



Ambitious Faith-Part 5
Believing All of God's Promises About the Future
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Well I doubt you disagree that we live in a society that bombards us with warning labels, and cautionary notices, and security alerts, we see them all the time whether its not leaving a bag unattended, or avoiding trans-fats, and cholesterol, its everywhere. And you add to that all the warning labels that are brought on by the endless parade of lawsuits, we are surrounded by people even telling us that your coffee is hot, or that a toasted pop tart might burn your mouth. Maybe I revealed too much with that example there. There's an organization in Michigan that gives awards every year to the wackiest warning labels. I thought you might want to hear some of this years winners. One of them was on a 5 inch fishing lure with three steel hooks; you got that pictured in your mind? Comes with a warning label; warning harmful if swallowed. That's the point I think but... Compact disc holders, you know you buy those things put them next to your TV, they've got all those little plastic slats you put your CD cases in them, right? Caution, do not use as a ladder. These are real; I'm not making these up. I guess they're thinking people want to change a light bulb, see that compact disc holder, thinking about putting their toes in between those little tiny plastic slots, don't do that. Child scooters, this is a real label, it says; caution this product moves when used. Good idea. This year's top winner, you can look it up on the internet, the one that won the award this year, this is the actual label on a bottle of drain cleaner. And it reads; if you do not understand or cannot read these directions, cautions, and warnings, do not use this product. So if you cant read, and your half way through that sentence and realize you cant read, caution, don't use the product. With all these silly warning labels that really are ubiquitous, they surround us today, its easy for us to kind of slough these off, and we just don't take them as seriously as we used to take a warning label. And that's understandable, but not always a good thing. Sometimes warnings are important, and they should be heeded. Just ask the Governor of New Jersey, have you read about him? He's now on TV everyday in New Jersey on a public service announcement telling people that they need to buckle up when they drive. And if you know his story, he's giving that announcement as he leans on two orthopedic crutches because he was just recently in a near fatal car accident. Now its not that he didn't know about the admonitions to slow down and buckle up, and his state is doing that, his office had spent all kinds of money telling people to slow down and buckle up. The problem with Governor Corzine is that he didn't heed those warnings, and he was traveling over 90 miles per hour the police said, without a seatbelt, as his SUV tumbled off the highway. He broke eighteen bones, he was in really bad shape, they didn't think he was going to live, he barely pulled through. And on his public service announcement he now says, and this is the understatement of the year, not heeding those warnings was a really big mistake. And that's certainly true, his body will never be the same. I suppose like Governor Corzine, our real challenge is to sort through all the warnings in life and figure out which ones are most important. Because we want to, at the end of our life, not look back and say, wow that was a really big mistake that I didn't heed that warning. Now I know you don't like to look at it this way, or several people don't, but if you really read the Bible from beginning to end, what you'll discover, if you really give it an appraisal is that it starts to read like one big warning label. Have you noticed that? I mean it really is about giving us the instructions to take precautions so that we can avoid an impending danger. That's really what the Bible is all about. The Bible is trying to tell us



there's danger ahead, there's a problem. And you need to take precautions so that you don't incur the damage and danger that is spelled out in the pages of scripture. If the Gospel is a caution to take precautions, then I think it makes sense that if we're going to do that, its going to require this virtue that the Bible talks so much about, its going to involve the virtue of faith. We're going to need to trust or have confidence in the one that is giving us the warning, we're going to have to believe that the warning is true, we're going to have to think the impending danger is worth avoiding, and we're going to have to trust him enough to take the precautions that the one who's giving us the warning is instructing us to take. Now that's really what the Bible is all about, and a very big part of what it means to put our trust in God. So as we study faith, and the writer of Hebrews and Hebrews 11 tries to illustrate it for us, it is absolutely no surprise at all that this man that we encounter this morning in verse number 7, is on the list. As a matter of fact, if you know anything about this man, he really is the prototypical, he is the foundational example of what it means to heed the warning of God. His name is Noah, and if you have your Bible I want you to look at it. Hebrews chapter 11 in verse number 7. This is a critical example for us. If for nothing else, to learn from Noah, that it's a good idea when God gives us a warning to heed the warning and to respond to it. And because Noah did, he not only saved himself, but all of mankind as we know it. Now I know this is a hard message for us, and it will be a hard message for us because it will, if you get past the veneer of chapter 11 verse 7, or the veneer of Genesis 6, 7, and 8, because we'll come to realize that Noah is not just a cute motif for our baby's nursery. Its not about a cute caricature of a man who likes animals and boats, that's not what its about. As a matter of fact, it's a very sobering account of what God is saying to a man who is one of the last in a long line, in Genesis chapter 5, of people that we're willing to be godly. From Seth on, men that walked with God, like Enoch, and there wasn't many of them left, and you know the story, we read part of it last week as we studied the life of Enoch, that God was very grieved that he had made mankind, the place had gotten out of control. So he comes on the scene with some really bad news. The bad news comes in the form of a warning. Look at verse number 7 of Hebrews chapter 11; by faith, and that's what its going to take, if you're going to heed a warning, you better believe it, you'd better trust the one who's giving you the warning. By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, they'd never seen a flood, let alone the destruction of the world, they hadn't experience that, life had just gone on since creation. But because he heeded the warning and trusted the one that gave him the warning, and believed the warning was true, in holy fear, that's and important phrase, we've looked at the concept of fear in Hebrews already. Its an unpleasant feeling, its not a good feeling, not a feeling you want to carry around at a party, its an uncomfortable feeling. But in holy fear, the Bible says, he built an ark to save his family. By faith, he condemned the world, that isn't what he set out to do, he wasn't out there trying to say I'm going to condemn everybody. But in his building of the ark, and the New Testament says, in preaching to them about the opportunity to get on the ark, unfortunately as you know, not many people responded, they just sealed their own condemnation. And by that faith, and by building the ark, and preaching about what he was doing, he unfortunately condemned the world. But because of his faith, look at this, he became the heir of the righteousness that comes by faith. That bridges for us the Old Testament account of Noah and the New Testament call of the Gospel. Right there, because its really not about biological salvation, this right here makes it clear that really what its about from a New Testament perspective, for all of us, is not just being biologically spared from some impending disaster, its all about this righteousness that we need to stand before a holy God. And speaking of holiness, that is what

prompted the warning from God in Genesis 6, and like we do every week, when we look at these Old Testament examples, it would be good to go to the source in Genesis chapter 6, and read a little bit about what was going on in his day. So turn back to the first book of the Bible with me and let's go to the historic context of the life of Noah, and see what the warning was all about, and why God's holiness played into this. What is this all about, what's the problem? Genesis chapter 6. We read part of this narrative last week, so let's drop down to a part we didn't read last week, verse number 11. God restates the problem here. Now the earth was corrupt. What does corrupt mean? Wasn't what it was supposed to be, it was offline, it was out of kilter, it wasn't how God designed it to go, it was messed up, the world was messed up, it was corrupt in God's sight. Now that's important because to them it wasn't messed up, they kind of liked the world the way it was. But because God is holy, he looked at the world and said, that's not what I planned, that's not what I said to do, that's not how I told you to live, that's not the way to do it. And because of God's holiness, he looks at it, he can't see anything but corruption here on earth, and in his sight the world was filled with violence. Because when you live a life without God's directives or his patterns, or his template, you eventually get around to that. So we can turn on the TV tonight, we can watch on whatever channel you choose at around 10 or 11 o'clock and see the world filled with violence. Whether it's some nation fighting with another nation or whether it's some guy in New York beating up on an old lady, or whether it's some armed robbery on Wilshire Blvd., whatever it is, we're going to see the world filled with violence because people aren't living according to God's standards. Their not holy, and that's the net result. God saw, verse 12, how corrupt the earth had become for all the people of the earth had corrupted their ways, it starts in small ways, by the way. So God said to Noah, here comes the warning, underline it; I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them, that is the people, and the earth. Now remember, the earth as we said the anti-deluvian world, before the flood was a really great place to live. It was very conducive to biological life, that's why people were living 6, 7, 8, 900 years, because this was a great place to live. The world as we know it was destroyed, we live in a very different world than the anti-deluvian or pre-flood world. And it was going to be destroyed, it was going to be forever wrecked, and he was going to limit the life span because of that wrecked environment down to 100 or 120 the Bible said that was going to be the max from then on. But the point was, it is not going to continue because I, as a holy God, adjust God, as the scripture says, the foundations of my throne are justice and faithfulness, and if I'm faithful to myself, justice is the foundation of what I am, I cannot just wink and I just cannot let it go. I've got to correct it, there's got to be an end to this. New Testament verbiage, the wages of sin is death. And that's not just physical death, that's standing before a holy God and being accountable for our lives, we have to give an account, there will be a day of reckoning. The day of judgment for Noah here, was the flood, and its going to come. So he says, and if you think he's just a mean God and he's all about destroying people, that's what verse 14 helps us to balance out our view of God, he says, there's going to be a way out here. Its going to be a big floating barge called an ark, an ark of cypress wood. Make rooms in it and coat it with pitch inside and out, it better be water tight, its going to be a big boat, he gives the dimensions here, its over 450 feet long, which is just about the max of building a wooden vessel, if you study these things. And its 75 feet wide, and its 3 stories, according to the biblical picture here, 45 feet tall, it is a gigantic barge. And a lot of people go, well I don't believe the story, the whole thing of Noah and the animals, and how could he get all the animals on the ark. If you really



study how big this thing was, which by the way was an equivalent, just by the dimensions I gave you, of about 522 railroad cars. That's a lot of cargo. And not counting sub-species but just species on earth, even with factoring in extinctions through the years, you don't ask the question, how did Noah have all the room for the animals. What you should be asking is what did he do with all the excess room? Because there's all kinds of room for that. You can do the math, lot's of people have, look it up, sketch it out, you engineers, there's lots of space. Not only for the animals, but for people if they chose to come. And you also had to feed them, so you had a lot of vegetation you had to bring on board. Big boat. Ark means box, it was just a big box, a big barge, it wasn't meant for sailing, it was just meant for floating. And God said, here's my grace, people don't have to die, you don't have to die, your family doesn't have to die, you don't have to be judged, you can enter the ark and be safe. This is the good news of salvation in Noah's ears. The bad news is what made the good news good, did you catch that? The problem today is, we don't understand a God, we don't picture a God anymore, who has any bad news for us. Its all about good news, and because its all about good news, we have to twist the good news, and create a good news that kind of makes sense to us because we've taken the God of the Bible and we've changed him into a God who has no bad news for mankind. Because we don't like that kind of God. We just like the fat see through God on his rocking chair in heaven stroking his beard, looking at his creation, patting them on the head, oh they're a little rebellious from time to time, oh boys will be boys, oh look at them acting up, I know they don't mean it, I really love them all. That's not the God of the Bible. The God of the Bible says I cannot strive with man any longer; he must come to a place of recompense, retribution, and judgment. Because the foundation of my throne is justice. Now am I loving? Absolutely, let me just show you how loving I am, you don't have to go through my punishment. You can enter the place that I have provided for you, a safe spot, a spot for you to come and not incur the judgement of God. Does that sound like New Testament theology? That's what its all about. Its about the fact that God says about this world, there's some bad news guys. Though wages of sin in still death, there will be a day of reckoning for all of you. And because of that, you've got to recognize that the good news of the Gospel is the good news of being saved, not from loneliness or broken heartedness, or purposelessness, or my inner child of my past is crying and he needs help, or I need to get in touch with my feminine side, or please heal my spirit, its not about that. It's about being saved, here's what the Bible says, from the wrath that is to come. Are you tracking with that? That's what the Bible says salvation is all about. Now that's not a message people are used to hearing, because we like to take God and pull the bad news out of it. But when it came to Noah, he never would have built the ark had he only believed in a God who just had good news for him. You and I, if we're going to be like Noah, number 1 on your outline; we have to accept or embrace both the good news and the bad. We've got to accept both the good and bad news. There's two parts to this. As a matter of fact, the good news is it really all that good if there's not bad news this good news saves us from. That's the message of salvation. And people don't get it today. I've quoted this before, but on a survey done by a mission sending organization of evangelicals that want to go out and "save" people, they were asked the question on their application, what are we saving people from? And I think the stat was around 80% when they answered the question could not say anything about the judgment, accountability, or wrath of God. It's all about this new kind of evangelicalism that's a salvation from loneliness, or a salvation from hurt, or salvation from some kind of purposelessness, that's not the Christian life. The Christian life is all about getting in the spiritual ark called salvation, so you don't have to face a holy God on



judgment day. That's what it's about. It's about being saved from the wrath that we deserve as sinful people. Today. And if you say well, one of the reasons we struggle with all of this, in our world we just don't believe in God, we don't believe in the afterlife. Phooey, that's not true. Over 90% of the people in our country believe in God. Over 81% believe in an afterlife, that they will somehow exist after this life. But you know how many of them are worried, and here's the word in the survey, that they **may** have an unpleasant experience in the afterlife, do you know how many people fall into that category? How many people think they may have an unpleasant experience in the afterlife? Less than 1% in our country. So most people say, well, I believe in God, okay. I believe in an afterlife, I just don't believe that God would have any bad things happen in the afterlife, certainly not to me, because God is so loving, and so kind, and so accepting. I'm all into the fact that God is so loving, and so kind, and so accepting. It's just that what he is saying to us is that if you want to experience his love, if you want to embrace his acceptance, if you want to be in a place where you experience his grace, what you need to do is to step onto the ark, so to speak, so that you don't incur the wrath of God. And if you want to take that out of it you just change God. That's called idolatry. As the old adage says, God made man in his own image, and man returned the favor. You tracking with that? I mean we're doing it all the time. We think God is just like us. Let me show you one example of that. Turn to Psalm 50. Let me show you that even today we've got to get in touch with the reality that God will hold people accountable for their sin, not according to my standard, but according to his standard. And my standard and God's standard are two different things. Because you know the people I'm willing to condemn, people that are worse than me, right? I've got no problem at 11 o'clock, watching the news and going, that guy's bad, oh that guy needs to be torched, that guy's in real trouble when he dies. I just don't want to turn the mirror on myself. Those are people I can look at and say, well, they're really bad, I'm not that bad. Here's one example from scripture. Psalm 50, in verse number 19, because I think we can all qualify for these next two verses. Are you ready? You use your mouth for evil, and you harness your tongue to deceit. Who can't in this room say, that I have at some time in my life, probably in the last month, maybe in the last hour, I don't know, I've used my mouth to say bad things, or I've deceived someone with my tongue. And who can't say this in verse 20? That you haven't spoken against your brother? And here's a group of people, they're doing it all the time. They are speaking against their brother; they're slandering their own mother's son. These things you have done, God says, and I kept silent. Here is this period where God creates mankind, he lets them live, and though they're living in sin, he does not immediately judge them or call them to account. And in that period of silence, men start to think well, I guess it's not a big deal, because God is not zapping us with some divine bug light, I'm still here, God seems to like me, I'm still getting a paycheck, my kids seem to be growing up ok, I must be ok with God. And we think this, underline this in your Bibles, if you don't ever write in your Bibles, today is a good day to start, okay? Take your pen and underline these next words.... You thought, this is God speaking, that I was altogether like you. Underline that. God says to us that when we think we can get away with sin, he says, you must have thought that I, the God of heaven, the Holy one, was a lot like you. You thought I had the same values as you. You thought I was altogether like you. That's a rhetorical statement, is God like you? No, not even close. The things that you and I wink at and say, well it must not be a big deal, we now forecast, we throw that out, we project that image, and we think, God must be like that. God is not like that. God is deeply offended by sin. He's got to be, he's holy. And nothing that is unholy can ever be approved by God. Nothing that is deviant in any way can



be embraced by God. That's the problem God has, he looks at the earth and he sees sinful people like you and like me and he says, there's got to be a day of reckoning for that, there has to be punishment for sin, there must be retribution. And if God does not retribute sin, he's not a good God. Just like if in the county courts, someone does not punish sin that's there on the books, if there's not some accountability for injustice or law breaking, we'd say that judge is not a good judge. Our judge is not a good judge if he does not punish sin. And he says even when you say things that are bad, when you slander your brother, that's sinful, it needs to be punished. That's the bad news, and we don't like the bad news. We'd like to think God isn't like that. And you can think that God is not like that, but this is the only God that we have, that we know anything about, based on the pages of his revelation, this is the God of the Bible. And as I share the gospel with people, I remember talking to my hair cutter, not my current one, but my old one, and I said, this is the God of the Bible and you've got to repent and this is important. And he says, if that's what God is like, I don't like that kind of God. I'm not into that kind of God. And my response to him that day was, that's the only kind of God that there is. And I recognize that that's not how people think. As a matter of fact, keep reading in our passage. He says, when you said I was altogether like you, that's not true, I will rebuke you and accuse you to your face, that's what God says. For what? For sin. Verse 22; consider this, you who forget God, now that's what I was saying to my hair cutter, you've forgotten the real God. Problem is, in his mind, he thinks God is like him. Therefore, he's not forgetting God entirely, he's still likes the concept of God, he's just forgotten the real God. He says, consider this you who forget God, the real God, or I will tear you to pieces, and there will be none to rescue. Boy that's harsh, I don't like that. Ethel, this must be a hell, fire and brimstone church, I don't like this sermon. Number one, I didn't write it, okay? I'm just here talking about it. Number two, keep reading; the great news of God's grace is only realized when we understand that our sin deserves what we just read. But the good news is, those who come to God, verse 23, and were willing to make the God connection and see God, and thank him for the grace he does give us, and the patience and the mercy that he does give us, the one who does that honors God. And he prepares the way, God says, so that I may show him the salvation of God. Because who's not guilty of verse 19 and 20? We all are, including the guy writing the Psalm. And he says this, you know what? If I can just respond to God as he told me to, God will show me his salvation. Salvation from what? Verse number 21; a rebuke to the face. Verse 22; being torn into pieces by the holy justice of God. Now that's the truth of the Bible. Well you know what, I just really know where we're at right now, we're on the left side of the Bible, bub, and that's Old Testament and stuff. Great, I'm glad you said that. 2 Peter chapter 3. Lets turn to the New Testament. Its not only the New Testament, its at the end of the New Testament. This is really New Testament. 2 Peter, and if your not turning to any other passage, now would be a good time. Right under the seat there in front of you there's a Bible, open it up, get it out, turn to the book of Revelation, turn back, there it is, 2 Peter, I know you can do it. 2 Peter 3 verse 3; first of all, you must understand that in the last days, scoffers will come, they'll come scoffing and following their own evil desires. The reason people think there's no accountability for sin, is that they don't want to think there's a future accountability for sin. They might like to think about the after life, which is a promise God made about the future. But they don't like to think about the promises of retribution in the afterlife, they don't like to think about judgment in the afterlife, they don't like those promises, they like to pick and choose their promises. So when it comes to preaching hell about God and punishment and hell, fire, and brimstone, if you start rebelling against that, those are symptoms of



a problem, and the problem according to verse 3 is that we're probably following after our own evil desires. We don't want to believe in retribution or accountability, because I'm kind of living my life my own way and I kind of like it like that, so can we forget about the judgment part? They will say stuff like this, where's this coming, I mean the day of judgment, where is that that he promised ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation. Because when he is silent, what happens? We start to think he's like us. They deliberately forget, and that's according to Romans, we have to suppress the truth in our unrighteousness. We deliberately forget that long ago, by God's word, the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water by water and by these waters also that the world of that time was deluged, what does that mean? Flooded. That's Genesis 6, 7, and 8, and destroyed. By the same word, in other words, God by his authority and his power to do these things, or withhold these things, by the same word, the present heavens and the present earth are reserved, not for water, but for, what's the word? Here's the hell, fire and brimstone, I was worried about that, any church with Bible in the title... talk about hell fire, don't like the hell fire. I understand you don't like it, I don't much care for it either, and if I look like I'm enjoying this, I'm not enjoying it. But the promise of God is, just like I punished the world with a universal flood, and destroyed the people on the earth, I am going to come in judgment on the current earth, but it won't be water this time, it will be fire, that's what the Bible says. The present world as you know it, go home watch the race on TV, watch the golf tournament, watch the news about the big cities and the tall buildings, this whole world is reserved for God's judgment and it won't be a flood, the Bible says it will be an act of God and it will be fire. Keep reading. It's being kept, here's what he calls that, for the Day of Judgment, and the destruction of ungodly men. But do not forget this one thing, dear friends, those of you that think, well, I don't believe that's ever going to happen, with the Lord a day is like 1000 years and 1000 years is like a day. I hate the fact that this has been used as some kind of code for unlocking the end times chart or timeline, this is not what this is. This is simply a statement for those that think, well its been a long time since he promised that, I don't think he's going to come. Because for us, when you made a promise yesterday, it's a big deal. You made a promise last week, well okay, still a big deal. Last month, well its starting to fade. Last year, ten years ago, you don't think much about promises you made thirty years ago. There's not many promises you still concern yourself with that you made thirty years ago. But with God it's not that way. Because 1000 years is like a day, and a day like 1000 years, time is not an issue for God. I know for us, time is like distance to the eye in the physical world, it kind of gets out there, it gets fuzzy, it gets small, I hardly remember it. God makes a promise and he has perfect recall, it's like he made the promise yesterday. And Jesus said that as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. And the point is, Jesus promised, I'm coming back and I'm coming in judgment. I'm coming with the holy angels in heaven to meet out judgment on the world. That's what Jesus promised. Then we're going...hmmm, that was a long time ago, he can't really still be thinking that. And the Bible says, 1000 years later is like a day, day like 1000 years, none of this has escaped his notice, he hasn't forgotten about it. As a matter of fact, he's not slow in keeping his promise, verse 9, as some understand slowness, instead oh this is really really bad stuff isn't it, this is really mean, this is a mean God. No, he's not a mean God, the reason he didn't destroy the world with fire in 300 AD, or 1300 AD, or last week is because he is patient with you. He's not wanting anyone to perish, but he'd like everyone he wants everyone to come to repentance. Will that desire be fulfilled by the way? No, everyone's not coming to repentance. Jesus said this, he said the way is really



narrow and the gate is really small that leads to life, and how many find it? Few are those who find it. But the way is really broad and the gate is really wide that leads to destruction and many are those who enter by it. God's heart is broken just like it was in Genesis 6. He does not want to see people judged, but unless they get in the ark, they're going to be. And they will stand to give an account before their creator. And the Bible says, that's why he's waiting, he doesn't want anybody to perish, he wants all to come to repentance. Verse 10; but the day of the Lord will come, and it's going to come like a thief and the heavens will disappear with a roar and the elements, the very fabric of the universe will be destroyed with fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid there. He's going to split it right open. Now either that's just kind of fancy gobbledy-gook religious kind of persuasion, trying to get you all to be faithful to your wives and your kids to stay off drugs and not have premarital sex and it's all about you trying to pay your....

If that's what it is, okay, then fine, let's just cut it out of the Bible. But if it's true, then I've got to recognize that the entire world as we know it, is one day, and I don't know what day it is, he hasn't revealed it to me, to you, to Jenkins, to LaHaye, Hal Lindsey, nobody knows. But it's coming, and one day he will judge the world with fire. And if that's the case, I'd better in my heart accept that as the reality of the scriptures. If it's a bunch of manipulation, let's quit, let's play golf on Sundays, let's go to omelets, let's have brunch like the rest of the world. But if it's the truth, we'd better come and get connected with it in our minds and recognize this is the gospel truth. God will judge the world one day, and you and I will stand in account to account before a Holy God. Verse 11; since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people might you be? I think we ought to be figuring out how to live holy and godly lives. As we look forward to the day... now why would we do that? And speed its coming... well how would we do that? That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise, we are looking forward to, here's why we look forward to it, a new heaven and a new earth the home of righteousness, where people's paths aren't corrupted, where there is not a world filled with violence that sounds good, I would like to anticipate that, and look forward to that. So then dear friends, since you're looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless and blameless, here's the key, and at peace with him. I don't want to be on God's bad side when he comes back. Because my old pastor said, and it's true, Christ is coming back, and he's real mad. He is going to judge the world. And when he comes back, I want to be on his good side, I want to make sure that I've got it right with God. But first it starts with believing, faith, trusting that the warning is true. And like a lot of us we slough off the warnings now because we are surrounded and bombarded by warnings. Here's one I think that you ought to take heed to, because the Bible says it's the difference between life and death. Verse 15; bear in mind that the Lord's patience means salvation. We ask two questions up in verse 12, okay. Why would I look forward to it? Because there's going to be a new world on the other side of it that's filled with righteousness. And then I said, how can I speed its coming? The answer, middle of verse 15, his patience means salvation. What does that mean? That means there's an opportunity for not only us, but others to come to repentance. So everyday that the judgment of God does not come, he says just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him, he writes the same way in all of his letters, speaking in them of these matters, his letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and the unstable people distort, as they do the other scriptures to their own destruction. Here's the problem right now, we're looking at accepting both the bad news and the good news. You can go to churches all over Orange County,



all over California, all over America, especially America, and find people where you can week after week, never hear this kind of stuff. You want a place that doesn't have hell, fire and brimstone? You can find them, man, they're a dime a dozen. And they will teach you about how to have inner peace, and have financial success, and how to get in touch with your inner child of the past, and you can have all of that week after week, eight steps to mental peace, or whatever they're teaching this weekend, you can have it, week in and week out, and never hear the bad news. The problem is, that's not the message of the Bible. And as long as you feed on that stuff, you've got to know that right here the Bible says, you will distort the truth, and you will do it to your own destruction. You'll never hear the warnings; you'll have the call to Christ to be the kind of get past the loneliness and the hardships, that's not the message. Do you recognize the message of salvation is this; save yourself from this evil generation because the wrath of God is coming on it. That's the message. Smattering of applause, thank you, that's affirming, I appreciate that. But I guarantee you not everybody's clapping, not everybody likes this stuff. Matter of fact, its all about, this is harsh. We just read 2 Peter 3, basically the entire chapter, okay. That's what we read, go home and read it, and try and figure this out without that message that we just underscored. There's some bad news here coming on the world. And the whole message for you and I is to recognize that the warning of scripture, and that's what it says, by faith, Noah, when warned about things unseen, have you ever seen the world completely burned and the elements of the world burned up and everything in this world destroyed, I haven't seen that, have you? It's going to take some faith. And that means we're going to have to believe the God of the Bible who did it once, that he promised he's going to do it again. And I think its going to lead us to what Noah was lead to. Look at your worksheet, Hebrews 11:7; by faith, Noah, when warned about things not seen, in holy fear, and that's an uncomfortable feeling, I recognize that, look what he did, he built an ark. Let's just work on those three words right there. He built an ark. Ark means box, it's a big box, it's a barge, and it's a place for animals. Big ark, that's what he did. He wanted to respond to the warning. It takes faith to believe the one who's warning us that the worlds going to end with fire and the judgment and accountability that God brings. I believe its going to take faith to believe. But its going to take even more faith, its going to take ambitious faith, to say I need to respond to that, I've got to respond. For Noah, because its biological in his day, right there, the pressing urgent concern was the world is going to be biologically destroyed. He here is concerned about building an ark. Well, what am I supposed to do? Go build an ark? Let me show you. Lets turn to 1 Peter chapter 3, what am I supposed to do, how do I get ready? Which, by the way, when you find 1 Peter 3, jot this down in your worksheet, that's the whole point, you and I need to make sure we're prepared. If the real issue for us is not building some kind of bomb shelter or some fallout shelter, that's a different church, you realize right? That's not what we're saying. Preparing for the end is not getting all your evaporated milk, or whatever it is they do in their bomb shelters, batteries in the crank up, radio, got to get ready for the end of the world. That's not what we're talking about. We're not trying to build a bunker, right? What we're trying to do is make sure that on the day of God's judgment, I'm not going to receive any. That's what we need to be ready for. How do we do that? Glad you asked. 1 Peter chapter 3 verse 18; Christ died for sins, once for all. Now wait a minute, he's going to judge sins, that's right, but he also died for sins. Now wait a minute, I thought that was the whole point of the judgment of God. It is. Your sins and mine are going to bring the judgment of God. But the Bible says, he came and poured out his judgment on his own son. That's what the death of Christ was all about. He died for sins. This is 1 Peter 3:18, are you with me?

Once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, I thought no one was righteous? You're right, there is no human being who is righteous, except for God when he took on human form and the God man lived a righteous life. And he not only lived a righteous life, he died the death of the wicked. He died the death of the compromised, or the sinner, the carouser, the adulterer, he died that death. Now how does this work? The problem that I have before God is the same problem that Noah ultimately had, and it wasn't just getting pitch on the ark so he didn't sink. It was all about him acquiring the righteousness of God, because if you read the rest of the story of Noah, you found out, he's not a stellar, righteous guy, right? Do you know the story of Noah? I mean he's got some problems. And one day, at the end of his long life, he's going to have to stand before a Holy God, what does he need? He needs his sins atoned for, and he needs righteousness that's alien to him, that's external to him, applied to his account. He's got the same need that I've got. And the way he's going to get ready for the ultimate judgment of God, is the same way I need to get ready for the ultimate judgment of God. I need to put my trust in the transaction of Christ dying for my sins, and his righteous life being applied to me. And why was all this done? Here's a great phrase, to bring us to God. That was the goal. There's no physical ark to get into, there's no bunker to build, what you and I have to do is to get connected with God. How do we do that? We have to put our trust in the transaction of Christ. We have to be ready to say my sin on his cross, and his righteous life on my bad resume. And we exchange his life for mine. The righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God. He's put to death in the body, made alive in the Spirit through whom he also went, and preached to the spirits in prison. Apparently there was, we don't have a lot of information in the Bible about this, some kind of proclamation that Jesus the victor, brought to those who were in a holding tank, ready to go to ultimate judgment, and at the great white throne they will go into a place of ultimate retribution, but for now, they're in prison so to speak. And Jesus, after his death, goes and proclaims to them that he has won. He heralds the message that sin has been paid for, this is not a second chance after death, this is a proclamation of victory. He does this to the spirits in prison, and that brings the Holy Spirit, in Peter's mind, to those who disobeyed long ago, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, while the ark was being built. It took a long long time to build that big box. And as they were building it, it was nothing but a call for them to get on the ark, and those who refused to, was nothing more than a reminder of their condemnation. And in those days, as God waited patiently, with the sin of mankind, those spirits that are now in prison, Jesus went and proclaimed his victory to them, and then he starts to talk about the whole ark scene. Middle of verse 20; in it, that is the ark, only a few people, eight in all, they were saved through water. And then he says, this water symbolizes baptism, which now saves you. Now inevitably, you know someone who believes that all you've got to do to get right with God, is to get dunked into some pool of water by some guy who's been to seminary, and then you're saved, okay? That's not what this passage is teaching. As a matter of fact, in scriptures there's only one baptism that really matters, the one baptism that matters is me getting in the place where God's wrath is already been. I need to be, as Paul often said, in Christ. How do I get in Christ? I have to put my trust in him, I have to call out to him, I have to say I put my confidence in what you've done for me, and I am placed into Christ. Placed, by the way is the Greek word, baptizo, I am baptizo'd into Christ. And now there's a place in the universe where God's wrath is already been and then when he comes to judge the world, guess what? I won't get judged because he's already judged that place. He's judged me in Christ. And I have died that death with him, Paul says, and now I have been baptized into him and it has nothing to do with water, it has nothing to



do with going into a pool and having the gunk washed off of your body, which he says next, don't miss the next phrase. I'm not talking about the removal of dirt from the body, that's what happens when you get dunked in water in front of a congregation of people. What he's talking about is the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It's that conscience that cries out to God in sincerity, that clear and honest calling out to God and saying God, I need you, God I'm committed to follow you, God I want to get on the ark. Now I know we have a problem as modern Christians, we like to turn the gospel into some kind of formulaic onramp into Christianity, we love to do that. And we do it to our own peril, and the peril of our children. We like the little sinners' prayer, asking Jesus in to our heart, that's not the way it's presented in scripture. As a matter of fact, God likes to always present this in the scripture to us with different phrases and different words. Oh, there are some key elements to it, repentance and faith, that's clear. But often times he talks about calling on the name of the Lord. Sometimes he talks about, like in this passage, the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It's that kind of crying out to God, that kind of throwing ourselves on the mercy of God. You don't need a list of instructions or words to repeat after, if God has brought you to the place of recognizing you deserve his wrath, and you want to get on the ark, you don't need anybody to coach you through that. God is doing that work in your heart and all we've got to say to you is get on the ark. If those are the words you say to God, I guarantee you if your heart is genuinely prepped by biblical change in your heart, repentance and faith, your going to cry to God and that pledge of a good conscience now saves you. It's that getting onto the ark. Get right with God. He says, it saves you, not because he's just looking for people that are sincere. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. That's what saves you. It's that trust in the payment and the work of Christ who's gone into heaven and sits at the right hand of God with angels authorities and powers and submission to him, he's done the work. And what you need to do is get on board. Number 2 is all about you making sure you're ready. Are you prepared? There's no bunker to build, there's no ark to get on, what it is, is a spiritual connection with God. And you've got to make sure that you are there. And it's all about making sure you're there. And the Bible says, the problem is that people don't have enough faith to heed the warning. And because they don't, they kind of play around with it. Or as we've already seen they twist the Gospels and they say, well I've kind of got God, it's kind of the God of my own making, and it's not the mean and nasty God, like that God at that church. And so I kind of have my own view of spirituality, and I kind of like it the way I'm doing it. It's not about that. It's about coming to the acknowledgement that the world is going to end with God's judgment, and you need to get out of that perilous place by putting your trust in Christ. Have you done it, really are you sure? Are you really banking on walking an aisle as a kid, is that what you're putting your trust in? Is it really all about a pine cone at the fire when you cried singing kumbaya? Are you putting your trust in some teenage experience? Or are you absolutely positively sure that you are seated on the ark with Christ? Are you positive? If you're not, today is the day to figure that out. Don't you dare get behind the wheel of a car and risk your life in traffic today unless you are absolutely sure that you've been placed on the ark. Make sure you get a seat. You've got to get a seat. And Noah was out there saying the same kind of thing. Get a seat on the ark, dude. Ahhh, I don't know, I don't really believe that, I don't believe that God would really destroy this place, my god is the kind of god that doesn't do that, he doesn't judge people like that. You can say that all you want, there's only one real God. And I think he's clearly revealed himself in scripture. And I know some of you are saying, well that's the problem, I don't really believe that book, it's been rewritten 100,000 times and it's just not reliable, a lot of oral

tradition in there, I don't really believe it. I wish I had 2 or 3 hours to go over this with you right now. But here's the great thing, I've already done it and I've recorded it for you, and I can yak at you for 4 straight hours if you'll just turn your worksheet over and grab a few of those messages in that small box, and listen to the reason that we believe that there is a God, and that he has spoken and that this is the record of his revelation to mankind. This is unlike any other book, we believe that this is an accurate reflection of God's revelation to man. That this is the inscribed thoughts of God on paper. As Francis Shaeffer said, he is there and he has spoken. There is a God, and he has revealed himself. And God has done so in the pages of scripture, and that's a whole other sermon but do the homework, because if you're sitting here going, well that is what the Bible says, and you're right about that, but I am not sure I believe the Bible. Lets get that one settled, this bears the marks of inspiration, just like the world, by the way, ask a geologist, it bears the marks of a deluge, a universal flood. There's evidence for that, there's evidence that this is Gods word, and God says, make sure you get on the ark. As a matter of fact, it's a scary thing, but let me turn you to it, Genesis chapter 7. Back to the middle of this discussion. Genesis chapter 7. This is so powerful and I've read this so many times, I was reading this over and over this week, kind of getting in the sandals of Noah and his generation. Then it hit me as I was reading this section, look at what's being said in this text. This is chapter 7, verse number 11; in the six hundredth year, remember anti-deluvian, pre flood world, totally different place, totally different, more conducive to biological life, he's 600 years old and plenty of strength to build a boat, right? 600th year of Noah's life, on the 17th day of the 2nd month, I had to read that about 3 times and I'm finally starting to get it. This is a day on the calendar, this is a day that they all said, well we remember when it was... on that day, the springs of the great deep burst forth. The floodgates of the heavens were opened, something underneath, something on top, we had this huge deluge, and rain fell on the earth for forty days, and forty nights. And on that very day, Noah, and his sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, together with his wife, and the wives of his three sons entered the ark. They had with them, and if you read earlier, we've got seven days of putting these animals all in place on the ark, every animal, according to its kind, livestock after its kind, creatures that move along the ground, we've got birds, everything with wings, pairs of creatures, everything with the breath of life in it. Verse 15; they came to Noah and he entered the ark, the animals were going in male and female, every living thing as God had commanded Noah. Now underline these words, then Yahweh shut him in. Boom. You can hear it. People say, well this is miraculous, well maybe it is, I don't know. It's a statement of God. Boom, you're in, sealed. Whether they pulled up the rope, I don't know, but the door closed. On what day? 600th year of Noah's life, 17th day, 2nd month, that's when it happened. That's when it closed. Boom. Can you get on, on the 18th day of the 600th year of the 2nd month? No, can't get on, doors closed. Can you get on, on the 15th day, of the 2nd month, of the 600th year? Yeah, it's open. Can you get on? Sure. As a matter of fact, all week people are getting on. On and off, on and off, animals all on the ark. But 17th day, it closed. They all got in, the judgment of God came, and the opportunity for salvation was over. No more. You want to get on, on the 18th day? No. You want to get on the 17th day, late in the afternoon? Probably not, closed. Morning, okay, but no one knew it was coming. Oh they heard it was coming, but no one knew exactly when. God had prepared Noah, he was ready. Everyone else, nah, I don't know if I believe all this stuff. Then the door was shut, and the Lord shut him in. For forty days, verse 17 says, the floods kept coming on the earth, the waters increased, it lifted the ark high above the earth, the waters rose and greatly increased on the earth, the ark floated above the surface of the water, they rose greatly on

earth, the high mountains under the entire heavens were covered. Not a culture in this world, post deluvian culture, obviously, that doesn't record some kind of flood account. We've got the divinely inspired word from God right here on what happened. And by the way, fossil fuel, petroleum products, geologic records, sea life at the tops of mountains, the world bears the marks of this catastrophic universal event. It changed our planet. What I want you to underscore in your mind is it happened on the 600th year, the 17th day of the 2nd month of Noah's life. And the Bible says that God in his own authority has fixed a day in which he will judge the world. And it hasn't happened yet, but that day is on the calendar. He's not telling anybody, no one knows, don't go to the next prophecy seminar to try and get a date, you won't get one. But it's coming, and at that point, the door will be shut. And if you miss it by a day, if you miss it by five hours, you've missed it. Oh he's trying to pressure us right now. I'm not trying to pressure you. I'm just trying to remind you that you should, as Isaiah 55 says, you should seek the Lord while he may be found. Because one day he won't be. And I don't care how much you cry and beg and plead, the door will be shut. There's a day, fixed in his own authority, he will judge the world. And for you then, it will be too late. Are you ready, are you absolutely sure you're on the ark? Are you positive? I'm trying to persuade you as best I can to make sure. It's lingering on, it's getting uncomfortable now, I understand that, that's the point. You and I ought to be pressed with the reality, because the Bible says, as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. And the problem that we have, is that just like in the days of Noah, here's what Jesus said, oh they were marrying, and giving in marriage, and they had plans to make, and they were picking out bridesmaid dresses, and they had all kinds of stuff going on, and they were investing in their 401k's and everything was business as usual. And then, Jesus said, the flood came, and destroyed them all. The day will be over for you. One day the time will be up. You've got to be sure now. Because that time could be up this afternoon, it could be up next week. Are you absolutely, positively sure? I'm not trying to save you from loneliness or purposelessness, or trying to get in touch with your inner child, I'm not doing any of that. I'm trying to say, are you going to avoid the wrath of God? That's the question. Make sure you're prepared. In holy fear, respond to the warning. Psalm 32; David said, let everyone who is godly pray to you while you may be found. Surely when the mighty waters rise, there's the picture, Noah's flood, they are not going to reach you. The person who put their trust in Christ will be kept safe. Okay, Mike, I got it. I got it pastor, I'm totally there, I'm sure of it, I know I've repented of my sins and put my trust in Christ, I'm not trusting in a pine cone, fire throwing experience, I'm not trusting in some kind of prayer I prayed, I see that I have put my trust in Christ, I see evidence of that relationship with God, I'm positively sure. Great, great, then this last point is for you. Go back to Hebrews 11, verse number 7. By faith, Noah, he was warned about things that weren't yet seen and in holy fear he built an ark. I love this, it wasn't just to save himself, it was to save his family. He was going to put a few extra seats on this thing. Going to save his family. Now you can say, why didn't he save more people than that? According to 2 Peter chapter 2 verse number 5, he tried. He put the message out there. He got his three sons and his three daughters in law, and his wife, thankfully on board. But the people, no one else responded. As a matter of fact, that's what this means in the bottom of verse number 7, is that by his faith, he condemned the world. Not only was the ark in his backyard, a condemnation of the world, but his preaching that they kept saying, ahh, you're a nut, that condemned the world. People have imagined what that must have been like. Lots of ancient extra biblical writings are fictitious accounts of what Noah must have said as he preached to the masses, as they were building the ark.



I mean we can wonder what that's like, what did he say? Surely he called people to repent, surely he said, get on the ark. But they wouldn't have it. Well I guess there were seven people along with Noah that would have it, they wanted to see. But most people didn't. Broad is the road; wide is the gate that leads to destruction. Small is the gate, narrow is the road that leads to life, and few are those that find it. You can say Mike, I know I'm prepared. Great, and let's be like Noah, if we really believe this, number 3 on your outline, let's you and I try to get others on board. Let's just do that. It seems so basic and fundamental, but let us try to get other people on board. And as you do, and if you're serious about this, just be prepared, that like Noah, you're going to have the same experience. There will be some that say, fantastic, give me a seat on that place, I'll get on, I'll get on the barge. And then you're going to have a bunch of other people that will go, you are a nut, stop trying to cram your Bible down my throat, I'm sick of hearing about it. You're going to have those people too, that there will be nothing but condemnation for. So many passages I want to show you. Let me show you on, okay, maybe two. 2 Corinthians chapter 2, and I know some of you hyper Calvinists out there, oh you know what, I'm not going to try to get others on board, God doesn't need me to save people, he's sovereign. Listen, here's a homework assignment for you, are you ready? Those of you who fall into that camp, you know who you are. 2 Corinthians chapter 5, we're going to chapter 2, but jot down chapter 5 and start in verse 11, and memorize verses 11 all the way to the end of the chapter, verse 21. And at the end of that, if you can still say you have no obligation to try and persuade anybody, if you are not like Paul, saying I want to beseech and beg you on behalf of Christ to be reconciled to God. It's as though God were making his appeal through me. If you can still sit on your butt and say, I don't need to save anybody, because God is going to save them without me. If you can still, after memorizing verses 11 through 21 say that to me, and really be faithful to that test, then you can go ahead and do it. But for the rest of us that are convinced that we have an obligation before God to be his ambassadors, as 2 Corinthians 5 says, then this passage is for you. As you start to open your mouth and tell people, man, you need to get right with God. And I know that's a caricature you don't want to be a part of, I don't want to be a sandwich board, turn or burn, the end is near, I don't want to do that. You know what? That's the most loving thing you could say to somebody this week, okay? Maybe you don't need to say it with some kind of a banner that has flames on it, okay, fine. You don't need a bullhorn, but maybe you should say to them, I care enough about you to tell you that I want you to be right with God. Because one day, the Bible says that there will be judgment for sin and you and I both qualify, but you know what? I've been placed into a relationship with Christ because of my faith in what he's done, and I'd like you to experience that same thing. That would be a loving thing to say, not to shout at them, don't need a bullhorn, don't need a banner with flames on it, but you should say to them, in essence, you should turn to Christ, or you will face the judgment of God. That's a turn or burn message. I'm sorry that's what it is. But we need to come to the place where we recognize our obligation. When we do, let's get our expectations straight, are you in 2 Corinthians chapter 2? Look at verse number 12; Paul went to a place called Troas, he went to preach the gospel, even that, hasn't that become a dirty word in our day, preach? No, don't preach at me. That's the most loving thing you could do, is herald, that's what the word means, herald the message of the gospel of Christ. The good news that you don't have to suffer the consequences of your sins, you don't have to. That's the good news, trust in Christ. And Paul said, he went to this place called Troas, and they were like, yeah, we want to hear about that. The door was open for me, but still I had no peace of mind, I couldn't find my brother Titus, that's where he went, he went to go find Titus in

Troas, but he didn't find him. So he said goodbye to them and he went on to Macedonia, and now he's realized, I'm starting to list a lot of places here, and he says, even in Macedonia, which didn't quite go as well, if you read the rest of the New Testament, but he says, thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ, and through us, now underline this, spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him. Now he's going to do an analogy, and the analogy is this, when I go and herald the message of the good news, I am representing Christ, and when I'm there talking about the gospel in Christ, I am representing him, and it's like a smell comes into the room. And that smell is either good or bad, based upon the hearts of the people that hear it. He says, in verse 15, we are to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. To the one, we are the smell of death, right? Don't cram that down my throat, you narrow minded Christian, you Bible thumper, I don't want to hear that. To the other, we're the fragrance of life. Tell me more about that, God's kind of working in my heart, where is that in the Bible, show that to me, I want to see that. We're the fragrance of death, or the fragrance of life. And if, by the way, here's another excuse to use, Paul says, who is equal to such a task? Some of us say, well I can't do that, you know, people know at my workplace that I'm imperfect, and they've watched me kind of mess up a few things and so I can't talk for Christ. Yes, you can. This is a rhetorical question... who is equal to the task of bringing the message of the gospel to people? No one, I realize that. You're imperfect, I'm imperfect, we're all imperfect. Share the message anyway. Which, by the way, speaks to those of you who don't even want to get into this dialogue because you're the kind that witness with your life, right? You witness with your life? Just going to live a good life in front of them. You can live your good life all you want and your neighbors and friends will still go to hell. Are you tracking with this? You've got to open your mouth. You have to tell them of the good news of the gospel. And what I've said, and it's clear, point number 1, you've got to share first the bad news. And the bad news is that sin is going to require some kind of just response from a Holy God. But the good news is, you don't have to incur that, so open your mouth. I know you're not equal to the task, neither was Paul, neither are we. But unlike so many, we don't peddle the word of God for profit, it isn't about us, for them, I know in the first century it was all about making a buck because the preacher's were the best paid people in their day. Uh-uh, things have changed. But he said we're not doing it for money, and by the way, for us, we shouldn't be doing it for our own advantage either. It's not about our reputation. On the contrary, in Christ, we speak before God, if you want some directions; here it comes, with sincerity. Just be sincere. Oh, I've got to go learn a big outline, and I've got to try to get some kind of method down and memorize all those verses. You know, it would be good for you to memorize those verses, but just go in sincerity and tell them you care enough about them to worry about where they're going to be 100 years from now. You care about them, be sincere. Be accurate, but be sincere, and then you will be like Paul was to these people, like men sent from God. You think your workplace, your neighborhood, the parents on your kids' soccer team, you think they need somebody sent from God to tell them there's an ark available, there's a big flood coming, this one by fire, and get on the ark. I think God would like to send some people to every sphere that's represented by all the people in this room. You could be that person, just be sincere, speak up, get over the fact that you're not worthy, and neither am I, to be talking about a perfect God, I realize that. But open your mouth anyway, and with sincerity, tell them, man, you need to get right with God. And I know the difference will come down to one thing, and I said there might be one more passage, last passage, Galatians chapter 1. If we're going to be like Noah, and open up



our mouths, and say hey, get on board, I know it's going to be condemnation for some, they won't like it. It will be salvation and the fragrance of Christ to others, that's great. But the reason you will or will not put this message into action comes down to one question, are you ready? Who are you trying to please? That's all it comes down to. Paul asks that question; let's get some context in Galatians 1 verse 3. He says, grace and peace to you from God, our father in the Lord Jesus Christ who gave himself for our sins. Now underscore this, you'll start to see it everywhere if you just open your eyes up to it, to rescue us from the present evil age. What's wrong with the present evil age? Its going to incur the wrath of God. He wants to snatch us out of that; he wants to save us from that. Rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father to whom be glory forever and ever, amen. He says, I'm astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ, and are turning to a different gospel. Verse 7, which, by the way, if its different, its really not the real gospel, and its no gospel at all. Evidently, some are throwing you into confusion and they're trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. Now you Bible students are going to say, now I know the problem in the Galatian churches, and that was they were trying to turn these people into some kind of adherence to Judaism so that they could get right with Christ, and that's the problem here, that's the perversion of the gospel. You're absolutely right. But that's not the temptation that's faced in Orange County today. Not many churches are saying hey, come be right with God, but you've got to be an Orthodox Jew first in our church before you can go and be a Christian, that's not what these people are teaching today. That's not the perversion of the gospel, the perversion of the gospel is found up there in verse number 3 and 4; its not about being rescued from sin and the punishment of sin anymore, now its about being some other kind of self help program. God's a big translucent therapist sitting you on the couch trying to help you feel better. That's not the gospel. Today, the gospel is being perverted in our culture in a different way. Same kind of perversion though, its different, and he says if we, verse 8, or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, if its different, then let him be eternally condemned. Did you catch that? I don't care if Michael the archangel or Gabriel come down and say, hey, I've got a message, but you know that gospel, it's just different now, my gospel is a little different than that. The bible says we ought to say anathema to you. Let you be eternally condemned. As we've already said, we now say again, he wants to make the point really clear, if anyone is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned. Now here's the difference between preaching the true gospel and distorting it so people will like it. He says, am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? That's the question for you, and that's the question for me. Am I trying to win the approval of men, or am I trying to win the approval of God? Am I trying to please men, if I were trying to please men, I wouldn't be a servant of Christ. Is it clear so far this morning that I'm not trying to please you with this sermon? Clearly, I'm not going to please a lot of you, right? Not trying to please you with the message. It's not about hey, pastor that was a great message, made me feel good. I'm not trying to make you feel good; I'm not trying to please you with it. My job as a herald or a conduit of God's message is just to be accurate. I want to be sincere, hopefully I've passed the sincerity test, I'm sincere about this. But it's the truth, and I've got to share it with you. Other pastors, they want to skip over this, rip it out, they don't want to preach the bad news. Fine, I want to be faithful and give you the message. And you know what? You've got the same choice that I've got. Am I going to go out to try and be popular, be liked, keep my job, be a great friend, win the employee of the year award at my work, I don't know what you're trying to do. But if



you're trying to be a representative of Christ, or as he puts it, a servant of Christ, bottom of verse 10, then you're going to have to speak up and speak the truth. You just got to say it. You've got to say what it is and not distort it. I want you to know brothers, the gospel I preach is not something I made up, it's not something man made up. I didn't receive it from any man, I wasn't taught it. Rather, I received it by the revelation from Jesus Christ. 27 books in the New Testament, apostolic period, here's the faith once for all, delivered to the saints, we've got this message now encapsulated, you can say its not true, but you'd better do your homework before you dismiss the book. For once we look at it and we say, this is a revelation from God, this bears the marks of divine inspiration, then we stand back and say, what does it say? You know what it says? Warning. Warning. Warning. The world is going to be punished by God. Know what? The grace of God has been extended to you, a ramp, that leads right up into a safe spot, its called the shadow of the cross. The Old Testament, the biological salvation, it was called the ark. And if you would put your trust in Christ, if you would throw yourself on his mercy, if you would repent of your sins, he can fix the problem right now. And if you've got it fixed, I think you and I would do well to start worrying about the people in our family, and start worrying about the people in our workplace, the people we hang out with, the people we rub shoulders with all week long, and say, I'm concerned about you, and with sincerity I just want to say, where are you going to be 100 years from now? We can twist it, we can contort it, but if we do, we do it to our own peril. We've said that a million different ways. I suppose on memorial day, its appropriate for me to end with the words of Thomas Jefferson, who back in 1781, it didn't take a pastor, it didn't take a theologian to come up with this simple observation... If you want to see these words, you can go to the Jefferson memorial; they are inscribed on the wall. After having spoken of God's truth, and God's gifts, he says, these are not violated, but with the wrath of God. In other words, if you want to put away God's truth, if you want to violate the scriptures, he said, then you're going to get God's wrath. And he says this, I tremble for my country when I reflect on the fact that he is just. He says, and that God's justice cannot sleep forever. Even Thomas Jefferson realized, we are in a period of God's grace, but his patience will run out. And at one point, he is going to call the world to accountability. The question is two-fold, are you ready, are you prepped, are you on the ark? And secondarily, what are you doing to bring a few people on board with you? Lets get our work done, we hasten the day of the Lord by understanding his patience, his salvation. And I've said this a million times, lets get our work done and go home. If we can get people on this thing and fill up the kingdom, and get the last seat on the ark filled, we get to get out of here. And we get to go to a place that is filled with righteousness. No violence, no corruption, and that's the hope of the Bible. Its not a fairytale, its not a fantasy, if it is, lets all quit and do something else, we can figure out some other way to keep our kids off drugs, this is not what its about. It's about getting right with a Holy God.