

# Blue Ribbons

by Anton Bosch

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of learning from the Old Testament and staying committed to Jesus and His Word, warning against the dangers of seeking something more exciting than the pure milk of the Word.*

**Duration:** 51:20

**Scripture:** Numbers 15:37-41, Deuteronomy 11:9, Matthew 9:20-22, Matthew 23:5, Luke 17:32, 1 Corinthians 10:1-13, Hebrews 12:2

**Topics:** "Spiritual Focus", "Christ's Return"

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## Description

This sermon delves into the importance of keeping our focus on God and heavenly things, drawing parallels from the Old Testament examples of the Israelites lusting after worldly things like fish, leeks, and garlic in the desert. The message emphasizes the need to have our eyes fixed on Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, and to be prepared for His return, just like the Israelites were to be ready to move out during the first Passover. The tassels on the Israelites' garments, the tearing of Saul's garment, and the significance of the tassels in various biblical accounts are used to illustrate the importance of spiritual focus and readiness for Christ's return.

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## Transcript

So let's read 1 Corinthians chapter 10 and verses 1 through 13. Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea. All were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea.

All ate the same spiritual food and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ. But with most of them, God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness. Now these things became our examples to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted.

And do not become idolaters as were some of them. As it is written, the people sat down to eat and drink, and they rose up to play. Nor let us commit sexual immorality as some of them did, and in one day 23,000 fell.

Nor let us tempt Christ as some of them also tempted and were destroyed by serpents. Nor complain as some of them also complained and were destroyed by the destroyer. Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation is overtaking you except such as is common to man. But God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make a way of escape that you may be able to bear it.

Now when we look at the Old Testament, and unfortunately I think that many times, and I know in my own preaching I don't spend enough time in the Old Testament, but the Old Testament is not just the background to the New Testament, but the Old Testament also contains many important lessons for us in the New Testament. And that's exactly what Paul does in 1 Corinthians chapter 10. And he says there that the things that happened to them happened as examples to us.

They are examples to us, so that we don't fall in the same way as they did. And he then spiritualizes a number of things which happened to them, not in a spiritual sense, but happened to them literally. And always remember that sometimes we can spiritualize these things and we forget that there was a literal event that this is based on.

And so for them it was literal, for us it is spiritual. So they came out of Egypt. Egypt of course is a picture of the world.

They were saved, if you like. They were brought through the Red Sea, a picture of baptism. And he says they were baptized in a cloud and in the sea.

So they were baptized in water as they came through the Red Sea, and one of the things that baptism does is it cuts the way off to going back. There's no going back. It's burning the bridges as it were.

They were baptized in the clouds. The cloud represents the Holy Spirit. They ate the same spiritual food, which was the manna, which I'm going to speak about this evening.

They drank the same spiritual drink, which was Christ, the rock that followed them. And that's an amazing thing. It's amazing how we read scripture and sometimes we just don't understand what it's saying.

But if you read that passage again, you'll see it says that that rock followed them. The rock followed them. Now I don't know how that happened, and I can imagine this big huge rock somehow creaking along as they were moving.

I don't know how that happened, but it says the rock followed them. And when they needed water, the rock was able to provide water for them. You remember how Moses spoke to the rock and the second time he hit the rock and that created a problem for Moses.

But in this passage then, he highlights a number of things that we need to learn from them. And he says in verse six, verse six is the one I'm going to focus on this evening, where he says that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. But also the other things in verse seven, do not become idolaters.

Verse eight, let us not commit sexual immorality or fornication. Verse nine, let us not tempt Christ. Verse 10, let us not complain as some of them also complained.

And notice the warning in the passage. And I know people really struggle with this idea, but look at what Paul is saying. He says they all, if you look at the first few verses, the word all appears there a number of times.

They all came out of Egypt. They were all baptized in a cloud and in the sea. But they did not make it to the promised land.

They died in the wilderness. Their bodies were scattered. The old King James is very graphic.

It says their corpses were scattered in the wilderness. And so they didn't make it into the promised land. Only two made it into the land.

I believe that Moses was saved in that process, but he dies before they get in. And so Joshua and Caleb, only two make it into the land. And clearly the warning in that passage is that they came out of Egypt.

They didn't get to the promised land. Now you can draw your own conclusions from that in case you think that I'm going to teach some kind of heresy. So you figure out for yourself what is it saying concerning our situation.

Now in verse six, then it speaks about the fact that they lusted after evil things. And what he has in mind is Numbers chapter 11. And I'm going to turn there and I'm going to take two separate readings from Numbers.

The first one is Numbers 11, but before we read that, let me paint the picture for you. So they come out of Egypt. They have some unleavened bread.

They have some food that they had brought with them and the food very quickly runs out. And so now they need more food and there's nothing to eat in the desert. You guys know well what it looks like in the desert.

And it's not unlike the high desert here. There's not a lot to eat out there and there's not much to drink. So God provides manner for them.

And this manner is a supernatural provision. And when we speak about the manner, we must always warn against the modern theologians who try and make this to be not supernatural. Try and make it into some natural thing that happens in the desert.

Some kind of tree that secretes some kind of sap and then that becomes edible or some bug that grows it and all kinds of fancy ideas. Now this wasn't anything natural. There was nothing natural about it.

It was God's supernatural provision. Psalm 78 and Psalm 105 says that it was angels' food and bread from heaven. And I don't know if angels eat.

I don't know that they necessarily eat, but that's really what the psalmist is saying is that this is divine stuff. This is the best you can get. And the manner was everything they need.

Now remember, the manner is a picture or a type of Jesus and of the Word. Jesus is the Word, but specifically the Word and Jesus. And this was all they needed.

They didn't need manner as well as multivitamins and protein and roughage and this and that. They just needed manner. It was a balanced diet.

It was all they needed to not just be healthy, but to be sustained. And it is miraculous because it begins at the beginning of the wilderness journey. And it's very specific that the day they entered into the land, it was

the time of the barley harvest.

They eat of the harvest in the land, and that day the manner stopped. And so it began at a specific time, stopped at a specific time. That's miraculous.

It wasn't just there. But just in case they thought, and this was part of God's dealings with them, just in case they thought, well, this is just, you know, this is the wilderness. It's here.

And remember, kids are getting born and they're raised because they lived there for 40 years. And so kids are getting born and they're saying, oh, well, this is what happens in the wilderness. This is, you know, every morning you go out there and there it is.

But remember, just in case they thought that it was natural, it's there for six days. And then on the seventh day, there's nothing. And remember, some of them were foolish enough to go out on the seventh day and there was nothing.

If you thought, well, I'm going to take tomorrow off. And so what I'll do is I'll take a double portion today and I don't have to go out tomorrow morning. Well, you know what happened? It would go rotten.

And so when you get to tomorrow morning, you sleep in and you say, well, you know, I'm going to take it easy. You know, I've got my portion for today. Well, the moment you open the pot, it's full of worms.

It's literally what it says. And you go hungry for that day. And so it's there every day.

Can't keep a second portion. It's only fresh for one day. But then on the sixth day, it lasts for two days.

And this happens week after week after week. And God is saying to them, this is supernatural. And it's not about the supernatural provision.

But what God is also saying to them is, trust me, I am powerful. I can control these things. I can make these things happen.

You can trust me. And so God is teaching them faith right through this process. But that's another message.

And I'm going to preach a fifth message today. And so there's the manna. And it tastes like honey.

Now, I don't know about you, but there's one thing that I absolutely love and that's honey. And I'm not a kid anymore, and I've eaten this stuff all my life, and I can never get enough of it. It's always good.

But it didn't take long when they begin to complain. And that's the essence of this passage. So let's go to Numbers chapter 11.

And let's see what happens. And I'm going to take a little sidetrack here, but this is important to the total picture. Verse one, Numbers 11.

Now remember, from verse one through verse three is a separate incident to verse four and onwards. They're two separate incidents, and you need to read through that very carefully to get that. Otherwise, you easily blend these two together, and they become one incident.

But they're actually two separate events. Now, the first one says, now when the people complained, well, that was the problem in the second one. But the problem was that they were always complaining.

This wasn't something new. This was an ongoing thing. They complained.

It displeased the Lord, for the Lord heard it, and His anger was aroused. So the fire of the Lord burnt among them and consumed some in the outskirts of the camp. Take note of that.

I'm going to come back to that. Consumed some in the outskirts of the camp. Then the people cried out to Moses, and when Moses prayed to the Lord, the fire was quenched.

So he called the name of the place to bearer, because the fire of the Lord had burnt among them. Verse four, now the mixed multitude who were among them yielded to intense craving. So the people, so the children of Israel also wept again and said, who will give us meat to eat? Now you'll see it says there that they yielded to intense craving.

They lusted after evil things, as Paul puts it in Hebrews chapter 11, and that's the connection between these two passages. So where does the problem begin? It begins with what he calls, or what the scripture calls, the mixed multitude. The mixed multitude.

Now we need to understand this background. When they came out of Egypt, all of the Israelites belonged to one of the, let's call it 12 tribes. Remember, it's a little complication because they're two half tribes and so on, but they all belong basically to one of the tribes.

But they had spent 400 years in Egypt. During that time, some were disobedient to the Lord and married Egyptian wives, or Egyptian husbands. And so when they leave the land, you have this problem now, you have some people who are married to Egyptians.

Now do they stay behind in Egypt or do they go with? And so some of them go along. And as they come out of the land then, there are these people who are of mixed blood, of mixed marriages, but there are also Egyptians who saw God's blessing amongst the people of Israel and attached themselves to them. And so as they move along, there's 12 tribes who are real Israelites, but there's a mixed multitude.

And it's interesting, it uses the word multitude, means a lot of them. And so there was a huge number of them that were mixed. They were half Jew and half not.

And as they move, they move in a particular order. Remember, God sets up this order. The Levites would move ahead, the front.

Well, there would be the pillar of fire or the cloud. And then the Levites would lead with the Ark of the Covenant. And then each of the tribes would come in their ranks behind them, each tribe marching in order.

And then when they would camp, they would do the same thing. The Levites would set down the Ark of the Covenant, they would erect the tabernacle over that. And then the tribes would camp each one in his particular place, three tribes basically on each of the four sides of the tabernacle.

But what did the mixed multitude do? Well, they weren't part of any of the tribes. And so they moved at the back of the column of people marching to the promised land. So they're out in the back there.

And I'm going to come back to that in a moment. When they camp, where do they camp? Well, they don't fit in with any of the 12 tribes, so they camp on the outside of the camp. Now you can see the connection to this passage.

When God judged them, where did the fire fall? On the outside of the camp, where the mixed multitude was. You say, well, is that coincidence? Of course, there is no coincidence. This is, again, God's anger against specifically the mixed multitude.

And why is God angry with the mixed multitude? Well, you see this clearly in the next incident in verse four. The complaining begins with the mixed multitude. And because they complained, the people of Israel listened to them, and they also stirred up.

And now you have a general rebellion against the Lord and His provision. And of course, we must apply that and understand that in our context. In every church, and I'm sure in this church also, there is always a mixed multitude.

Now, it may not always be a multitude. It may just be a minority. And we trust that it is a minority.

But these are people who are not in, and they're not out. They're not committed to the church. They're not committed to God's move.

But they somehow want to be part of stuff. They want to be part of God's blessing. They want to be part of whatever's going on.

They want to enjoy the fellowship, or they want to enjoy the worship, or they enjoy the preaching, whatever it is. So there's something in it for them, but they're not committed because they're equally committed to the world or to whatever is out there. And when trouble starts in a church, and I mentioned in the earlier service that just as I was driving up here, I had a long conversation with another pastor in another state who has exactly this situation right now.

He is facing some kind of division in his church, and where does it begin? It always begins in a mixed multitude, those who are not in and who are not out. Now, let me appeal to you that if you're in that situation tonight, decide what you want to do. Remember, Joshua says, why do you halt between two decisions? If God is God, then serve Him.

Make up your mind. Now, I can't go as far as I would like in my own church because this isn't my church, but if this is my church, I would say, if you're not with us, then get out. Then go.

You say, well, that's not the heart of a pastor. No, my heart is for the people of God and to protect the body of Christ. And if there are those in the body of Christ or those who have attached themselves to the body of Christ who are troublemakers and whose only interest is to complain all the time, well, then better they get out.

Now, for the record, it's on the tape, Pastor Shane, I'm not telling any of your people to leave. And so the problem begins there. And the problem is the manner.

Verse four, the mixed multitude who were among them yielded to intense craving. So the children of Israel also wept again and said, who will give us meat to eat? We remember the fish which we ate freely in Egypt, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic. But now our whole being is dried

up.

There's nothing at all except this manner before our eyes. Now the manner was like coriander seed and its color like the color of beryllium. And the people went about and gathered it, grounded it on millstones, beat it in the mortar, cooked it in pans, made cakes of it.

And its taste was like the taste of pastry prepared with oil. Now there's a whole bunch of stuff in here that I need to very quickly deal with. The first is that what they wanted was the stuff of Egypt.

I'm going to go back to that. We remember the fish, cucumbers, the leeks, the garlicks, the onions, the melons, the stuff of Egypt. That's what we want to go back to.

We're tired of the manner. And not only are we tired of it, but we're starving here. My whole soul is dried up, they say.

And folks, that's exactly what we hear in Bible teaching churches. People are saying we're tired of preaching. We're tired of the Word of God.

We want entertainment. We want worship. We want this.

We want that. We want programs. We want whatever else it is.

But we're tired of the same stuff. We're dying here. Now I trust that that doesn't happen in this church.

But I had a situation last Saturday that I had to deal with in my church where I had exactly this complaint. Pastor, we appreciate the way that you teach. We appreciate the Word.

But you need to give the people more than that. No, I don't. The manner is all you need.

All you need is Jesus and His Word. He is sufficient for all of our needs. You don't need entertainment.

You may want entertainment. You may want whatever else it is. But you just need Jesus.

But there are people, and I'm not speaking about a small minority. There is a huge majority in the church in the world at large who say we're done with teaching. We're done with the Word of God.

We're done with Jesus. We want something else. We want something more exciting.

And where am I going to find something more exciting? Where I came from in the world. And so we bring the world's systems, the world's methods, the world's way of doing things into the body of Christ. And they take the manner and they grind it in millstones.

They beat it in the mortar. They smash it up. They cut it.

They dice it. They cook it this way. They cook it that way.

But in the end, they don't improve the taste. It gets worse. It ends up tasting like pastry cooked in oil.

The moment we take the Word of God and we think that we can cut and dice it, we think that we can smash it up and we can somehow put some flavoring and some worldly stuff in it and somehow make it better. You can never improve on the pure milk of the Word. It's the best stuff you can get.

And so in the end, instead of improving it, they make a mess of it. And they say, we're tired. We need the stuff of Egypt.

Now I want you to see the stuff that they wanted. In verse five, the fish, cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions, and garlic. Where does all that stuff come from? It comes from the ground.

Remember, Egypt doesn't have rain. We're going to come back to that idea in a moment. It doesn't have rains like here.

The water comes down the Nile River. It comes from Central Africa. In fact, past Central Africa, almost Southern Africa.

It flows through all of these villages and comes with all of its stuff and all of its mess. It's filthy by the time it reaches Egypt. But that's what they survive off.

And they plant their vegetables in the mud that overflows the banks, the salt that comes from the river. They fish the river. They still do the same thing today.

And they say, that's what we want. We want the fish in the river. We want the leeks and the garlicks and the onions that grow in the ground.

We want the melons and the cucumbers that grow on the ground. Everything that they wanted was down on the ground. And they'd forgotten where God was taking them.

He was taking them to the land of milk and honey. And in Deuteronomy chapter 11, and I'm not going to turn there because I want to turn to another passage in numbers in a moment. But Deuteronomy 11 verse 9 says, and that you may prolong your days in the land, which the Lord swore to give your fathers and to them and their descendants.

And here's the description of the land, a land flowing with milk and honey for the land, which you go to possess is not like the land of Egypt from which you have come. Now, in case you think that I'm reading into scripture, my whole point here today, this is, this is where it's from. He says that there's a difference between the land of Egypt and the land to which you are going.

Egypt, which you, from which you have come, where you sowed your seed and watered it by foot as a vegetable garden. But the land, which you cross over to possess is a land of hills and valleys. It's not flat like Egypt, which drinks water from the rain of heaven, a land for which the Lord, your God cares.

The eyes of the Lord, your God are always on it from the beginning of the year to the very end of the year. And so you can see that Deuteronomy is drawing a very clear distinction between Egypt and the promised land. The Egypt is about what happens on the ground.

The promised land is about the rain that comes from heaven. It has hills and valleys, and it is a land that flows with milk and honey. Now, where does the milk come from? Here's some good education for your kids.

They don't come from the supermarket. It comes from the udder of a cow, which is above. It's not on the ground.

It's above. The honey comes from bees that fly in the sky, in the air, that make their nests in the trees. It's above.

But the other things the land was known for was for the grapes. Remember when they sent in the spies, these bunches of grapes were so big, two men had to carry a bunch of grapes. Where do the grapes grow? On the vines, up in the air.

It was a land of pomegranates growing up in the air in the trees, olives that grow in trees. And the list goes on. The stuff that the land was known for was not stuff that comes off the ground.

It's stuff that comes out of the air. The water doesn't come off the ground. The water comes from heaven.

And so God is saying, I'm taking you to a better place. I'm taking you to a place which is heaven-oriented, a place where everything comes from above. But you want to go back to the stuff that is earthly.

And I think you can begin to get the picture where we fit in. Because God is raining his spirit upon us. God feeds us with a manna that comes from above.

He's taking us to a land which is heaven above. Everything that he's trying to get us to do is to have our eyes fixed on him and on heaven. But unfortunately, what we're doing is just like the Israelites.

And that's why Paul says, learn from them. Who, as far as they were going, they had their eyes down, and they were looking on the ground, looking for the leeks and the garlics and the onions. Instead of looking up where their bread was coming from, bread from heaven and angels' food.

And so to fix the problem or to help them with a problem, God institutes a little practice, a little custom for them. And if you're in Numbers with me, please go to chapter 15 and verse 37. Again, the Lord spoke to Moses saying, speak to the children of Israel, tell them to make tassels on the corners of their garments throughout their generations.

Put a blue thread in the tassels of the corners, and you shall have the tassel that you may look upon it and remember all the commandments of the Lord to do them, and that you may not follow the to which your own heart and your own eyes are inclined, and that you may remember and do all my commandments, be holy for your God. So a very simple thing. He says on the four corners, remember they didn't have tailored clothing like we have today.

So they basically had like a caftan thing was just a square piece of fabric and maybe a hole in the middle for your head, and there would be four corners. And on each of the four corners, they were to put these tassels and these tassels were to contain at least one thread of blue. That's where the title comes from.

And the purpose was twofold. He says that when you look at the tassel, you will remember the Lord's commandments. And number two, that you would not follow your eyes.

Now it was their eyes that was the problem because they were looking for the stuff of Egypt. And the ribbon of blue is a picture of what? Heaven. The sky is blue.

And so every time they're looking down and they're just seeing sand and sand and sand, and they're wondering where's the leeks and the garlics and the onions, they see the blue. And that is to remind them to look up, reminding them to look to the Lord, who is their source and their provision. And so this becomes a custom, which is built into the law, obviously, and they take it and they add to it as the Jews did

very well, taking the word of the law of God and then adding to it many things.

And so they prescribed how it was to be made. It was to be made out of eight threads. One of the threads is blue, five knots, and each of these numbers represented something.

The knots represented various aspects of the law. The bits in between represented various aspects of the law and so on. And that was all man-made stuff.

It had nothing to do with the word of God. And of course, they still do that today. If you see a practicing Jew, you'll see underneath his suit, if he wears a black, most of them wear black suits, black jackets, you'll see sticking out from underneath are the fringes.

And these are the same fringes. In Hebrew, they are called tzitzit. The plural is tzitzit, the singular is tzitzit.

And so they still do this through today. And here is the next message. These tassels flow right through scripture.

And I want to show you some of those very quickly, and I'm somehow running out of time, but I'll move as fast as I can. In 1 Samuel chapter 15, you read about Saul being confronted by Samuel. Saul had been disobedient in the matter of the Amalekites.

Samuel confronts him. Saul is not hearing Samuel. Saul is not repenting.

And Samuel eventually turns around, and he's about to leave. God is done with Saul. This is the end of the road.

And as Samuel turns around, you remember what Saul does. He reaches out to grab Samuel, because he understands Samuel represents the Lord, and if Samuel goes, then God goes. And so he reaches out to try and grab Samuel and to hold Samuel back, but he gets his garment.

And what happens? He tears the edge, the corner, off his garment. But what was on the corner? The tassels. And so he had torn one of the four tassels off the garment, and he understood what that meant.

He didn't need Samuel to explain it to him, because he had understood that God had ordained that there be four tassels on each garment, and three is not four. Keeping nine of the ten commands does not make keeping the ten commandments. And so by tearing one of the corners off, you were invalidating that which represented God's law and God's authority in Samuel.

And you remember what happened. Samuel turns around, and he says, you know what you've done. Symbolically, what you've done is a serious thing.

It's not a matter of just tearing my clothing, but you've symbolically torn the law of God. And he says, God has torn the kingdom from you, given it to another. And then you remember a little later on, Saul is now chasing David, and David is fleeing before Saul.

David is up in the mountains, and he looks down, and there's Saul on the other side of the valley camping with his men. Obviously, David is in it with a small band of his brave men, and they are not that visible, so Saul didn't see him. But Saul has a big conventional army, and so David sees the army down there, and he sees Saul.

You remember what he does. He goes down that night, and amazingly enough, everyone's asleep. No guards, no one watching over the king.

King's lying there, and David comes, and the king's spear is stuck in the ground, and his water jug is there, and David's men tell him, here's your chance, kill him. Remember, David doesn't do that. But what does David do? He cuts the corner.

You see where this is going. Cuts the corner off the robe. That's exactly what Saul had done to Samuel.

Tore the corner off. And the next morning, David thinks about what he has done. And if you read the passage, you'll see that David is absolutely broken over what he had done.

Now, if all he had done was just torn the man's clothing, remember, this is the king. He could order another suit or another cloak, no problem. So it wasn't about the clothing.

It was about the symbolism of what had happened. And David is absolutely mournful, and he is broken, repentant before God, because he understood what he had done. He had torn the kingdom.

He had torn the authority. He had invalidated the law in Samuel's life, in Saul's life. And of course, David hadn't done that.

That's what Saul had done. And David simply was acting as an agent of God. But David understood the symbolism.

And that's why, if you read that passage, that's why David is so sorrowful over that. Now, before we got to all of this, and I don't know why I put it in this order, but before all of this, you remember there was this young woman called Ruth. She was a Moabiteess.

She was not a Jew or not an Israelite. She comes back with her mother-in-law, and she finds this man Boaz, who is her near kinsman. And there's a whole story behind that.

You understand all of that. And she goes to where he is at the threshing floor, and he's sleeping there for the night. And interesting, the similarities between Saul sleeping and Boaz sleeping.

And she goes and lies at his feet. And again, there is nothing sexual about this. I get incredibly angry about preachers who turn this into a sexual encounter.

There's nothing sexual about this. This is the ancestor of the Lord Jesus Christ. Everything about that picture is holy and righteous and just.

But she goes and lies at his feet. He wakes up, and he says, what do you need? What do you want? And here's where we lose it in the translations. Some translations say, he said, extend your wings over me.

The old King James said, extend the border of your garment over me. But the literal, the Hebrew, the word is exactly the same word that is used for Saul tearing Samuel's corner of the robe. It's exactly the same word, David cutting the corner.

What she was saying is, extend the corner of your mantle over me. Bring me under God's authority. Bring me under your law.

Bring me into the covenant. Remember, she's a Gentile. She has nothing to do with Israel.

And so by saying to him, put the tassels over me, she's saying, bring me under God. And he understood that. And that's why the NIV that says that, you know, bring me under the covering of your wings is sort of correct, because that's effectively what it meant.

But it's really not literally what she was saying. So you can begin to see the picture. This goes through to the New Testament.

Jesus in Matthew chapter 23 abrades the Pharisees, because one of the things that they did, they did a number of things for show. And one of the things they did was they made the hems or the borders of their garments large. But in fact, this is again a problem with the translations.

Literally what they were doing was extending the tassels. And this is well-recorded in Jewish history. And there is one guy, I've forgotten his name already, but he was Rabbi So-and-So Long Tassels, became his nickname, Long Tassel So-and-So, because you see, they prescribed how these things were to be put together, but there was no restriction on how long you could make them.

And so some of them made them extra long so that they showed how religious they were, and that's the point that Jesus makes. And so he says, you make your tassels extra long just to show people how religious you are. There's another guy in the Mishnah that speaks about who was a rabbi and who goes to visit a prostitute.

And apparently this was a thing that happened quite often. And he goes to visit this woman and he climbs up the stairs to her room on the second floor. And as he climbs up there, he has these extra long tassels, and he trips over his own tassels.

And as he falls, he looks down and he realizes that he's tripped on the tassels, but he sees the tassels. And remember, one of the things the tassels did was to remind them of the law of God. And he was reminded of that, and he turns around and he repents.

And then it speaks about people coming to Jesus. And again, we lose it in the translation, but what they want to do is they want to touch the hem of his garment, believing they would be healed. But you can understand really what they were wanting to do is they were wanting to touch the tassels, the ribbons, because there was a tradition at the time, a superstition rather, that if they could touch the tassels of a great rabbi, they could be healed.

That's why they did it. And that's why the woman with the issue of blood did that. And remember that her statement is, I just need to touch the hem of his garment.

But it's in the translation again, I just want to touch the corner, literally what she was saying, I want to touch the corner of his garment. Same superstition. And of course, for her, she is healed because Jesus understood that she had faith.

So you can see how the picture unfolds. And then finally, we get to the cross. Jesus is crucified, his few possessions is taken and divided amongst the soldiers, and then they get to his garment, to his cloak.

And you remember what they did. They said, well, it's woven out of one piece. These are Gentiles.

They don't understand anything about what I've just told you. We can't tear it. That would be wasteful.

So we'll cast lots. So they played dice or whatever they did, drew straws. I don't know what they did, but they cast lots for the garment.

You can begin to understand the significance of this. They didn't understand what it was about. But that garment contained the four corners with the four tassels.

Had they ripped it apart and cut it into three pieces, or two pieces, or four pieces, they would have done exactly what Saul did to Samuel, what David did to Saul. They would have invalidated the authority of God. It would have been symbolic of Jesus breaking the law.

But he never broke any law. And therefore the tassels are kept intact, symbolic of his perfection and the fact that he has perfectly kept the law of God. And so the question now is, what does this have to do with us? Well, clearly the problem is that we need to have our eyes in the right place.

And you'll notice that when we started in 1 Corinthians 11, it says that they lusted after evil things. And I've heard preachers preach on that passage. Remember, I've been a Christian for a long time.

I've heard more sermons than I'd like to remember. But I've heard preachers preach about that, speaking about looking at a woman and lusting after her. And I understand there's scripture that deals with that, and Pastor Shane deals with that very well.

But that's not the point here, because the interpretation is, or this is an interpretation for Numbers 11. And what was it that they were lusting after? It wasn't sinful stuff. It was legitimate stuff.

There was nothing in the law. There's nothing in the laws of kosher that says you can't eat fish, that you can't eat leeks and garlics and cucumbers and melons and all of those things. It was all legitimate stuff.

But the problem was that it was worldly stuff. It wasn't God's provision for them. And that's the warning to us in Corinthians.

And he says that we need to learn from them. And so there are legitimate stuff, things in our lives. Jobs, families, hobbies, interests, recreation, television, money, cars.

These are all legitimate things. And the list goes on and on and on. But if that's what we have our eyes on, we're doing exactly what they're doing.

Because he doesn't want us to have our eyes on those things. He wants us to have our eyes on him. And when we speak about the second coming, I really believe that many Christians don't really want Jesus to be coming back.

Because life's too good. They have their agendas. They have their stuff.

They have their plans. I want to do these things. Lord, don't come now.

But what they're saying is that their eyes are on this world and not on the world to come. You know, here's a scary thought. Some people have a real problem when the service goes over one hour.

So what are you going to do in heaven where the service is not one hour, where it goes forever and ever and ever? Folks, this is serious. I believe that there are Christians who will be desperately uncomfortable and unhappy in heaven because that's not where their hearts are. Their hearts to get home and go to

watch the movie or have dinner or whatever it is.

And so God gives us tassels, not literally like some Hebrew roots Christians do. They actually wear the tassels. Obviously, the Lord Jesus is very clear.

It's not about those things. It's about the spiritual principles. And so he gives us a number of things.

He gives us the Holy Spirit. And remember, Paul speaks about the Holy Spirit and he says he is our down payment, our deposit, the earnest of our inheritance. And so the Lord Jesus gives us his Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit serves the same purpose as the tassel to remind us to be looking up.

He gives us water baptism, does the same thing. He gives us the Lord's table or communion, whatever you want to call it. And the communion is not, remember, it's not just about looking back at the cross, but it is also looking forward at his return.

I will not eat of the drink of the fruit of the vine until I do so new in my father's kingdom. And as the Jews ate the first Passover, they did that with their shoes on, with their belts around their waist, with their sticks in their, the staffs in their hands, because they were ready to move out. And we ought to take communion in exactly the same way.

Having our bags packed, our affairs settled, ready to move out, because maybe tomorrow I'm going to be in heaven. Folks, it's real. And I'm very grateful for Matt who published one of my recent articles in the bulletin on imminence.

Don't be put off by that fancy word, read the article. It's simple, it's straightforward. Jesus says, I'm coming and I'm coming at a time you don't expect.

And if that is disturbing to you, you have your eyes in the wrong place. You need to get your eyes on Jesus. In Luke, there's this very brief, one of the briefest verses in the Bible, Luke 17, 32, and it's not Jesus wept.

Anyone know what that verse is? Remember Lot's wife. I've got enough time to preach another message here. Remember Lot's, why must we remember Lot's wife? She was a loser after all, but remember Lot's wife.

Why? Because her eyes were fixed on the city. And when the angels came and dragged her out of the city, kicking and screaming, her heart was still back there with her stuff, with her friends, with her house, with whatever it is that she had down there. And she looks back and she turns into a pillar of salt.

Remember Lot's wife. Where is your heart? Where is your treasure? Where are your eyes? Are they still fixed upon Egypt? Are they fixed on Sodom and Gomorrah? And for the same as Sodom and Gomorrah burnt up with fervent heat, this city, Lancaster, and this world will burn up with fervent heat. But those who belong to him will be in his presence.

But where's your eyes? What are you looking at? And so Hebrews reminds us, looking unto Jesus, the author and the finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him, where was Jesus looking? Not at the mocking crowd, not at the pain, not at those who had forsaken him. Looking unto Jesus who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross. Because he had his eyes fixed on the right place, he was able to endure the cross.

Henceforth he has sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high. And the same way the Hebrews are saying to us, the same way Jesus had his eyes fixed on the joy that was set before him, we need to have our eyes in the right place. Not like Peter looking at the waves, not like Lot's wife who had eyes on the city, not like the people of Israel who are constantly looking for the leeks and the garlics and onions, but that we may look when we see those blue ribbons that God sends our way through his word, through his servants, through a word here and a message there, through the communion, through these various things.

Let us be reminded to look up because our redemption draws nigh.

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