

(Through the Bible) Hebrews 3-4

by Chuck Smith

The sermon emphasizes the superiority of Jesus as our High Priest and the necessity of faith to enter into God's promised rest.

Duration: 1:20:24

Scripture: Psalm 95:10, Matthew 6:33, Philippians 2:12-13, Hebrews 3:7-8, Hebrews 3:12, Hebrews 4:1, Hebrews 4:11

Topics: "Judgment And Accountability", "Faith And Obedience"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of being mindful of our actions and motivations, as we will all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. Our works will be judged not based on what we did or didn't do, but on the motivation behind our actions. The speaker warns that many good deeds may be discarded in this judgment. The sermon also discusses the example of the Israelites wandering in the wilderness for forty years due to their unbelief and failure to receive God's promises. The speaker highlights the need to exhort and encourage one another daily to avoid being hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

Transcript

Shall we turn now in our Bibles to Hebrews, the third chapter. Wherefore, holy brethren. The word wherefore immediately leads us back to that which is immediately preceding.

And that is the declaration of the superiority of Jesus over the angels. Because he is superior over the angelic beings. Being the son of God.

Wherefore, holy brethren. Partakers of the heavenly calling. Consider the apostle and high priest of our confession.

Jesus Christ or Christ Jesus. So, here we are called upon to consider Jesus. And that's what the book of Hebrews really is all about.

And again, later on, we'll be called to consider Jesus. Paul calls them holy brethren and partakers of the heavenly calling. He calls Jesus the apostle and high priest of our confession.

The book of Hebrews was written to Hebrews. Those who had grown up and had been thoroughly trained in the religion of the Hebrews in Judaism. Who were used to having a high priest.

Used to the ceremonies in the temple. Used to all of the regalia and the worship of the priesthood. They were used to the high priest going in on the day of atonement.

And making the atonement for the sins of the people. Now he is going to declare we have a high priest. And in time he is going to show the superiority of our high priest over the priests who were after the order of Levi.

But for the time being, in chapter 3, he is going to show us the superiority of Jesus over Moses. Through whom the priesthood was established. In other words, God established his house.

The spiritual house. Through Moses. And it was through Moses that the tabernacle was set up.

And the dimensions and all declared. And so he is going to show the superiority of Jesus. Consider now the apostle and high priest of our confession, the Messiah Jesus.

Who was faithful to him that appointed him. As also Moses was faithful in all of his house. For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses.

In as much as he who has built the house has more honor than the house. Now it is interesting that the figure of the house is used for the congregation of the people of God. We are told in the New Testament that the church is the building of God.

We are the royal priesthood. We are of the household of faith. And this idea of the house of God being the church, God's people, where God dwells.

Now in the Old Testament, Israel was the house of God. And the temple was known as the house of the Lord. And when Solomon built the temple, he called it the house of the Lord.

I know that the heavens of heavens cannot contain you. How much less this house that we have built. The interesting thing to me, the glorious thing to me, is that God desires to dwell with his people.

Now he could dwell anywhere in the universe that he pleased. And he does fill the universe. But it is the Lord's desire to come and to dwell among his people.

God just loves dwelling among his people. Oh that we would recognize the presence of God as he comes to dwell among his people. And so tonight as we lifted our voices in worship and praise unto him, God dwelling here in the midst of his people.

Just an awesome reality. How God loves to dwell among his people. Now the one who builds the house is greater than the house itself.

It was the Lord who built the house. Thus he is greater than the house. He is deserving more honor and glory.

For every house is built by some man. And that is the idea of the effect and a cause. You cannot have an effect without a cause.

Every house is built by some man. You look at a house and you like the architecture and the style and you say, I wonder who built that house. I wonder who drew up the design.

And if I would try and show you and say, Hey, nobody built that house. Just one day it appeared there. You know we had an earthquake and all of the earth was shaking and all and pop right out of the earth.

There this thing is. Beautiful dormers and stained glasses and you know the whole thing. Just marvelous.

You can say you're crazy man. You can't have an effect without a cause. You can't have a house without a builder.

Things just don't happen that way. Unless they're man. According to the evolutionary theory.

Every house has a builder. The cause and effect. And the builder of all things is God.

It's the argument of cause and effect. Here's the house. All right.

You've got a house. You have a builder of the house. Here's the church.

You have to have one who built the church. Jesus said upon this rock I will build my church. And so he who has built the house is greater than the house itself.

And he that has built all things is God. Now Moses verily was faithful in all his house. As a servant.

For a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after. So Moses was faithful. He gave to us the laws of God.

He was a servant. And he declared unto us the commandments and the statutes and the judgments. The worship.

The ordinances. Which were all a shadow of Jesus Christ. As Paul wrote in Colossians.

These things were all a shadow of things to come. The real substance is Jesus. So if you go back in the law.

If you go back in the sacrifices. If you go back in the ordinances and in those things. You will find that Jesus is behind it all.

It is all pointing to Jesus. The offerings for sin and all. They're all pointing to Jesus.

So he was a faithful servant. As he testified of those things. Which were to be spoken after.

So there is the prophetic aspect to the writings of Moses. That were fulfilled in Jesus. But Christ.

As a son over his own house. Now Moses is a servant in the house. Faithful.

But Christ is as the son over the house. Whose house we are. The house of Jesus Christ.

The building of God. The church. The place where God has chosen to dwell.

Whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence. And the rejoicing of the hope. Firm unto the end.

And so here is the exhortation towards perseverance. There was a danger. And it was happening.

That some of these Jews who had come out of Judaism. And all of its traditions. They were beginning to slip back.

Into Judaism. Going back to the traditions. And so Paul is warning them.

Or I believe it is Paul. Whoever it was that wrote Hebrews is warning them. And if I slip and say Paul.

You will know that that is my opinion. Is warning them. To maintain.

Their hope. That they have come to in Christ. And hold fast that confidence.

And the rejoicing of hope. Unto the end. Wherefore.

As the Holy Spirit sayeth. Today if you will hear his voice. Harden not your hearts.

As in the provocation. In the day of the temptation in the wilderness. When your fathers tempted me.

Proved me. And saw my works for forty years. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation.

And said. They do always err in their heart. And they have not known my ways.

So I swore in my wrath. They shall not enter into my rest. So he is going to make reference to this.

Ninety-fifth Psalm. A couple of times here in chapters three and four. As he is going to be pointing out.

The superiority of Jesus over Moses. For Moses a servant in the house. Bringing them the testimony of God.

And the law of God. Could not lead them into the rest. Moses could not lead them into the promised land.

They came to the water of Meribah. Which means strife. They came to the wilderness area.

They came to the wilderness to the area of Meribah. And they cried unto Moses and said. You know you brought us out here to die.

We don't have any water. We are going to perish. We have been better to have stayed in Egypt.

Moses had been hearing this stuff for forty years. He had had it. He could not take it anymore.

He went in before God and said. God I have had it. I can't stand it.

Nothing but murmuring and griping for forty years. They are not my children. I didn't produce all of these people.

And I am sick of trying to carry them. And God said. Moses they are thirsty.

They need water. Now you go out and speak to the rock. That it might bring forth water.

But Moses was angry. He was upset. He was sick of their murmuring.

And so he went out and said. You bunch of hypocrites. Always murmuring and complaining.

Must I take my rod and smite this rock again to give you water. And he took his rod and he smote the rock. And the water came forth and the people drank.

God said. Moses come here son. Did I tell you to strike the rock? No.

What did I tell you? He said speak to the rock. Why did you smite it? I was angry. Yes.

Moses. You are my representative to those people. They look to you.

To understand me. My attitudes. Moses you misrepresented me.

You represented me as angry and upset. I am not angry and upset with them Moses. They need water and I know that.

I am compassionate. I am cognizant of their need. And because you failed to represent me before the people Moses.

I just can't let you lead them into the land. Oh come on Lord. You can't be serious.

Yes I am Moses. Lord. That's been the ambition of my life.

It's the only reason why I've been hanging around. Sorry Moses. Oh please.

No way. And though Moses besought the Lord. The Lord would not let him lead them into the land.

He could not take them into the rest. Now that is significant. In that.

Moses being representative of the law. Through history. It is interesting to observe the fact that the law.

Or the works of the law. Can never bring you into the place of rest. In the Lord.

By your obedience to the law. By your keeping the law. It will never bring you into rest.

The law cannot bring you into the rest of God. And so. The people provoked God.

Later. Well earlier actually in their history. Then they came to Kadesh Barnea.

As they were journeying. From Mount Horeb. It is an 11 day journey from Mount Horeb to.

Kadesh Barnea the scripture says. But it took them 40 years. They came to Kadesh Barnea.

In the beginning. They sent spies into the land. Of which 10 came back with an evil report.

Bringing fear into the hearts of the people. Which. Ultimated in unbelief.

And they said we can't go in. We can't do it. We can't take the land.

And because of that heart of unbelief. God was provoked. And he said alright.

Because you are not trusting in me. You say that you're afraid if you go in there. Your children will all be killed.

I'll tell you what. This is going to be the longest funeral procession in history. You're going to stay here in the wilderness.

Until you all die. And your children who. For whom you feared.

They will be the ones that will go in and take the land. And so they never entered into God's rest. Moses couldn't bring them into God's rest.

And so he quotes from this psalm. As the psalmist. Talking about.

The goodness of God and the Mercies of God and all. Turns to the subject.

Of their failure in the wilderness to enter into the rest. Harden not your hearts. He said.

As in the day. Of provocation. When your fathers tempted me.

Proved me. Saw my works for 40 years. And I said they have not known my ways.

So I swore my wrath. They shall not enter into my rest. Take heed brothers.

Lest there be in any of you. An evil heart of unbelief. In departing from the living God.

Again. The departing from. God.

These people have been delivered from. Egypt. They come out of the bondage of Egypt.

The issue isn't the deliverance from sin. The issue is the entering into the fullness that God has for you. There are many people.

Who have peace with God. They've been delivered from the power of sin. From darkness.

Into the kingdom of light. But. They don't have the peace of God.

They have not entered into the rest. They haven't entered into that. Full rich abundant life of the spirit.

That God has promised unto us. Their Christian experience is a wilderness experience. As they wander through the wilderness.

They don't really enjoy the walk with the Lord as they should be enjoying it. It's sort of a trial. Constant trial.

Where God wants you to come into that fullness of the life and the spirit. And know the victory of the spirit of God within your life. Entering into that rich fullness of the Lord.

And so they wandered for 40 years. As an example. Of what happens when we by.

Our unbelief fail to receive. The promises of God. So.

We are needing to take heed. That we not depart from the living God. But exhort one another daily while it is called today.

Lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers. Of Christ.

If. We hold the beginning of our confidence. Steadfast.

Unto the end. Again. The exhortation towards perseverance.

Twice here in the text. Actually. Three times within the text.

If we hold. Our confidence. Steadfast to the end.

While it is said today. If you will hear his voice hard and not your hearts. As in the provocation.

For some. When they had heard did provoke. How be it not all that came out of Egypt by Moses.

But with whom was he greed for 40 years. Was it not with them that had sinned. Whose carcasses fell in the wilderness.

And to whom swear he that they should not enter into the rest. But to them that believed not. So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

Now it is important for us. To notice. Their failure was the failure of faith.

They did not believe. God was able to bring them into the land. They somehow were looking at their own resources.

And looking at the power of the enemy. And they were saying. We can't do it.

We're unable to go in. Many times we find that. It is our unbelief that keeps us.

From entering into that full rich life. That God would have us to experience and to enjoy. And again.

Our problem is our looking at our own resources. And looking at the power of the enemy. And always.

When we get our eyes off of the Lord. And on to the enemy. Terror fills our hearts.

And unbelief. But we've got to know that there is. Greater power with us than that which is against us.

Greater is he. That is in you than he that is in the world. And so.

Jesus. The high priest of our confession. Greater than Moses.

In that Moses was only a servant in the house. Jesus the son ruling over the house. The builder of the house.

Moses. Unable to take them into God's rest. Whereas Jesus.

Will bring us into God's rest. Let us therefore fear. Lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest.

Any of you should seem to come short of it. As you. Look at your own heart tonight.

Is it at rest. Have you entered into the rest of God. Do you have.

That deep. Peace of Christ tonight. Filling your mind your heart your life.

Or is there anxiety. Strife. Turmoil.

Unrest. What is the condition of your heart tonight. Now let us beware.

Let us be careful. God has given us the promise of rest. Let's take heed that.

We. Enter into that rest. For it is very possible that even though God has a rest.

And as. Desiring you to come into the rest is possible that you don't know or experience that rest. That God would have you to know and experience in Christ.

Jesus said come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden. I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you learn of me.

For my yoke is easy yet my burden is light and ye shall find rest for your souls. Have you found that rest for your soul. Are you resting in Jesus tonight.

That's the issue. For there are many who are not. There are many Christians.

Who do not know that rest in Christ. But are still laboring under a work ethic. In order to be pleasing unto God.

Or just who through unbelief. Have not made that total commitment of their life and the affairs of their life unto him. Knowing that he is faithful and will keep that which I've committed.

But they haven't made that commitment. And thus they do not know the rest. For unto us was the good news preached.

As well as unto them. But the word preached did not profit them. Because it wasn't mixed with faith in them that heard it.

God has promised a rest. I've got to believe that. I enter into it by faith.

If I don't by faith enter into it. Then I will remain in my mental turmoil and strife. Do you believe that God wants you to experience his rest? Do you believe that God is in control of your life? Do you believe that God loves you? If you believe these things.

Then you have entered into that rest. Because after all. Why should I worry? God is in control.

God is going to take care of it. The way we sometimes act. You would think that God abdicated the throne.

That he wasn't in control anymore. But God is in control. If you have surrendered and submitted your life to him.

And you have to just believe him and trust him. Knowing that he is able to take care of you. For we which have believed.

Do enter into the rest. And that's the key. To entering into the rest.

It is the rest that can only come through faith. Now a lot of people say. But it's so hard to rest in faith.

It would be a lot easier to rest. If God would just show me what he's doing. If God would just explain to me.

Why he has allowed this to happen to me. And what he's going to work out of it. The good that's going to come from it.

If I could just see that. Then I could probably rest more easily. It's hard to rest in faith.

You may find it hard to rest in faith. But the only place you'll ever rest is in faith. You cannot rest in your works.

In your skills. In your efforts. Never will you find rest.

Until you come to that rest of faith. Lord I've committed it completely unto you. I can't do anything about it Lord.

I have no control over these circumstances Lord. I turn it over to you. And I place it in your hands God.

And I'm just going to trust you. And I'm going to watch and see what you do. Knowing that you've promised.

That you will work. I'm going to just believe you Lord. To work out a perfect plan in my life.

And in these circumstances by which I'm surrounded. And so I rest. An incomplete commitment is complete rest.

That total commitment and abandonment to God. Is the place of perfect peace. And God will keep you in perfect peace.

If your mind is stayed on him. So we which have believed. Do enter into rest as he said.

As I have sworn in my wrath. If they shall enter into my rest. Although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.

Now as far as the works are concerned. They have been wrought by God. All I am to do is to believe the work of God.

What must we do? They said to Jesus to do the work of God. And Jesus said this is the work of God. Believe on him who he has sent.

It is a finished work that Christ has accomplished for us. You cannot add one thing to your salvation. You cannot add one thing to your acceptance by God.

He has accepted you in and through the finished work of Jesus Christ. You cannot add to your righteousness. As Paul wrote to the Galatians.

Oh foolish Galatians. Who has bewitched you that you should so soon turn from the truth. Having begun in the spirit.

Are you now going to be made perfect in the flesh. As the children of Israel began a spiritual relationship with God. Being brought out of Egypt by the power of God.

Now they thought that by their own efforts they were going to have to go in and take the land. And thinking that they were going to have to by their own works and efforts take the land. They looked at the giants and they looked at the problems and they said we can't do it.

And thus they failed to enter into the rest. Now there are so many Christians. Delivered miraculously by the power of God's spirit from the life of sin.

And now God holds before them. This full rich life in the spirit. Walking in the spirit.

Walking after the spirit. Walking a life of complete obedience unto God. And they say oh I could never do that.

That's beyond my capacity. I can't be that good. And having begun in the spirit somehow they think that God has said alright now you see what you can do from here on.

I can even quote you that verse of scripture. Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. I know how that scripture used to shake me up.

I had that preached to me so long. Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. But they never completed the scripture for it is God who works in you.

Both to will and to do of His good pleasure. Don't quote a half a verse. Have the truth.

The whole truth. In half a verse. When you finish the verse it makes all the difference in the world.

It takes it off of me and puts it on Him. Takes it off of my strength and puts it on His. My abilities and it puts it on His.

It is God who is working in me both to will and to do. I don't have it. I can't do it.

But God is able to do for me what I can't do for myself. And so I am believing and trusting God to do it. And I'm resting in God.

And as I rest in God I have that glorious peace within. Hey, I'm not perfect. Not by a long shot.

But I'm on the way. God's working. And He is able to do what I can't do for myself.

Having begun in the Spirit I must remain in the Spirit. Walking after the Spirit. Yielding to the Spirit that God might work.

But in the meantime I'm resting. So I fail so I rest. God is able to make me to stand.

He is able to keep me from falling. And I am believing Him and trusting Him. Resting in Him and in His finished work.

For He spake in a certain place of the seventh day. On this wise. And God did rest the seventh day from all of His works.

And in this place again He said, If they shall enter into my rest. Now God rested on the seventh day from all of His works. That is His creative works.

Because the creation was finished. Once the creation was finished. There was no longer the necessity of creative works.

And so God rested from His creative works on the seventh day. Now God established then the Sabbath day. And He said, Six days shalt thou labor and do thy work.

And the seventh day is a day of rest. Because the Lord rested on the Sabbath day. Now this Sabbath day rest that was established in the law by Moses.

Was a type of the rest that the believer is to experience in Jesus Christ. The problem is they made a work out of the Sabbath day rest. And you ought to see how they work at it today.

It's a real task to keep that Sabbath day rest. And it really takes working at. And they've made up all kinds of rules and regulations concerning the Sabbath day rest.

Thou shalt not bear any burden on the Sabbath day. What constitutes bearing a burden? Well false teeth are something that you carry. And so you can't wear your false teeth on the Sabbath day.

I suppose false eyelashes would fall into the same category. The rabbis really didn't have to deal with them. You're not to use money on the Sabbath day.

By yourself. But a nice little convenience you can use a credit card. You're not paying for it today.

There's some kind of a mental imbalance with credit cards where you think you're not paying. It's sure a lot easier to shove the card across the counter than it is the bucks isn't it? Somehow you get the feeling you're not paying for it. Here it's just a card.

You're not paying for this. But that Sabbath day was only a shadow of the rest. That the people of God should experience in Jesus Christ.

The substances of Christ. Therefore let no man judge you in respect to new moon, Sabbath days and so forth. Which all were a shadow of things to come.

The real substance is Jesus. There are those today who would judge us because of the Sabbath day. There are those that would even introduce the Sabbath day worship to the church.

And introduce the laws of the worship on the Sabbath day to the church. But if you are going to seek to be justified by the law you better also realize the curse that is involved with it. Because it says curse it is every man who continues not in the whole law to do all of the things that are written therein.

Now one of the things on the Sabbath day you could not do was kindle a fire. The minute you turn the ignition switch on your car you're kindling a fire. That little spark that ignites the fuel in the cylinder.

You're kindling a fire. Can't turn on a light switch. Kindling a fire.

Within the bulb. Seeing therefore it remains that some must enter therein and they to whom it was first preached did not enter in because of unbelief. Again he limited a certain day saying to David today.

And notice through the text there's been today, today, today, today, today. Some five times or so. The emphasis is upon today.

He limited it to a certain day through David in Psalm 95. He said today. And this was a long time after their failure in the wilderness.

They had still not entered into the rest. God was still speaking of the day that they could long after their failures. After so long a time it is said today if you will hear his voice don't harden your hearts.

So David was pleading with the people of his day. Today hear God's voice don't harden your hearts. Don't follow the example of those in the wilderness.

For if Jesus. Now this is Joshua. It's the Greek translation of Joshua.

And it's a reference to Joshua who took over after Moses death. Again one of their great leaders. If Joshua had given them rest.

Then would he not have afterward have spoken of another day in which they could enter into that rest. So Joshua who brought them into the land. Did not bring them into the rest.

And that is an interesting thing. There are even those that have come into the land of promise who still haven't entered into the rest. The rest that God wants you to experience is his child.

The rest in the completed finished work of Jesus Christ. For our righteous standing before God. My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus blood and righteousness.

I dare not trust the sweetest frame but wholly lean on Jesus name. I am resting in him. He has done the work of salvation for me.

He paid the price for my sins. He is the one who has made me righteous by my faith and trust in him. It is a completed finished work.

There is nothing that I can add to it to compliment it. It is once and for all accomplished for me by him. Now I have to by faith believe that and enter into the rest.

If I don't believe that I can go on in my efforts, in my struggles, in my strivings, in my endeavors and in all of these works that I seek to do. In my fervish desire and activity to try to be better or to improve my relationship with God by my efforts. Or I can just simply believe that Jesus did it all and enter into the rest of faith.

For if Joshua had given them rest then he wouldn't have spoken of another day. There remains therefore a rest to the people of God. There is a place of rest for God's people.

For he that has entered into his rest, he also has ceased from his own works as God did from his. Once the work was finished, God ceased. He rested the seventh day.

Once the work of redemption was finished by Jesus Christ, God rested as far as man's redemption is concerned. Jesus said, I came to do the will of my father and to finish his work. The work of redemption for man.

And on the cross it was finished. He cried, it is finished. Man's redemption is complete.

Now, if we have entered into his rest then we have ceased from our own works. Even as God did from his. There is nothing that God will do now to save you more than what he has already done.

In providing the way of salvation through Jesus Christ. And now it is up to you to believe and to accept that which God has provided. The perfect complete work of salvation and acceptance before God.

And our endeavor and labor to be accepted by God. We are accepted in Christ. As Paul said, one of the blessings is we are accepted in the beloved.

Let us labor therefore. And it sounds like a contradiction of terms. Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest.

Hey, there is a rest. Let's labor to enter into it. Let's work at it entering into it.

Because Satan is going to come and challenge you at every step. You can't do it. You can't live that kind of a life.

You can't live a life of purity and righteousness and holiness. Hey, that is his work in me as I believe and trust in him. He is able to do for me what I can't do for myself.

I must believe and trust in him to do it. No, I can't myself but through him I can. I can be all that God would have me to be through the work of Jesus Christ.

I can do it within my heart and life. Therefore, let us labor. I have to really work at it because Satan is constantly challenging my position of faith and trust in Jesus.

Satan would come along and bring turmoil again into my heart. He would keep me in a state of restlessness. As he would encourage me in my endeavors and works.

Because he knows that I will fail. Anything I try in my flesh is going to fail. I think that Satan is behind the incentives for every fleshly endeavor.

Because he knows that all you can do in your flesh is fail and then you get discouraged and upset. And you lose your rest and your peace in Christ. Oh, how important that we labor to enter into that rest.

Lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief as they did in the Old Testament. For they were trusting in themselves. In their power to whip the giants.

And they knew they couldn't. And so through unbelief they fell. For the Word of God is alive and powerful.

And sharper than any two-edged sword. Piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit and of the joints and marrow. And is a discerner of the thoughts and the intents of the heart.

God's Word. Now, again there is a scripture that people so often misquote. And that is the scripture, the letter killeth.

But the spirit giveth life. And people in misquoting that use that to refer to just the scriptures, the teaching of the scriptures. They say, oh but the letter killeth.

Not so. He was talking in context of the letter of the law trying to be righteous by your works. That will kill you.

You try to live under the law, that will kill you. It will condemn you to death every time. The letter kills.

The letter of the law will wipe you out every time. But the spirit gives life. But here it declares the Word of God is alive.

It's powerful. It's sharper than a two-edged sword. And as such, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and the spirit.

Now, there is a lot of worship that is purely psychic. And touches our emotions. And is soulish.

But not necessarily spiritual. It doesn't really touch our spirits. The liturgy, the incense, the candles, the robes, the chants.

Quite an experience. As you sit there, you're entranced by the beauty of the liturgy. And you go away with a sense of having worshipped God.

But if the Word of God was not really taught. All you experienced was a soulish experience. It didn't really feed your spirit.

It is only the Word of God that is able to feed the spirit of man. You don't grow spiritually in psychic experiences or emotional experiences. You grow spiritually through the Word of God.

In the same token, in the Pentecostal services. With the highly emotionally charged meetings. Where, when as the people leave, they declare the blessedness of the service.

The preacher didn't even get a chance to preach. You know, the spirit came down. Oh, we were all so blessed tonight.

And it seems that the height of the, you know, the pinnacle of the spiritual experiences to them. Is when the preacher doesn't get a chance to preach. God intervened tonight.

They've had a very powerful emotional experience. But not necessarily a spiritual experience. For it is the Word of God that is able to divide between the soul and the spirit.

That's something that's hard for us to divide. Man's soul and spirit are so intertwined. There's such a crossover network between the two.

That it's really hard for us to discern when it has really touched me spiritually or just touched me in a psychic way. In an emotional way. In fact, the division is so fine that is only the Word of God that can make that distinction.

Between that which is soulish and that which is spiritual. And then it is a discerner of the thoughts and the intents of the hearts. Now, I'm going to trust in the finished work of Jesus or I'm going to trust in my own works and my own efforts.

To finish this work of redemption in me. And perfection. Now, if I'm trusting in my own works.

I can't rest. Because I'm not certain of my own works. Of what motive they really are.

Some things that we do that apparently on the outward side have a very marvelous appearance. It looks so good. If our hearts were honestly examined.

The reason why I did those things was in order that I might look good. And so I made sure that everybody was watching when I did it. You know, I started whistling Jesus loves me real loud so everyone would turn.

And then I did my little thing and they said, oh my, isn't that marvelous. So the motivation behind it is often wrong. The motivation behind my works is so often wrong.

Take heed, Jesus said, that you do not your righteousness before men to be seen of men. God help us that so often is so. Behind my righteous acts is that desire to be seen of men.

That I might be known by men as a righteous person. Now be careful of that, Jesus said. Take heed that this doesn't happen to you.

For we are told that one day. We are all going to stand before the judgment seat of Christ to receive the things that we have done while in our bodies. Whether they be good or evil.

And that our works are going to be judged of what manner or sort they are. Now the judgment for our works when we stand before the Lord and our works are brought before him. Those works are going to be judged but they are going to be judged as to not what I did or didn't do.

But what motivated me to do it. And because that is the judgment, the motivation that prompted the work. A lot of those good things that we have done are going to be tossed out.

My works will be judged by fire. If any of them remain, I will be rewarded for them. Now, as a child of God, I do work.

And so many times people take these things of the New Testament, as Peter said, the writings of Paul. And they rest them to their own destruction. As Paul points out that by works of righteousness shall no man be justified in the sight of God.

And points out the necessity of resting in the finished work of Jesus. People say, well then there is no sense of trying to do anything because after all, you know, it doesn't count anyhow or it doesn't matter. Not so.

I do many works but the motive behind them is my love for Jesus Christ. I do not look to my works to make me righteous. I do not look to my works to make me accepted.

I do not look to my works and point to my works when I come before God and say, Lord, I've done this and that and the other. My works are just the response of my own heart for all that God has done for me. I don't look for any credit for the work that I've done.

It's just the natural response of my heart in understanding all that God has done for me. I want to do something for God. I long to do something for God.

As David said in Psalm 116, What shall I render unto the Lord for all of his benefits unto me? And when I think that of all of these things that God has done for me, my spirit cries out, what can I give to God? Look how much God has given to me. Look how much God has done for me. What can I give to God to show my appreciation, my thankfulness for all of these benefits and blessings that God has bestowed upon my life? And just to show my appreciation and love, I get out and I do what I can just to show God I love him and I appreciate all he's done.

But I don't then turn and say, well, God, look, you ought to love me because look what I've done for you. God, you ought to bless me because look what I've done for you. No, what I've done, I've done because God has blessed me.

He's blessed me so much. I want to respond to him. Be careful that you don't try to put God in the respondent position.

Let us all praise the Lord tonight because the Lord inhabits the praises of his people and we want to be blessed of God tonight. So let's all lift up our hands and praise the Lord so that God will bless us. You see,

you initiate, let God respond.

God will surely respond if you initiate. Not so. What kind of a real praise is that if I'm only praising with a selfish motive of getting blessed? Is that true praise unto God or is that just something selfish? I want a blessing so I'm going to praise him.

No, the true praise is that which rises spontaneously from my heart unto God when I realize how good he's been to me and his blessings upon me. Oh, God, you're so good. I love you, Lord.

I know that I don't deserve anything. Well, I know that I do deserve something, but not these blessings. I deserve a swift kick.

And yet, look what God has done for me. Oh, God, you're so good. I love you, Lord.

And just that which rises from my heart in spontaneous response to God. God is the initiator. God so loved that he gave.

Now I respond to that gift. God has blessed me. I respond to those blessings.

And there is no work that I can offer to God that will cause God to respond to me. God is the initiator always. I am the responder.

And yet, for so many years I fasted in order that God might work in my life. You know, I want God to respond to me. And so my fasting was works.

I haven't fasted for a long time. There may be a day when I'll go back to it again. But when I do, it'll be on an entirely different basis than what it was in my early years.

For my motives were wrong. I read all of these books about fasting and how you can get God to really work. You know, all you have to do is fast.

And they even had the thing all worked out. In five days this will happen. In ten days this will happen.

In eighteen days. Man, the whole thing was all mapped out, you know. And so, you know, how much do you want? This is how long it takes.

God is the initiator. Let's respond to his love. Now, my works are to be judged.

And the word of God is the discerner of the thoughts and the intents of the heart. So what chance do I have? When my judgment will be the motivation behind the work, not the work itself. As they said to Jesus in that day, Lord, Lord, you know, open unto us.

Have we not prophesied in thy name and cast out devils and done many mighty works? And Jesus said, I never knew you. Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity. Oh yes, they did all of these things.

But they did them in such a way that they brought glory and fame unto themselves. They merchandised the things of God. They enriched their own pockets.

And yet they come to God in that day and try and say, Lord, you know, we healed the sick and we cast out devils. And we did all of these marvelous things. Oh yes, you did them for your own glory.

You did them in such a way as you brought glory and wealth and all to yourself. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight. But all things are naked and open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to deal.

I mean, you're not going to hide anything from God. Your life is an open book to him. There is not one single thought that you have ever thought that he doesn't know.

You can't hide from God. David said, you know my thoughts before I think them. Everything is open.

Everything is naked before him. God knows everything I do and he knows why I do it. That's why I don't want to depend upon my works.

I want to depend upon the finished work of Jesus Christ. And I'm glad that I can have my standing in his finished work, not my efforts or my works. When I was a little kid, the little neighbor boy and I were out in our little clubhouse.

We were putting flashlight batteries under our t-shirts pretending we were girls. I was about four years old I think. And my mother came out and caught me.

And I said, how did you know I was doing that? And she said, I was ironing and the Lord told me. Man, all through my life I had that. I had a mother who was a godly woman who the Lord talked to her about me.

He squealed on me all the way. I didn't get by with anything. And believe me, I came to the realization of that as I was growing up.

I was afraid to do anything because I knew the Lord would tell my mom and I'd be in trouble. You don't hide anything from God. I came to that consciousness very, very early in life.

You don't hide anything from God. How foolish to even try. Now let us consider the apostle and the high priest of our confession, Christ Jesus.

Verse 14, seeing then that we have a great high priest that is passed into the heavens. Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. Seeing that we have this great high priest, not entered into the Holy of Holies, which was only a model of heaven, but has entered into heaven itself for us.

This great high priest, let us hold fast to this new confession in Christ. Let us recognize that confession of Christ. For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feelings of our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

So we have in Christ a glorious high priest. He's passed into heaven for me to make intercession for me. But he is a sympathetic high priest because he understands my weakness, because he became a man and he experienced the temptations that man experiences.

He knows my problems. He knows my weaknesses. And thus he can empathize with me.

Oh, what a glorious high priest that we have. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace. How can I ever come boldly to the throne of grace except through Jesus Christ? Dare you come boldly to the throne of grace asking God to accept your works or to reward you for what you've done now? Lord, look what I've done for you this week.

Now I'd like to receive my rewards today. No, I'll tell you, I can only come to God through Jesus Christ. I don't dare come to God on my own.

But through Him I come boldly. Because my great high priest understands my weaknesses. He was tempted just like I am.

That's why he is able to help me in my time of temptation. And so I come boldly to the throne of grace, not to the justice bar of God to receive the works rewards. I don't come to the paymaster to get my pay for the work I've done.

But I come to the throne of grace that I might obtain mercy and find grace to help me in my time of need. And so I approach God on the basis of His grace and mercy towards me. Not on the basis of my works and my deserving.

And because I approach God on the basis of His goodness and His grace towards me, I can come boldly and I can always receive the help that I need. I can find grace to help me in the time of my need. Because I'm coming on the basis of God's invitation to me as His child.

Now, in our minds, because we hold in our minds this concept of rewards for goodness and for good works that we carry from childhood. If you're good today, you can have ice cream for dessert tonight. And so instilled in me from a child is this reward for goodness and punishment for badness.

No ice cream for you tonight. You've been bad today. You know, and even Santa Claus makes out a list and checks it twice.

And you're going to get a bundle of sticks because you've been naughty. And so it's hard for us to think in the terms of grace. But it's important that we come to God by virtue of His grace, not by virtue of our merit or our goodness or our works.

Because if I come by virtue of my goodness, then most of the time I can't come. If I come by the virtue of God's grace, I can come anytime. If I come on the virtue of my deserving, then I'll get very little.

Because I don't deserve very much. But if I come on the basis of His grace, then hey, it's wide open. Everything, anything I might need, it's there.

Richly, freely bestowed upon me because God loves me. And He is a merciful, gracious, loving, compassionate God who knows my needs and my weaknesses and sympathizes and empathizes with me and for me. So how are you going to approach God? On the basis of your goodness, your efforts, your work.

Or on the basis of the finished work of Jesus Christ. So, here I am, resting tonight. Because I'm not resting in myself, in my righteousness.

I'm resting in His finished work for me. Here I come tonight, God. Not on the basis of, I've had a good week and everything's been flowing well.

But I'm coming on the basis that you love me and you've invited me to come to receive of your grace through Jesus. And I just believe you, Lord, to help me though I don't deserve it. To bless me though I'm really not worthy of it.

But just because you are a God of love and a God who is so gracious and merciful, Lord, bless me now. And I believe and trust God to bless me. And so He does.

Because the blessings are always predicated upon the faith and believing Him to do so. The lack of blessing does not come from the lack of your devotions, but your lack of faith. Now that's hard for us to grasp, isn't it? Oh, I haven't been faithful in my devotions this week.

I really shouldn't ask God to help me. I really failed Him again. I know there's no use asking Him, because I know He won't help me.

Because, boy, I just did such a miserable thing this week. I just know that. Dare not ask Him for anything.

I know He won't do it. And you know what? He won't. If you have that attitude.

If you don't believe Him to. See, the lack of blessing, though, isn't the lack of devotions. It's the lack of faith.

Believing God to do it. Now, many times my failures get in the way of my faith. Because I am looking to my works rather than to His finished work.

But if God can help us to grasp this concept, then your life is going to rest. And God is going to bless you. And as a result of those blessings of God, you're going to be responding to God in continual praise and thanksgiving and awe and wonder at all that God has done for you.

He is so great and so merciful and so marvelous that you're just going to be constantly rejoicing and praising Him. Oh, God, you're so good. I love you.

You're so much. And God will continue to bless and bless and bless and bring you into that rest that He has for His people. God help us tonight, we pray, to believe Your Word and to trust in Your Word and to believe in the finished work of Jesus Christ, our Great High Priest, who has made the way for us to come boldly to the throne of grace to receive the mercy and grace in our times of need.

Oh, Lord, how thankful we are for Your grace towards us and Your goodness and Your mercy that endures forever. How thankful we are for Jesus Christ, our Lord, our Savior, our Great High Priest, who has finished the work of our redemption so that we rest in His finished work. Lord, I'm saved because I believe in Jesus.

As my Savior, and because I am saved, I surrender my life to You as my Lord that I might obey Thee and do whatever You want me to do, that I might be a servant that is pleasing in the eyes of His Master, because I love You, Lord, because You first loved me. Amen. Now may the Lord be with you to bless you this week, to pour out upon your life the riches of His love and His grace and His mercy towards you through Christ Jesus, our Lord.

And may you abound and be rich in all things in Christ.

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