared my faith, I was too busy doing this, that, and the other, and the guilt of this led me to that, and then I didn't do this. And I couldn't



even pick up my Bible because of this, and I didn't lead here when I should have, and you will get to the end of your life and all you're going to do is pull out your spiritual calculator and say, you know, it would have been a whole different story walking through the gates of the kingdom had I just done what the preachers and my disciplers were telling me to do from the beginning, and I did not do it. And you will suffer loss. And look me up, please look me up 100 years from now, and see if there's not one of us who is not going to suffer some kind of loss on that day. And the only way to prevent that is like every week, how about every morning, to wake up and say, I know what the fruit of light consists in, and now today I'm going to wake and discern what is pleasing to the Lord. Because if I can honor the Lord with those things, not only is that the highest achievement of all, honoring the Lord, but he's going to honor me. And one day that's going to matter. If you think it doesn't matter, you're wrong. It's going to matter. And you need to know, I mean from Chrysostom and Origen all the way through Ryle and Edwards and all the rest, everyone's been preaching this and teaching this until lately when it's kind of fallen out of favor it seems and it's time for us to get back to what the Bible teaches. Don't let your theology make you read the Bible wrong. It matters.

Now anytime I teach about good deeds and press you on that and you go out of here going I have to do good, I'm all about that as long as you don't misunderstand the fundamental thing. On this side: justification. There's not a single good work that'll get you out of the slavery to sin. Not your good work, at least. There was a good work hence the death of Christ on the cross that cancels your sin is the life of Christ that fulfilled all righteousness. So please do not confuse justification with sanctification. You are saved not by any work that you do. Will you be rewarded for good works? Absolutely. And if you are afraid of that because you think I'm going to be jealous, you will not be jealous. There's a little book out on envy you should read sometime. You will not be envious in the kingdom.

The hierarchy of angels... is there a hierarchy of angels? There are archangels, there are seraphim, there are cherubim, there are low-ranking angels and you know what? None of them are complaining about it and no one's jealous, no one is envious, no one covets. There's not going to be any of that in the kingdom. But what we should care about now is honoring the Lord enough for him to start honoring us. What we're doing now is knowing our entrance into this whole thing, man, we can't do anything about that. We're trusting the Lord Jesus Christ, not only to empower us to live for him this week, but we got in this thing because he did it all. You brought nothing to the equation for your salvation but your sin. He has brought it all. He lived in your place, he died in your place, he rose again to vindicate the fact that he has done exactly what he said he would do, present himself as the sacrifice that is adequate for our sin. It's finished, 100% included. But don't leave here saying, well, that's all that matters. No. It's the main thing that matters for sure. But God wants you to get up from your knees of thanksgiving and say, you know what? Let's live for him this week.

God, we do want to say with all sincere faith we trust you. We know you have not just given us a philosophy to live by, a theology to believe, but you spent your life fulfilling the righteous deeds that we need to be acceptable. And you did them so that they could be imputed, credited to us. Then you died because we're sinners, because our sin needed payment. God we trust you did that for the honor of your Father and for the good of our future and it was an



ugly reality but we accept it by faith. We want to be living in light of the fact that our life comes from the death of Christ. God, we're so thankful that we're speaking now to a living Christ. We want to live for you today. I'd like to live for you this week. As hard as it is in this fallen world, give us renewed strength, give us joy, let us have a synergy with each other, helping each other and encouraging each other and spurring each other on to love and good deeds. Let us always look beyond the horizon of this life and say we do look forward to the good things that you've planned. We want to hold firmly to our hope because you're the keeper of your promises. There's increased joy and there's increased fulfillment. As Jonathan Edwards used to say, it may be that we'll all be full, but there's certainly a capacity that's distinct. Some capacities of saints will be huge. A huge experience of a kind of joy that's so distinctive from others. And certainly, responsibility is obvious throughout the Scriptures. With that responsibility, we'll become distinguished, distinguished reputations, and things that will bring great glory to you. God, we're thankful for your Word on this, and I pray that everyone here will be a good Berean. Dig deeply into your Word to see what is being said on this very important topic. We continue to seek your will, and discern it day by day.

In Jesus' name. Amen.