

Living in Light of Eternity

by Brent Yim

Brent Yim's sermon emphasizes the importance of living with an eternal perspective by seeking the Lord and prioritizing spiritual pursuits.

Duration: 53:40

Scripture: Matthew 20:25, Romans 12:1, 2 Corinthians 5:10, Revelation 20:11-15

Topics: "Eternity"

Description

In this sermon, the pastor emphasizes the importance of living in light of eternity and evaluating our priorities. He admits that even he struggles with placing things before God, as he was playing Angry Birds instead of studying for his message. The pastor encourages the congregation to seek the Lord and build their lives upon the foundation of Jesus Christ. He urges them to live in a way that will receive the commendation of 'well done, good and faithful servant' from the Lord. The pastor also acknowledges the moral darkness in the world and encourages believers to find joy in the Lord despite the circumstances.

Transcript

I was thinking last night as I was studying for this message, how all the events of 2010, you know, they're going to contribute to the consummation of God's sovereign plan of redemption. And I was thinking specifically about the souls that came to know Jesus, you know, over the course of this last year. And, you know, it says in 2 Peter that God's longsuffering is for the purpose of salvation.

And so the reason that the Lord extends His mercy each and every day that we awaken is because there are still people in this world that have yet to come to know Him that will come to know Him. And it's amazing that not only are we growing in more of an intimate relationship with Christ, we're able to be that platform and that catalyst to share with others about Jesus as well. And it is a great privilege.

And so I look forward to 2011 and all that the Lord has in store. Who knows if we'll make it through the entire year. But as many days as the Lord does give to us, we look forward to how He's going to continue to move and work in our midst.

So let's pray and ask the Lord to bless our morning. I'm going to share with you a special message today. And then next week we will resume our study through the life of Christ.

I'm looking forward to that as well back in the parables. So let's pray and ask God to speak to our hearts this morning. Father, we come before You humbly with a clear understanding of how desperate we are for You.

Lord, and I know one of the greatest lessons that we can learn is evaluating our life apart from Christ and then who we are in Christ. Lord, knowing who we were and now having been transferred and conveyed into the kingdom of the Son of Your love. Knowing that we have Jesus and that everything that we do have is attributed to Your grace and to Your grace alone.

There's nothing that we've earned by way of our works. There's nothing that's noteworthy in and of ourselves. But anything good in us, Lord, is because of You.

And so we thank You for all that You have done. Lord, all that You are doing and all that You're going to continue to do in each one of our lives. Lord, I was thinking this morning that I'm so grateful that the accomplishing of Your plan is not contingent upon my health or my faithfulness.

But it's based upon Your faithfulness. And it's in that promise that I find great confidence, Lord. Knowing that the work You began in each one of our lives, You're going to be faithful to complete even unto the day of Christ.

And so I'm asking this morning as we look into Your word that we would reflect upon, Lord, all that You've done in this previous year. And that we would look forward to all that You're going to continue to do. Lord, we pray that You would give us ears to hear what the Spirit is speaking.

Hearts that would be wide open to receive all that's found in Your word. And we pray that You would continue to take us from glory to greater glory. And it would be for the exaltation of Your name that many would come to know You as Lord and Savior.

We love You. And we commit this morning into Your hands in Jesus' name. Amen.

A pastor's responsibility is to hear from the Lord, who obviously is the chief shepherd. And then to relay God's heart to those who have been entrusted to His care. And it's a responsibility that should be approached with the utmost reverence.

But what this requires of a pastor is that their heart remains sensitive to what the Lord is wanting to reveal to His people to the end. That they might share with the flock clearly and concisely the things that are upon the Lord's heart. And you might be asking, well, why is this important? Let me read to you how this question is answered in Habakkuk 2. And so God has ordained that He would raise up leaders in the church that would receive His heart.

And that they would in return relay that information to those who are under their care. And it's so very important that pastors are aware of what God is doing and how He's moving. Because the Lord wants His people to be informed in regard to His will.

And although the Lord doesn't always reveal to us the specifics of what He has for us. We do know that He wants us to live with an expectation and an anticipation concerning the things that He's promised to us. And so when we open the Word of God and we read the promises of God.

We should be living with an anticipation and expectation that God is going to fulfill His promises. That's how we're to live. We're to live on a daily basis with this perspective.

Therefore this morning's message was birthed out of a desire really to set the precedence for this upcoming year. And so my prayer is that the Lord by His Word and through His Spirit would really prevail in our hearts. And prepare us for what's on the horizon.

I believe that God has wonderful things in store. Not only for us individually but also for us collectively as the body of Christ. And not just here at TCC but for the universal body of Christ as a whole.

And the closer that we come to Jesus' second advent or Jesus' second return. The more we should expect that God is going to continue to move in our midst in a powerful way. I really believe that God is going to produce a revival in our days.

And I live with that expectation. Because I know God's heart and His desire to bring people into relationship with Him. And we know that where sin abounds grace abounds so much more.

And so I know that this world looks very dark in terms of its morality. The direction of our country and the direction of our world looks pretty dim. But I know that the Lord many times chooses at these points in history to work in the most profound ways.

Because it reveals that God is above and beyond these things. That the will of man and the sin of man will not prevail against God's plan of redemption. And I know that we can draw great comfort from that.

Now the inspiration for what I'm about to share with you really has materialized within this last week. As I've reflected upon someone's life who has been extremely inspirational to me. Now I'm going to share with you to preface that.

That my wife, one of the gifts that she bought me for Christmas was decision points. It's an autobiography of George W. Bush. We were at Costco and I just wanted to have a glimpse into what a president's life really is like.

And so she ended up buying that for me and I've enjoyed reading it immensely. And it's in this book that I'm really getting a candid snapshot of some very influential leaders of our times and from history. So I'm getting a glimpse into presidents and to diplomats and justices.

And all of these important people that we look up to as inspirational figures. But really none of these people as important as they are or have been in the past. Really have inspired me as much as one dear saint who has recently gone home to be with the Lord.

Actually her family is sitting here in the back on the side. And her name was Bobbi Rogers. She was a beautiful jewel that testified of God's grace.

And really her life exemplified the heart of Christ. I was sharing with Art and Jim just a few days ago when we were sitting down at our elders meeting. You know that of all the people over the course of this year that have inspired my life.

Not one of them has really inspired me the way that Bobbi Rogers has. And really as I reflect upon her life. The more true this statement becomes in my life personally.

And so there's many people here who knew her. And she was just a wonderful lady that testified of God's grace. And it wasn't until I was sitting here during her memorial service.

And I was listening to other people share about her life. That the Lord revealed to me what propelled her life. And why she lived the way that she lived.

It was almost as if the Lord whispered to me. Brent, Bobbi lived in light of eternity. And she was fully aware.

Having considered the amount of days that she was to live. And that ultimately her life would be weighed in the balances of eternity. And because of this her life loudly declared live in light of eternity.

I actually changed my message I was going to share in John chapter 11. And as I was sitting here listening to everyone share. I felt like all I had to do was simply highlight what her life actually declared.

And so I got up and shared out of 1 Corinthians chapter 15. And about resurrection. And shared a little bit about how she having polio as a young lady.

She was on the brink of death. And it was at that point that she realized that life is short. And when she came to know Jesus Christ as her Lord and Savior.

From that point forward she lived a life that was exemplary. Before the Lord and before people. Because she lived in light of eternity.

She was a wonderful woman. But the Lord really spoke to my heart. Brent, Bobbi lived in light of eternity.

I shared that she was like a living exhortation to me. Every time I would see her. And every time I would talk with her.

She was always reminding me of God's promises. She always had a smile on her face. Even when she was in the hospital.

And she was hooked up to a respirator. And she had all these IV's going into her arms. She still trusted the Lord.

And she still loved the Lord. And loved the people who were around her. She lived a selfless life.

And she lived a life that inspired me. And as I was thinking about her life over the course of these last couple weeks. God really granted her that form of wisdom that Moses asked for in Psalm chapter 90.

Where he says, teach us to number our days that we might gain a heart of wisdom. God granted her that wisdom. She understood that her life was short.

And therefore she lived in light of eternity. So in honor of Bobby Rogers. And to set the precedence for 2011.

For my life and for your life. And for this ministry collectively. The title of this morning's message is Living in Light of Eternity.

And as I was thinking about this title. The Lord I believe revealed to me three very practical and purposeful ways. That our lives should demonstrate this reality.

And so that's what our message is going to consist of. Are these three points that are really practical and purposeful ways. That our lives as Christians should demonstrate this principle.

So for the remainder of our time together. I'm going to briefly touch on these three points. So first, living in light of eternity by seeking the Lord.

If you have your Bibles turn with me to Colossians chapter 3 verse 1. I like New Year's because it speaks to me of new beginnings. And it's always the month before we enter into a new year. That I pray that God would give me.

His heart in regard to what he wants to accomplish in my life. Over the course of the next year. If he so would continue to give me life.

But the one passage of scripture. That I really believe the Lord highlighted in my heart. Is found here in Colossians chapter 3. And that's why it's our first point.

Living in light of eternity by seeking the Lord. And every time I come to this passage of scripture. My heart's encouraged.

I'm blessed by the scripture. And it's been very influential in terms of my outlook on life. But this is what Paul says or writes.

As he's ministering to the church in Colossi. He says if. And really in the original language.

That's a first class conditional sentence. And what I mean by that is. If Paul is not saying the possibility.

But he's actually inferring probability. So it's better translated sense. So sense you have been raised with Christ.

He says seek those things which are above. Where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above.

Not on things on the earth. For you died. And your life is hidden with Christ and God.

When Christ who is our life appears. Then you also will appear with him in glory. So first I want to point out from these few verses.

I want you to notice who Paul is writing to. Paul here is writing to Christians. This isn't a message to unbelievers.

And the reason that this message cannot. And will not be appropriate for unbelievers. Is because the natural man doesn't understand the things of God.

They're carnally minded. The natural man is subservient to the natural mind. Therefore they don't see the value.

In thinking upon eternity. The mantra of our world today is. Let's live, eat, drink and be merry.

Let's live for today. For this moment. Their plans even if they're for the future.

Are always for the future of this life. And so Paul here isn't talking to an unbeliever. He's speaking to Christians.

Because Christians should have a sense. That they're to live in light of eternity. But secondly I want to point this out.

How our position in Christ. Is the grounds of our pursuit of Christ. I'll repeat that.

Our position in Christ is the grounds of our pursuit of Christ. Notice it says. Seek those things which are above.

Where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above. Not on things on the earth.

For you died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. And so having been born again by the Spirit of God. Having received Jesus Christ into our hearts.

We then become positionally righteous before God. The Lord looks down upon us. And he sees us as blameless.

As sinless in his Son Jesus Christ. And so he says. When you are brought into relationship with Jesus.

And positionally before him as a redeemed servant of God. This becomes the grounds and the basis of your pursuit. If you are a child of God.

Then your pursuit should reflect your position. Does that make sense? The thought process here of Paul is this. Is a redeemed man ought to have a redeemed mind.

A renewed mind. He's saying we as Christians are to be seeking those things which are above. Now you might be asking the question.

Well why? Why does my mind need to be renewed? Why do I need to meditate upon things that are above? Well the answer is very simple. It's because convictions shape our conduct. The things that we believe.

The things that we hold to in terms of our beliefs. They will ultimately shape the way we act and the way we conduct ourselves. And so Paul here as he's writing to the Christians.

He's reminding them. Listen. You need to set your mind upon things above.

You need to seek those things which are above. As a child of God. This should be the utmost priority in every single one of our lives.

Yet so often living in this life. And surrounded with all the distractions that we're surrounded by. We're easily led astray.

And the enemy knows that if he distracts us then he can keep us from being effective. He wants to distract us. And sometimes these things are necessarily bad things.

But they take the place of the best thing. Right? And so here he's saying listen guys. Don't focus upon the things on the earth.

You need to set your mind upon things above. Seek those things which are above. Because Paul understood anthropology.

The study of man. That what we set our mind upon is how we're going to conduct ourselves. The things that we're going to say.

The way that we interact with one another. In other words our actions are simply a reflection of our beliefs. And so the apostle he answers this question.

How can my mind be renewed? Well our minds are renewed by seeking those things which are above. And by setting our mind upon things above. There's a similar encouragement given in the book of Philippians.

Where Paul says be anxious for nothing but in everything by prayer and supplication. Make your request be known to God. And the peace of God that surpasses understanding will guard your heart and your mind through Christ Jesus.

But he continues and he says the things that are pure, just, noble, trustworthy. Meditate upon these things and the peace of God will be with you. Because again Paul is highlighting the reality.

That which we believe and our convictions in our mind. Is only ultimately going to be the basis of our quality of life. And God wants us to experience victory in our life.

That's why in 2 Corinthians chapter 10 Paul would speak to the church in Corinth. And he says listen guys. Our war is not against flesh and blood.

But it's against principalities and powers. Rulers of the darkness of this age. And spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

But he goes on and he says the weapons of warfare they're not carnal. But they're mighty in God and pulling down strongholds. And exalting itself against the knowledge of God.

And so God has given us those weapons that we're in need of. To fight this battle that we're engaged in. But we as God's people need to be equipped by meditating upon things that are above.

And setting our mind upon those things which are above. Seeking the Lord and his economy. Now the word seek here in Colossians chapter 3. Is the same word that's used in Matthew chapter 6 verse 33.

It's a passage that many of us are familiar with. But in this passage it says seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. And all of these things shall be added unto you.

The same exact word. The word here seek means demand, ask, pursue with diligence. It means to be active and proactive in the seeking of these things.

It reminds me of a similar passage where Jesus says. If you knock then the door is going to be opened. If you seek you're going to find.

And so we're continually given that encouragement in the word. That we as God's people are to be seeking eternal things. That we're to be setting our mind upon that which is found in the word of God.

That exalts the Lord. That our minds might be renewed. And Paul here is speaking to the church in Colossians saying listen.

We need to live by this principle that Jesus taught us during his earthly ministry. Which is if we're living in light of eternity we will prioritize our pursuits. If we live in light of eternity then we will prioritize our pursuits.

And many people don't prioritize their pursuits unless they're faced with their own mortality. Maybe they find out they have cancer or there's something wrong in their life. Or they know that they're going to enter into eternity.

And therefore they kind of get everything in order. But wouldn't it be amazing if the Lord granted us this wisdom. Where we didn't have to get cancer or we didn't have to be on the brink of death.

Before we said Lord I want to seek for sure kingdom in your righteousness. God I want to set my mind upon things that are above. I realize the things that I've been searching after and seeking for upon this earth.

They're never going to satisfy me. The way that you satisfy me. God I realize I've been created to know you.

And the more that I know you the more I'm going to experience the quality of life that you've intended. That abundance of life for me. And so it's based upon all of these truths that we say you know what we want to prioritize our pursuits.

We want to be a people who reflect the reality that we live in light of eternity. So that when people see our lives they say there's something different about them. They're not seeking the same things that the world seeks after.

They're not pursuing the things that have left us with a void in our hearts. But there's joy, there's peace, there's contentment, there's satisfaction. Hey they might not have all the best stuff but listen they're living life.

Because they're seeking the Lord and his kingdom first and foremost. It's a principle that we find throughout the word of God. The third in this text I want you to consider how our pursuit of Christ assures us of our promotion from Christ.

He says when Christ who is our life appears then you also will appear with him in glory. Isn't that amazing? What confidence this statement provides for us. That we know that when this world and its works they pass away we're going to reign with Christ victorious.

That we look forward to a day where we're going to stand with Jesus and we're going to see him face to face. And so Paul says let's live in this way. Knowing that you're going to stand with the Lord.

Knowing that God is coming back for you and it could be at any moment. Seek me because that is what's really going to endure. Seek me because that is what will sustain you and maintain you.

Not only in this life but in this life to come. I was driving here to work today and I saw this young lady. She was on one of those what do they call in the gym? The elliptical machines.

I actually use it when I go to the gym as well. And I guess they make a street one where she was. And I was thinking wow that looks really nice.

Because after all the eating I've done for the holidays and stuff. I'd really like to do some exercise. After you haven't exercised for a while.

But I was thinking as I saw her pass by in my mind that verse came to mind. Where it says bodily exercise profits little. But exercising yourself toward godliness is profitable for all times.

But so often we focus upon the things that are upon this earth. And the lord is wanting to take us deeper as people to understand this to a greater reality. Not just to know these concepts in our minds.

But for these truths to actually impact the way that we live. For these truths to really sink deep into our hearts. Where we say you know what? I want to start seeking those things that are above more than the things upon this earth.

And not only will that bring again just a greater encouragement and satisfaction in your life personally. But listen the people that are around you are going to be impacted. Because just like Bobby Rogers who lived in light of eternity.

And she was always seeking those things which were above. And every time I knew her she was wanting to read her scriptures. And even her daughter Sandy was sharing with me.

How when she went to the hospital all she wanted was her bible. Because that was her life. She sought the lord.

She sought eternity. And that's why she's had a lasting impact upon me. And upon you and to the people she came in contact with.

And I was thinking as I was thinking about her. Lord I want to have that influence in the lives of the people that are around me. I want people to look at me and think wow.

I want to follow in after that example. And it has nothing to do with me or my faithfulness. But simply that we would be people who would respond to the word of God.

And say Lord we trust you. We believe that seeking your will and first your kingdom. Is the greatest thing that we can do in our lives presently.

Because that's what we'll be doing throughout eternity. And knowing that we're going to stand before the lord and be promoted by him. We will also appear with him in glory.

I look forward to that day. Listen the more conscious we are of eternity. The more closely we're going to evaluate our priorities.

And you know I'm not just talking to you right now. I'm talking to myself as well. I'm talking to myself as a pastor and a normal person with struggles like you.

And everyone else in this world. We all have these issues of placing things before God. To be honest last night I was supposed to be studying for my message.

And I was playing angry birds on my little phone. So I'm sitting there playing this little game angry birds. And there's all these levels and you have to try to knock these things down.

Absolutely worthless in terms of investment and time. And my wife looks at me and she goes. Shouldn't you be reading your bible or something? And I said yeah in a minute.

But I share that with you in all honesty. Because I'm not saying that I've figured this out. I'm not saying that there's a person in here who really is the perfect example of that.

I mean Jesus he is our model. And really this exhortation, this encouragement is relative. Based upon where you're at in your relationship with the Lord.

And as we grow the Lord reveals to us. Hey listen although all things are lawful. Not all things are expedient.

Although you as a Christian have liberty to do what you want to do. As long as it's not contrary to the word of God. It doesn't mean that necessarily lends toward maturity and growth.

And as you grow in the Lord your eyes begin to be open to this reality. And as you're praying God I want to get closer to you. The closer you get to the Lord the more the Lord reveals to you how sinful you are.

But it shouldn't stop in terms of our desire to pursue after him more and more. And I believe in 2011 not only for us personally but for us collectively as the body of Christ. The Lord wants to challenge us in this.

The Lord wants to challenge us that we would be a people who would be known. On the outside world and those looking in. That we are people who are seeking first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

That we are people who are living in a consciousness of eternity. Therefore we're evaluating our priorities. The things that we're engaged in.

The things that we're involved in. Should all be a reflection or a manifestation of us living with this perspective. That we are living in light of eternity.

So first living in light of eternity by seeking the Lord. Second living in light of eternity by submitting to the Lord. Turn with me to Romans chapter 12.

Now I know I've shared this text with you multiple times throughout this year. But as I was, yeah praise the Lord. But as I was sitting in my office thinking about a text to highlight this point.

The Lord once again led me to Romans chapter 12 verse 1. And I believe the reason he did that is because it's appropriate for the context of our thought process. And this is one of those jewels that's found in the word of God that really is so applicable every moment of the day. You know it's a passage of scripture that when I first went to Bible college I was careful to memorize.

And I found myself as I've taught the word of God that I'm continually quoting this verse. And as now I've been teaching on more of a broader scale. And not so limited as I was at the Bible college that this text continually comes up.

And I think of Paul's encouragement. He says it's not a tedious for me to remind you of these things always. It's something that we should continually learn and hear.

Because it's so appropriate for each one of us. But living in light of eternity by submitting to the Lord. And this is what Paul says.

I beseech you therefore brethren by the mercies of God that you present your bodies as a living sacrifice to God. Which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world.

But be transformed by the renewing of your mind that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. And so Paul here is writing to the church in Rome. And he's saying listen based upon what God has done for you.

Based upon your position as a born again believer. And his ways being above our ways. Past finding out.

I beseech you there. I urge you. I beg you that you would lay yourselves down as a living sacrifice.

That you would discover what God's will is for your life. And the whole purpose of discovering God's will is so that we would submit to God's will. Our discovery of God's will is to the end that we would submit to God's will.

And I don't want to belabor this point. But it's imperative to highlight the reality that to live in light of eternity is to submit our will to the one who inhabits eternity. Because only his will endures forever.

So if we're living for eternity. Then we want to be about the plan that is going to endure for eternity. And anything in our life that does not match up with God's will is going to pass away.

And so if we say as Christians we want to live in light of eternity. What we're saying is we want to live God's will. And as we begin to understand this concept and it seeks deep into our hearts.

And it becomes a part of who we are. Then we're able to pray. Not with just our words but with our heart.

The same plea that Jesus offered to the Father. Not my will but your will be done. Because someone who lives in light of eternity will sacrifice their will on the altar of obedience.

Because they believe that God's will is superior to theirs. And I ask you this morning. Do you believe that God's will is superior to yours? Do you trust God with your life? When you know that God is good.

When you know that God is gracious. When you know that God is merciful. And that he is kind.

That is who he is in his nature. Then his will will always be congruent with his nature. Meaning if God asks you to do something.

Or he tells you to do something. Or he says I have this for you and your life. Then we could submit to it knowing that God has our best interest at hand.

No matter how scary. No matter how difficult it might be. We're saying Lord we believe your will above ours.

And there's really so much comfort in this. Because the world today when you talk to them. They'll say to you well I'm going to pursue this new work endeavor.

I'm thinking about this relationship of proposing. Or I'm thinking about doing this or doing that. Or this is my ambition.

This is my desire. And really all the world and the encouragement they can give is go pursue your dream. Or they can pat you on the back and say good luck.

Right? And then if that fails. They kind of turn back around and say well yeah it didn't all work out. But as a child of God we come from a different perspective.

We come from a perspective of knowing that we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus. For good works prepare before and that we should walk in them. And so when God is revealing his will to our lives.

And we're submitting to that. We're simply saying Lord we trust that you've redeemed us. That we belong to you.

You know what's best for us and for our life. And God we want to surrender and yield to that. Because we believe that's what's best.

And that's called walking by faith and not by sight. Because I can tell you personally as a pastor who hasn't been really walking with the Lord that long in terms of years. That the Lord has asked me at times to do things where I had to step out in faith not knowing what the result would be.

And that's scary. It was scary coming here to this church. It was and it still is scary at times being here at this church.

But I believe that it's God's will for my life. So no matter what my feelings or my emotions are telling me. I say Lord I trust you above my feelings.

I trust you above my emotions. I trust you above my ambitions God. I'm here.

I'm yours. I belong to you. And so Lord I want to live what you've called me to live.

And how you've called me to live. Because I trust you. And again I don't have this perfectly figured out.

And I don't think anyone in here would raise their hand and say well you know I'm going to do a seminar on how to submit to the will of God. Because the Lord is constantly taking us from glory to greater glory right? We think we've conquered one area and the Lord says okay now this area. Oh not that area though Lord.

I'll do this, this, this and this but not that. And the Lord is constantly challenging us. But it's always to the end that we might experience a better quality of life.

Remember Jesus said I've come to give you life and life more abundant. Now when I say quality of life I'm not talking about the world standard. I'm talking about what's revealed in the word of God.

The quality of life that God wants us to live is a life of peace, of joy, of patience, of kindness, of goodness, of self control. Being untouched from this world. God wants us to experience a greater intimacy with Him.

That's the quality of life I'm talking about. And so whenever the Lord is calling us to do something it's always to that end. Does that make sense? It's always to the end that we might experience Him more, that we might know Him more, that we might trust Him more.

And the results are always wonderful. As hard as they may be. But someone who lives in light of eternity will be able to submit to the will of the Lord.

And be able to offer their will on the altar of obedience because they trust that God's will is superior to theirs. The more conscious we are of eternity, the more closely our will will be aligned with His will. And you know in 2011, maybe just tomorrow or today, we're not promised tomorrow.

And so obviously I'm not saying this in a boastful way, in an arrogant way like it says in the book of James. I'm just saying that the Lord would tarry and God would grant us life. I believe that He's put this word on my heart not only for me personally to share with me what He's wanting to do in my life.

But also for you as well. That the Lord wants to take us to a deeper place where we understand this principle. And I'm not saying understanding it intellectually.

I'm saying understanding it experientially. God wants us to experience Him more. Because the result will always be wonderful.

So first, living in light of eternity by seeking the Lord. Second, living in light of eternity by submitting to the Lord. If that was it, that would be enough.

But I believe the Lord gave me a third point. And that is living in light of eternity by serving the Lord. Turn with me to Matthew chapter 20.

And we're going to pick up in verse 25. To share with you the context to this story. Here Jesus is giving His disciples a glimpse into the standards that govern the heavenly economy.

And as we read over these few verses, I want you to notice the contrast between the heavenly standard and the world standard. But Jesus called them to Himself and said, You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them. And those who are great exercise authority over them.

Yet it shall not be so among you. But whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave.

Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give His life a ransom for many. And so Jesus' life and Jesus' death personified service. Jesus was willing to serve humanity to the point of His death.

Now this is a service that I can't personally sympathize with. I can't really relate to this. Because it's hard for me at times when I see the dishes in the sink at home.

And I'm tired from being at work and the Lord prompts my heart to say, You need to offer to do the dishes. And sometimes I do them, but not always with a good heart. And then I come to passages like this.

Where the Lord says, I didn't come to be served, but to serve and give my life a ransom for many. And then I'm reminded of the crucifixion. And the physical pain that Jesus experienced.

So that I can be whole. And then I think about not only on the physical end, but the spiritual end. Where the Lord laid upon Him all the sins of the world.

And He had to endure the wrath of God. And separation from God. So that I might be brought to Him.

And my heart fails. Because I realize that in my flesh. And in the human nature.

This doesn't sound fun to me. But in the spirit my heart says, Yes Lord, I want more of that. So there's this conflict going on.

In me personally. Part of me is saying, No. And part of me is saying, Yes.

But if I'm living in light of eternity and I realize. That Jesus being my supreme model. Should be the foundation of how I live my life.

Then I believe that God wants to take me to a greater degree. In understanding what this actually means. So Jesus who is our supreme model.

That paradigm that we look to. Use His life to illustrate our third point in this text. It reminds me of John chapter 13.

Where a few hours before the Lord would be betrayed. To the guards. And to these men who wanted to kill Him.

He's there in the upper room with His disciples. And instead of isolating Himself and going into a corner. Preparing Himself for the wrath and the pain that He would endure on the cross.

He actually gets on His hands and knees. And He begins to wash the feet of the disciples. And the reason that He did this is found in John chapter 13.

Preceding these verses where it says. Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands. And that He had come from God and was going to God.

He did these things. And so listen. The God man, the Theanthropos.

Jesus Christ who came into this world. Knowing that He'd return before the Father. And give an account to His responsibilities.

Upon the earth. God down on His hands and knees and began to wash the feet of the disciples. His service to the people.

Was driven by living in light of eternity. And that's what God wants of us. And the reason it's so difficult is because we live in a society and a culture.

That propels and declares something completely different. They're constantly telling us it's about you. It's about your desires.

It's about your wants. Who cares who it hurts. Who cares who it offends.

And even though we have laws right now. It seems like the heart of humanity. Especially in America.

Because we've so given ourselves over to this mentality. Everyone's doing what's right in their own eyes. And we're calling evil good and good evil.

And we don't care who it affects. Or who it offends. Or who it hurts.

We're going to do it because we want to do it. We're a selfish culture. And we are being affected by that.

We, maybe, I don't know, I'm in a mid-generation, 31 years old. The older generation is being affected by that. But do you want to know who's most affected by that? It's our kids.

I mean think about what they're being taught on a daily basis. Think about what their teachers are telling them in school. Think about what they're watching on TV.

Think about what they're reading on the internet. It's the spirit of antichrist that's saying it's all about you. Do you know what the phrase in the satanic bible is that really encompasses that religion? Do what thou will.

Do what thou will. It doesn't matter who it hurts, who it offends. Do what you want.

Give yourself over to your passions, to your lusts, to your desires. It doesn't matter. Where the bible says no.

You die to your desires so that you might serve others. And so do you see the polar opposites here? That the bible is saying that we as Christians, when we're living in light of eternity, knowing that we're going to stand before God, should live lives of selflessness. Where the world is saying, no, you need to live a life of selfishness.

You deserve this. You're entitled to this. And I buy into that all the time.

I think, oh lord, I've been serving you so well. I've been studying for messages and I'll go to a hospital call or I'll do some counseling and I come home and I tell them, baby, you don't know I've been ministering all day. No, I want to be served.

But listen, we're willing to serve to a degree. And listen, for a lot of us, maybe that comes naturally to you. And again, this encouragement is relative based upon where you're at with the lord.

But I believe God wants to take us, me, together to a place where we're living in light of eternity and that's reflected in our service to the people that are around us. I get so turned off by church often and the mentality of church because we come together and we bring this mentality into the fellowship. If the chairs aren't nice enough or the building or the heat or the air or the TVs or this or that or parking wasn't good enough or this or they didn't have good muffins or good coffee, it's like, you know what I mean? You're trying to please people and everyone just thinks, you know, you're here to serve me.

It's always about me. But could you imagine if we were a church or a fellowship or the church in America specifically, they caught on to this biblical principle and they said, God, man, we repent of that. Man, I'm not here to be served.

I'm here to serve. I'm here to look out for the interests of others. It's not about how I feel today, Lord.

Is there somebody around me that I can maybe minister to, maybe pray for, encourage, build up, share a word with? I just want to come here to serve the body of Christ. Hey, and if we all did that, could you imagine the effect that we would have upon one another's lives? But not only that, when people came in and they saw that, they'd be like, whoa, this is so different. Some may not like it.

They may be offended and walk out. But others are going to come in and they're going to say, wow, this is what I've been searching for. This is what I've been longing for.

Wow, these guys, they really exemplify the reality that they are disciples of Jesus Christ because of their love one for another. They're not living selfishly, but they're living selflessly. And I believe that the Lord wants to take us to a greater level in regard to this principle and its application to our life.

This reminds me of a reference found in 2 Corinthians 5 where Paul writes this, Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well-pleasing to Him. For we must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body according to what he has done, whether profitable or unprofitable. Now, this isn't to scare you because Paul here is not referring to the white throne judgment found in Revelation 20.

Paul here is referring to the Bema seat judgment. And he's using the correlation to the throne that was there in Corinth after the Olympic games or the games where the athletes would stand before the judge and the judge would reward them based upon their efforts. And in 1 Corinthians chapter 3, Paul, he refers to this and he says, There's going to be some people who have built upon the foundation, which is Christ, with wood, hay, and stubble.

And it's going to be tested as of through fire. And some people's works, they're going to burn up. It's going to be gone.

There's nothing that's going to be left. And they're going to make it through into heaven, but just barely. And he says there's going to be some people who heeded this encouragement and they lived their lives in light of eternity.

They served the people that were around them. And they built upon that foundation with precious gold and silver and jewels. And when they stand before the Lord and their works are tested, it's going to endure that fire.

And the Lord's going to look down upon them and say, Well done, good and faithful servant. Do you want to hear that? Do you want to hear your Lord and Savior, the one who will bear the marks upon his arms and upon his feet, the scar on his side when you see him face to face, do you want him to look down upon you? And then there, as you're in light of what he's done for you, say, Well done, good and faithful servant. And you listened and heeded this encouragement.

Therefore, enter in to the joy of the Lord. That should be a desire from each one of us. But we won't live this way unless we're living in light of eternity.

Paul understood that. And that's why he wrote this in 2 Corinthians chapter 5. And that's why he purposed to weigh his deeds according to this biblical principle. And there's so much that we can glean from this example.

You know, the more conscious we are of eternity, the more consistent our service is going to be before him. And I believe these three principles, I mean, at least for me personally, I'm simply sharing with you what the Lord's put on my heart. I believe the theme for my year is living in light of eternity.

And I believe that it is a theme that each one of us can attribute to our lives as well. We can find that it's applicable or pertinent for our lives as well. Because no matter how young or old you might be, no matter where you are in terms of your walk with the Lord, how long you've been walking with him, none of that stuff matters.

Because this is a biblical principle that can be applied to each one of our lives. And so some of us today have been convicted and we're realizing, okay, maybe I need to reevaluate my life. And that's good.

Conviction is good. But what do we do from this point? I was sharing with First Service that, you know, I believe the way that we respond is first recognizing that we can't muster the strength up in and of ourselves to produce this type of effect. It's not something that we can work to obtain.

Oh, look, now I'm living in light of eternity. It's something that God has to do in our hearts. But the Bible says that the Lord draws near to those who have a broken spirit, a broken, contrite heart, those who tremble at his word, those who recognize and acknowledge that God's word is truth.

And we would say to the Lord, God, we believe, but you need to help our unbelief. We need you, Lord, to do this work in our hearts, in our minds, in our lives. Because without you, we can't do it.

We know that this is what you've called us to. But, Lord, will you come in and will you change my life? Will you change my heart? Will you change my priorities? Maybe some of you are sitting here today and the very first point that I touched on in terms of seeking the Lord is an area where that just really stood out to you. And in the quietness of your heart, all you have to say is, Lord, you've exposed this, God.

Will you work this into my life and into my heart? Will you help me prioritize my pursuits? Or maybe for some of you, it's submitting to God's will. Maybe a job or a relationship or there's something in your life where you've really been resisting what you know you should be doing. And you're saying, God, I know you've called me to this, but I need help.

I need help because my flesh is fighting this. And I'm asking that your spirit would prevail in my heart. God, I want to be a person who submits to your will for my life.

Or maybe for some of you, you've been convicted or the Lord's exposed in your life that maybe your service before him hasn't been where it should be. Maybe you're not serving your spouse the way that you should be. Maybe you're not serving your kids the way that you should be.

Maybe you're not serving your coworkers the way that you should be. I'm not just talking about here at the church. I'm saying in your life in general that the Lord is wanting to take you to a new level in terms of living in light of eternity by serving his people.

And if you're saying today, yes, that's me and I need to grow in this area, but Lord, I need the strength and the will and the resolve to do it. Then just simply offer that before the Lord and say, God, I need your help. And watch how God begins to work in your life.

Watch how God begins to produce these results in your heart. Watch as he begins to renew your mind and transform your mind and he begins to replace his desires with your desires. Watch how he does it.

And then we as God's people become a living testimony, an example of his grace and of his glory. And so for 2011, for this day and for tomorrow, for the rest of this week, maybe not for the entire year. Some of you are thinking, I don't even know I'm going to do like two days from now.

I just need a word for today. This is the word for today. OK.

The word for today is living in light of eternity, and it's pretty easy seeking, submitting and serving. And if you pray about these things, then really this is a great foundation to start off this new year and say, Lord, I

want to be used by you. I believe that God has wonderful things on the horizon.

You know, there's specifics in my life. I'll be teaching again at the Bible College, and there's a few things that I've committed to, and I'm excited about that. I really believe that the Lord is opening up more doors for me to minister the word.

And we've taken that step of faith to bring Jim on staff and actually pay him for everything that he does now. And, you know, to free me up maybe to be able to study a little bit more and to give myself to the ministry of the word and prayer and also to my family. And, you know, there's just a lot of things that I'm doing here that I've been doing for the last two and a half years that I feel like the Lord is really pulling me away from more so that I can exercise the gift of teaching that God has given to me and to minister to his people and to love his people.

And so I'm looking forward to that. But then there's things that I know are on the horizon that, you know, I probably never even began to imagine. You know, and it's exciting living with that expectation and anticipation.

And that's not just for me as a pastor. And God doesn't love me more because, you know, I'm teaching his word. He loves us all the same, and he has wonderful things in store for each one of us.

So as Josiah and Lindsay, they come back up here to lead us in a time of worship. I was instructed by Hytham that we're going to pass out the bread first, and then we're going to take that together. And then their ushers are going to come back up, and they're going to pass out the cup to make it a little bit easier so that you guys can hold on to one and then the other.

But my encouragement to you as we're bowing our hearts before the Lord and waiting for the elements to be passed out, that you would just really take some time before the Lord in your heart and just pray that the Lord would search you and know you. And just ask God, Lord, what do you want him to do? And have him speak to you. Ask him to speak to you.

And I know he's going to be faithful to do that. So Father, once again this morning, I thank you for this word. And maybe, Lord, you've had me go to two services to teach twice the same message so that it really could impact my heart.

Maybe I'm the one that needs to hear it double of what everyone else is hearing it. Lord, I want to be careful as a pastor and as just a man to heed the encouragements found in the Word of God. Lord, I know that none of us are perfect.

We don't claim to be perfect. If that was the case, then Jesus didn't have to come to die. But we do want the practicality of what you've done to be congruent with that which we profess.

We want our lives to declare and demonstrate that we are those who do live in light of eternity by seeking you, by submitting to you, and by serving your people. And so right now, as we prepare our hearts to take communion, Father, I ask that we would look to the sacrifice and provision that was made upon the cross so that we might have life, the ability where we once didn't have that ability to serve you. And so, Spirit, fall upon this place and encourage, uplift, strengthen.

As we look to you now, we sing this song of adoration because you're worthy, Lord. And so we do love you. Thank you for this morning.

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