

Stewardship - Part 3

by David Adams

This sermon explores the concept of stewardship as outlined in the story of Adam and Eve, highlighting the consequences of failed stewardship and the importance of our responsibilities to God and creation.

Duration: 48:28

Scripture: Genesis 3:16, Acts 17:22-23, 1 John 3:12

Topics: "Original Sin", "Redemption"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the legacy that Adam left to his sons, which was the instruction to approach unto God. He explains that this legacy was a result of Adam's failed stewardship and the need for humanity to come back to God. The speaker then references Acts chapter 17, where Paul encounters altars in Athens dedicated to the unknown God. He connects this to the fallen nature inherited from Adam and the legacy of sin that we carry. The sermon emphasizes the importance of recognizing our fallen nature and the need to turn to God for redemption.

Transcript

Good morning, everyone. No complaints. No complaints, no wind to blow your hairdo around this morning.

Lots of sun and everything's just in fine order. I'm getting to feel more and more at home all the time. I had two injunctions handed to me.

Not handed to me, delivered to me. I'm not sure how this one's going to be carried out. I was to turn the mic off before I start singing at the close.

And then another sister informed me that, made me feel right at home, that they don't always hear what I say. And the problem is, I drop my voice at the end of a sentence. My wife says to me, before I come away, now, don't forget, whatever you do, don't mutter.

So you see, I'm beginning to feel right at home. Very well, will you go back with me, please, if you can, as Tertullo said to Festus, of your clemency, of your long patience. Go back with me this morning to Genesis again.

And I wish to pick up some details and then move on to a further development of the stewardship, which we call Adamic. It was the initial stewardship of the human family and some of the consequences of it. I want to notice particularly some of the results of a failed stewardship.

Now, we were reading in chapter 3 yesterday and we did not go into the details of the sentences that God passed upon those three who were responsible for the fall. You will understand, the first two, of course, sought to get away and out from under the responsibility by turning it over to someone else. So Adam says, the woman thou gavest me and the woman says, the serpent beguiled me.

And then God turns to the serpent and makes a statement, a sentence, that is in verse 14 of chapter 3, regarding his responsibility and the consequences of it. So, none of the three escaped personal responsibility for his or her stewardship. I judge that Adam was part to blame in this.

Now, I know 1 Timothy chapter 2 tells us that Adam was not deceived. But the woman being deceived transgressed, was in the transgression, 1 Timothy 2 says. So there were two reasons or two statements made about Eve's fall.

Number one, she was deceived. Number two, she transgressed. And these things are given to us along with the sentence that God passed upon her when he came to deal with this matter of the fall.

As far as Adam is concerned, I feel that he failed in one aspect of his stewardship and that was regarding his responsibility towards his wife. Some of you are going to ask me about that afterwards, but if I told you all I think about it now, then you'd have no reason to ask me, so we'd miss out on that conversation. And then, later on, God turns to the serpent and he passes upon the serpent a sentence of judgment.

One thing that is of interest to notice is that when God speaks to Adam and to the serpent, he attributes a consequence to that which is amoral. For instance, Adam's failed stewardship yielded the result to himself and to his posterity that the ground was cursed. Now, the ground is an amoral thing.

There is no morality in ground. Nevertheless, the ground was cursed. And it was cursed because of Adam, which is a very important lesson to us, isn't it? When we fail in our stewardship, the results are not limited to ourselves.

Oftentimes, they branch out to others or other things, but that is one of the ramifications of a failed stewardship. When God speaks to the serpent or to the spirit behind the serpent, he speaks to the animal as well to the spirit. So, the animal, the serpent itself, as an animal, was cursed because of the fact that it was used by that great spirit, the adversary, who came into the garden and came in with a very definite plan in his mind.

I think we notice something of the result of that plan in Luke chapter 4. And we may speculate, it's not always wise to do it, but it is sometimes a little profitable to do it, why it was that the serpent had the ambition of destroying the man, for which reason he chose the woman. He wasn't really interested in the woman per se, in herself, but he was directing his subtlety to the woman by which or by whom he would attack and destroy the man. Now, that's very simply explained, of course, when we remember that this original relationship of man and woman from that time till now has always been in the mind of God an example in terms of earthly experience between man and wife, the relationship that existed between God and Israel and later Christ and the Church.

For you remember that the marriage relationship did not begin with Christ and the Church because God is spoken of more than once in the Old Testament as being Israel's husband. And she was responsible to him, that was her stewardship in relation to the husband's wife. So when God speaks to the serpent, he speaks to the animal as well as to the spirit.

And both are cursed because of their participation in the fall. I think that's very instructive and illustrative too regarding our relationship and our stewardship here in life. Another thing that I thought to notice with you was, please, if you look back to chapter 2 for one passage, verse 7 of chapter 2 says the following, The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of lives.

That's a plural word. It is not singular as we would say the breath of life. That is just one life, his life.

But the Hebrew is in the plural. So God breathed into man's or Adam's nostrils the breath of lives. Now that's very instructive I judge because you remember when God formed Eve, when he formed a woman, he did not breathe into her nostrils the breath of life.

The life that she enjoyed, that she received upon creation was a prolongation of the life that God breathed into Adam because God breathed into Adam the breath that was to be enjoyed by lives in succession all down through not only his immediate family but all the families of earth to come. So we may pause to consider the fact that every life, every human life participates, if in a small way, but participates in the original in-breathing by God of Adam. Which means we have a stewardship of life.

We'll come to that a little further on when we consider the universal stewardship of the human family. So God breathed into the nostrils of Adam the multiplicity of subsequent lives. Now just stop and think of that for a minute.

Does that mean then that every human being born participates in the original life that God imparted to Adam? I believe it does. Therefore, to destroy life in whatever form it exists is a stewardship failed. It is a responsibility that is incurred upon every human being.

We all participate of the original in-breathing that God made to Adam. So, does it matter if it is a fetus or an embryo for that matter or a fetus or an unborn child that lives and breathes and expresses emotion? Is the murder of the unborn an attack on the life of God or the life which God has given to the human family through this original in-breathing of Adam in chapter 2 and verse 7? We may have opportunity to develop that a little later. Now I want to notice with you this morning as well the legacy of a failed stewardship.

God pronounced, as I've said, individual sentences upon these three who were responsible for the fall as we speak of it. The first thing that we notice is that it was not all failure. That is most encouraging.

Let us look at something here that we have at the close of chapter 3. We know that God drove the man in verse 24, He drove him out of the garden and He placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword which, without the conjunction and, a flaming sword which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life. Now that's a very significant statement and sometimes we pass over it very lightly and don't stop to think exactly what is said here. The cherubim.

We know about the cherubim from later on. We know they were considered to be part of the atmosphere of the throne of God. And whether you call them seraphim or cherubim it matters very little.

Some people love to make a big issue over the hymns, over the cherubs and the seraphs. But these are the, or were considered to be the attendants upon the throne of God. The covering cherub is gone from the immediate presence of God.

But the cherubim are there. And they're depicted, as you know, on the mercy seat, the propitiatory of Israel's holy of holy place. The cherubim here represents something very significant, I judge.

And notice, please, that it says the cherubim and. And you may refer, I believe, to whatever version you can lay your hands on and I think I have a Bible at home with 24 versions in it, all between two covers. Now, how about that? And I've checked and checked and rechecked and back and forth.

And the conjunction is always there. That is the conjunction and. Cherubim and a flaming sword.

Now, when I went to Sunday school, which was, you know, a few years ago, the day before yesterday or something, we used to see pictures in our Sunday school papers of a cherub with a flaming sword in his hand, guarding the way of the tree of life. And for years, I thought that's what it really was until I noticed this conjunction after the word cherubim is the conjunction and something additional. So it was cherubim and a flaming sword.

And as I understand this, the cherubim were not wielding the sword. The sword was distinct by itself and the cherubim were distinct by themselves. And when I noticed that, I got a considerable comfort out of it and I got some very good instruction out of it.

You see, when we come into chapter four, there was a legacy that Adam left to his sons. And this legacy was that they should approach unto God. God had driven them out of the garden, but that they should come back to God, if I may so say.

They should approach unto God. But how will they come unto God? Well, we know the story well as we read it here in chapter four. They each brought an offering.

Why did they bring an offering? Why do unlettered, uncultured tribes of dark forest regions, when they approach their spirit gods, bring offerings? There is something built into the nature of man that realizes an indebtedness to that superior power or powers that he seeks to worship. And you say, well of course, because after sin, they must come to God with a sin offering. Or they must come to God with a trespass offering.

But you see, the offering already has been made because God in grace has clothed Adam and Eve at the cost of life. He has clothed them with garments other than the ones they themselves manufactured. For their own manufacture was very unsatisfactory.

It could not give them fitness to stand either in the garden or before the Lord. But it was to cost life that he made the garments not of leaves, but of skins. And with these skins of a life sacrificed, God clothed Adam and Eve.

And then he drove them out. And clothed by the grace, by the hand of the grace of God, they went forth to bear the burden of the curse. Very encouraging, isn't it? God has not called us to labor under the curse of our fallen nature, unprepared or unqualified.

There is at the sacrifice of life a covering of acceptance and righteousness which God has given to us. And it's in Christ, isn't it? But then after they're outside the garden, these two boys, Cain and Abel, they bring an offering to the Lord. And we stop to wonder because we have offerings described later on, particularly in the book of Leviticus.

We have offerings described for us. We wonder what kind of an offering would this be? And the first thing that jumps to your mind, it must be a sin offering. Or it must be a trespass offering, so described later on in the Levitical order.

Or it may be another kind of offering. You remember when Abraham and Isaac went up the mount together? And Isaac said to his father, Father, behold the fire and the wood. But where's the lamb? For an offering? No.

For a burnt offering. And the Sunday school teacher and the gospel preachers, they love to use this as a picture of the sacrificial substitutionary work of the Lord Jesus at the cross. Because you see, Isaac was laid on the altar but he was not sacrificed.

So there was a ram caught in the thicket. That's an interesting thing, isn't it too? Because as I understand this word, it's a mountain two-horned ram. You say, well, what's to do with that? It was caught in a thicket by its horns.

Plural. And this dual element of the horns was the means by which it was trapped to be a sacrifice. Well, then you say to me, but what is that a picture of? What could it be a picture of? But our substitutionary sacrifice being the Lord Jesus.

And what are the two horns? Well, let me suggest this to you. They are the representation of that dual character of the Savior. God and man.

You know, we often say, well, the Lord could have gone back to heaven without going to Calvary. Could He have really? You remember what He said? Father, save me from this hour. I can't pray that.

Because, He said, for this cause I came unto this hour. He came to be the sacrifice. He came to be the substitutionary sacrifice.

And the very fact that you have one here now who is man at the same time and who is very God. He is trapped. If you will allow me the word.

The concept. He's only here for one purpose. How could He have gone back to heaven when that's the reason for which He came to be the sacrificial ram? And so, the very fact He's here, God manifest in flesh, means that that's why He's here.

So the ram is taken and offered in the place of Isaac. But here's the point. We use that often times in the Gospel to say, well, you see, Christ took the sinner's place and He became the sacrifice for sin.

But the word that is used every time you read it, the word offering, in Genesis chapter 22, when Abraham and Isaac were brought from the mountain, is not a word for the sacrifice for sin. It is not in the word for the sacrifice for a trespass. It is always the word for a burnt offering.

And that's what Isaac said to his father. Father, here's the fire and the wood, but where's the lamb for the burnt offering? And all the way up, it's always used the burnt offering. The ascending offering.

And that's exactly what our Lord was on our behalf. Going back to Cain and Abel, what kind of offering did they bring? The first thing we ask ourselves about this is, who taught Cain and Abel to bring an offering to the Lord? Who taught them that? How did they know they should approach God with an offering? That must have been part, surely, of the legacy which was left to them as a result of the failed stewardship of their fathers or their parents. They must have had some instruction in the fact that God can only be approached on the basis of a sacrifice.

But here's the interesting feature. The word that is used, the Hebrew word that is used, is specifically the word for a gift offering. Not a burnt offering, and not a sin offering, but a gift offering.

They come to God with an indebtedness, with a stewardship to be recognized and to be contained in a gift offering, not a sin offering. Well, you say, but wouldn't they need a sin offering? Well, you may say it if you wish, but that's not in the word. Cain and Abel brought to the Lord a gift offering.

All right. What does this teach us? It teaches us the stewardship of humanity, of the human race. And that's going to be enlarged as we move further into the New Testament.

The human family owes a debt to God, and each of us owes personally a debt to God. We must bring our gift offering. If you elevate this to New Testament theology, you remember in Hebrews chapter 8, it says, Now, the sum of things which we have spoken is this.

We have such a high priest who has passed through the heavens, who has sat down at the right hand of God. And because he is a priest, he was ordained to be an offerer. One who is to offer.

For every high priest ordained of men is ordained for men to offer both gifts and sacrifices. Wherefore, says the writer, it is of necessity that this priest, our Lord, the great high priest, must have offerings to offer. But it's not the offering of himself, for he did that once for all at the cross.

But now that he has risen, gone into heaven acclaimed, this day have I begotten thee, thou art my son, sit on my right hand. And he has constituted a high priest after the order of Melchizedek. Now then, he must have something in his hands to offer for every high priest of the sons of men is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices.

Well, our Lord is offering gifts today. All gifts are not sacrifices. But as these two boys brought their gifts to the Lord, they were sacrifices.

One was the sacrifice of toil and labor, and the other was the sacrifice of care and shepherding and life. But then let's add to that something else that is said here in chapter 4. It is said in verse 3, In the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. Now, you read that and immediately you ask yourself, they brought an offering to the Lord.

Where was the Lord? These are two boys, or two young men, whatever age they may have been, and they gathered together this offering, this gift that they want to give to the Lord. And they bring these gifts, Cain's and Abel's, and they bring them, it says, very specifically, unto the Lord. Well, where was the Lord? And you will remember after God had remonstrated with Cain in chapter 4, farther down, in verse 16 it says, Cain went out from the presence of the Lord.

Now, Cain is a physical man as we are. If he goes out from someplace, he was in a specific locality, and he went out from that locality. And it says he went out from the presence of the Lord.

Well, where was the presence of the Lord? They're both outside the garden. But Cain and Abel come to the Lord. Now, you've got to have a geographical location to be able to say that.

You just can't say, well, they just came to the Lord. Well, where do they come to? They themselves are localized. Their offerings are localized.

So they come to the Lord, and later on Cain goes out from the presence of the Lord. Well, where was the presence of the Lord? Well, let me suggest to you that we have the answer to that in the passage we've read at the close of chapter 3. God placed the cherubim at the east of the garden. And in addition to the cherubim, he placed the sword.

And as I have suggested to you already, I don't believe the sword had anything to do with the cherubim. But I do believe this, that the cherubim was a visible, at that time, a visible representation of the presence of the Lord. And these boys brought their sacrifices, they brought them unto the Lord.

Where else could they take them but to where the cherubim were? This is their place of acceptance. This is their place of localized presence of Jehovah. So that's where they brought their sacrifices to.

Now, I know what some of you are going to ask me, so I might as well anticipate the question before it happens. You're going to come to me and say, now, Brother Dave, just a minute now, tell us if this is true as you have been saying. How long were the cherubim there? Well, I could guess.

But what's the sense of me guessing for I don't know. It's like a lady came to me after one time I was speaking on that revelation chart that I already mentioned to you. And she said, Brother Adams, would you please tell me what the seven thunders said? I said, I've just been speaking on that section of the book of the revelation.

And I said, do you remember that the angel told John when he started to write what the voice of the thunders were, started to write what they said, and the angel said, don't write it. That's sealed up. So if the apostle was not allowed to write the message, how can you expect me to know? Well, she said, I just thought that you would know by now what they said.

Yeah, I sometimes discover that I know a lot more than what I really know I know. But I have to be informed of it from some outside source. Well, how long was the chariot been there? I don't know.

And some people told me, well, it was likely until the flood. Well, that was a long time, wasn't it? I don't know. I just don't know.

But I remember saying to a group of young folks one time, I was speaking to them, and I said, has anybody here heard the word Shekinah? Oh, sure, of course. These are Christians' children to a large extent. I said, do you know then about what is called the Shekinah glory? And they said, oh, yes.

Yes, of course. Well, I said, now, can any of you tell me where we read in the Bible about the Shekinah glory? And they stopped, and they thought for a while, and they said, well, there was nothing said really. And I said, all right, I'll give you a little bit of homework.

Go home between now and our next meeting. Find out if you can just where we read in the Bible about the Shekinah glory. So, away they went.

Away they went to do the homework. I like giving homework to my audience, you know, sometimes. And they come back the next meeting, and I said, by the way, what we mentioned last time, did any of you find out where the Bible speaks about the Shekinah glory? And I thought nobody was going to put their hand up, but then there was a girl, she knew she was the only one that knew, so she said, I did, sir, I did.

I said, great. Tell me, where did she find it? She said, I found it in the prophecy of Zechariah in one of Schofield's footnotes. She was the only one that had found it at any rate, but she found it in one of Schofield's footnotes.

The fact of the matter is, of course, it's not in the text, although so many people know about the Shekinah glory, and the Jews, even to this day, know about the Shekinah glory. So, it was the place where the presence of God was known, where it was placed. Let me suggest something to you.

At the close of chapter 3, where we read, so he drove out the man, and he placed, and I discovered that the Hebrew verb to place is Shekan, from which the Jews get the word Shekinah. The Shekinah glory then really is meant to confer the idea that that was where God dwelt. Now, this word, he placed the cherubim, is the word from which finally the word Shekinah has developed.

So, the cherubim did represent God, and it was the presence of God at that time, at any rate. However much, they may have been taken away, I don't know. And then you want to know, of course, what happened to the flaming sword, and I don't know that either.

Of course, you may tell me it was drowned in the flood. I don't know. But the idea, of course, was it was to guard the way of the tree of life.

And that tree of life was so that they would live forever. Now, the tree of life was not guarded, and men were not, and Adam and Eve were not kept from it until they fell. So, then you're going to ask me and say, well now, Brother Dave, do you believe that they partook of the tree of life before they fell? Yes.

Well, no. How could you believe that? Why shouldn't I believe that? There is no life self-sustaining. All life which comes from God, breathe into Adam the breath of lives, must be sustained.

There is no creature, no creature, whoever he may be, no creature that is self-sustaining. We all are sustained by an outside source. Everything must be fed.

All kinds of life, plant, vegetable, animal, bird, or human, all kinds of life must be sustained outside of itself. And what would be wrong if they had eaten? Because Eve said, we can eat of all the trees of the garden. And she did not exclude the tree which was in the midst of the garden that God said in the first place was the tree of life.

But when Eve's speaking to the serpent, she says there's a tree in the midst of the garden. Looks to me like she put it where it wasn't put by God. Or she considered it to be the most important.

I don't know which. Because when God makes the garden and makes the trees, he puts in the midst of the garden, he puts the tree of life. But when Eve's talking to the serpent, she says no, but there's a tree in the midst of the garden and we're forbidden to eat of that.

So whether she, in her esteem of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, was greater than her esteem of the tree of life, I don't know. But there is no suggestion that the tree of life was not accessible to them or that it was participated by them before the fall. Then you say to me, but then they would live forever.

That's not the idea of it. The idea of God says lest the man now puts forth his hand and partakes of the tree of life, having fallen in a fallen state, we will drive him out. And you will have noticed that when God said to Adam in the first place, the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die, he never said a thing

about the body.

And it isn't until after he falls and comes into a sinful condition that God brings in the statement thus thou art and to dust shalt thou return. He never said that before he fell. Now, stop and think of that.

I'm stopping too long on the way. I was supposed to get a whole lot farther than this yesterday. Alright.

Stop and think about that. If Adam now were to have the life which he presently owns or possesses perpetuated in a sinful state, what a horrible thing that would be. Can you imagine what it would be like to live forever? God brings in physical death subsequent to spiritual death.

What he said in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. And that exactly was experimented by Adam and Eve when they went and hid themselves from the presence of the Lord. What is death at any rate if it isn't the severance from the source of life? And once they are separated from God and are hiding behind the trees of the garden, then they have experienced death.

Spiritual death. But they are not going to experience physical death and it was never promised to them until after they fell. That was a tremendous blessing.

Because, you see, it would have been the most devastating thing if they were to live forever in their physical state after they have fallen inwardly. What can be more horrible than to imagine, I suggested to you, I believe it was Sunday morning, what can be more dreadful to any of us to have happen to us that we should be welded eternally in our fallen state. So what is physical death? It's God opening the door to a better life beyond this life without the corrupt body that drags us down so often that Paul calls the body of our affliction or humiliation.

You see, the prohibition was protection. When God said to them, of all the trees on this deep, but don't eat of this one. That's a prohibition.

You cannot eat of this tree. What was that meant to be? It was not meant to be something unjust or unkind. It was meant to be a protection.

It was to make Adam and Eve aware of the fact there is evil lurking out there. And be prepared and beware for the test is coming. And that evil came into the garden as we know.

And Eve was unaware of the fact that what God had foreseen for them and tried to protect them from was actually going to happen when she was deceived and transgressed. Now that they have fallen, what will God do for them? Leave them in this fallen state in a body that's going to live forever? Never! So He brings in physical death. And physical death now is the blessing.

It's the opening of a door to another world which God has provided for man and of course by faith in Christ. Then what that does is, according to 2 Corinthians 5, another passage, it gives us the prospect of being clothed upon, invested with another body other than this one. So it's a blessing, you see.

Now even in our late day when we consider death, we are sometimes, as Hebrews chapter 5 tells us, or chapter 2 rather, tells us that we are sometimes very apprehensive about death. And yet the word is clear in Hebrews chapter 2. Do we have been delivered from the bondage of the fear of death? That's why our Lord became man to do that very thing. To open wide the portals of the next world or the other world wherein we shall enjoy not only freedom in the spirit from sin, but liberation from a body that is affected

constantly by sin.

The body that so humiliates us so often in which the elements dwell that are called by Paul in Romans chapter 7, another law working in our members. So, there are the cherubim. That's where God was.

As far as they were concerned, that's where He was. And when Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, he left the cherubim. He left the precincts of the garden.

He left the place where he could have been accepted by God and he went out. As Judas did later on, you remember. And it is said, it was night.

Alright, I just have a few minutes left this morning to extend the legacy of a failed stewardship. There were some good things, evidently, that Adam and Eve passed on to their boys. There was the tragic thing that sin now, the viper that was implanted in their hearts was so soon to express itself in murder.

You know, murder didn't make Cain a sinner. John tells us that when he was born, Eve said, she called him Cain because she says, I've gotten a man from the Lord. How wrong she was.

And she wasn't the last mother to be mistaken when she looked upon what do they call them? Little angels, don't they? When they're born, isn't it? In Spanish, we've got los inocentes. El pobre inocente. This child comes into the home and the parents look at him or her and they say, what an angelic little thing he, she, is.

Straight out of the cradle of the glory, they came. Only to discover later on, as Eve did, that they weren't little angels and they weren't little innocents and they weren't directly out of heaven. Because when you come to John's epistle, John says that Cain was of that wicked one because of which he slew his brother.

He didn't become a wicked person or he didn't become a satanic expression because he slew his brother. He slew his brother because he was of that wicked one. We get things reversed sometimes, don't we? Change the order.

That's not what John says. John says because he slew Abel then he was of the wicked one. No.

John says he slew Abel because he was of the wicked one. And that's exactly we have the full-blown expression of sin in its first child to be born in the world. That was part of the legacy of a failed stewardship.

And you and I have come into that legacy. Adam's or the Adamic stewardship which was a failure has left for us the legacy of a fallen nature, the legacy of all the seeds of all the evils that have ever been perpetrated in human history. We carry them with us.

But we also have come into another stewardship. I don't know if I should start it unless I'm not. Because I only have four and a half minutes there, I think.

Oh, no. Oh, no. I'd rather have this clock than that one.

This one says ten twenty-one and a half and that one says ten twenty-five. I shan't look up. I'll just look down and look at this one.

Turn with me quickly, if you will, please, to Acts chapter 17. Acts chapter 17. The legacy of a failed stewardship.

Now, this has to be brief. It's like the man that got up at the end of a dinner somewhere and he was known for being long-winded and he got up at the end of the dinner and he was to make one of these famous speeches that they make and he said, now, he started off for a little bit and then he said, now, to cut things short and somebody in the back said, too late. All right.

To cut this short, look at Acts chapter 17, Paul at Mars Hill, verse 22. I'm sure you all know this story and he is walking through the marketplace at Athens and he sees all these altars and he finds one altar with this inscription in verse 23 to the unknown God, Agnosto Theou, Agnosto Theou, the unknown God. Then he goes on to say, whom therefore ye ignorantly worship.

Now, notice this, please. He's there worshiping Agnosto Theou, the unknown God. He was not forgotten by them.

He was not despised by them. He was not neglected by them. They had an altar to him and they were offering their offerings, their sacrifices to him unknown.

We sometimes thought that these were wild savages who had no interest whatsoever in God. That's not true. They worshiped him.

They revered him. And they built this altar to him. And then Paul says, whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.

God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands, neither is worship with men's hands as though he needed anything, seeing he gives to all life and breath and all things. Here is a bestowal. Here is a legacy.

Here is something that God has conferred upon mankind in general. What is it? Life, breath, and all things. Notice the development.

Life comes from God. Well, we just said that, didn't we? In the lives, the breath of lives that God breathed into Adam. And this is what Paul said here.

He said, each of you who is here has received from God life. And not only have you received life, but you received breath for the continuity of that life. And not only have you received breath to continue this life, you have received all things that goes with life and breath.

He is the source. We get back again to the fact that we have nothing that is truly our own. The life that we have, says Paul, you have received it from God.

The breath that you have to continue life, these 40, 50, 60, 70, 80, anybody here 95? That breath is also something that God has bestowed upon us. And then all the things with which we are surrounded, adding to this initial life and the continuity of breath, he says that's all come from God as well. Now, look farther down.

There's something else he adds to that here. He says, in him, verse 28, in him we live. Now, remember, please, he's talking about pagan philosophers who are idolaters.

He's not talking to believers. He's not talking to Christians as we know them. He is talking to pagan philosophers and idolaters.

In him we live. And he says, consequently, in verse 29, well, at the close of verse 28, we are also his offspring. Who's he talking to? Grecian philosophers.

Who's he talking to? Athenian idolaters. And what does he tell them? We are his offspring. There's the stewardship.

And then he goes on to say in verse 28, in him we live. And in him we move. We have our mobility.

And then the last thing he says is, have our being. We are who we are by divine bestowal. You say, well, nothing new about that.

Did it ever pass your mind or cross, like a flying bird, or maybe one of these airplanes that go up seven and a half to eight miles, did it ever cross your mind sometimes, what if you hadn't been who you are, what you might have been? Now, I'm not talking about reincarnation, you know. It's some of the mysterious beliefs of some other nations or other lands, other cultures, other religions. You know, you go away as a woman and you come back as a, better not say, might get into trouble.

You come back in a reincarnated state. All I know is that my wife says if there's anything such as reincarnation, the next time she's not going to be married to a preacher. Well, probably a real blessing if she weren't.

But we don't believe in reincarnation of that order. But we have our being, that is our identity, who we are, because God has bestowed upon us our identity. We will never be anything different from what we are.

Oh, of course, you won't be mean and critical and caustic and sadistic and unkind and so on and so forth. That's not the idea of it. The idea of it is identity.

We have our being. We are who we are by God's decree. And we will always be what we are.

And we will always be who we are. There's no change of identity in the next world, in the next state. You're not going there to be angelic.

Oh, your husband may think you are now. That should be a real blessing. I mean, to him and to you if he thinks it.

But we'll always be human beings. Always. There is no identity change in the next state, in the heavens.

We're not going to become what we are not now. Speaking generically, we are always going to be humans. We're always going to be of the family of Adam in that world to come.

You're not going to be somebody else. You will always be who you are. And the body that you will be given there will be in perfect accord with your personality.

I don't know if that scares you or not. You're not going to suddenly change to be somebody else. I mentioned this one time in a meeting and one of the sisters came to me afterwards at the close of the door.

One of those beautiful ladies that come to me at the close of the door. And she said to me, Brother Gabe, you've spoiled my whole concept of heaven. I said, why? Well, because she said I was hoping that at least when I got there, I would have lost 125 pounds.

And now you tell me I'm going to be there as I am here. I'm not talking about average boy, you see. I'm not talking about physical dimensions.

I'm talking about the nature of the body and the nature of our being. We'll always be as we are. Members of this family of God and I never got to that part the other day and I hope to do that that we are going to displace that great being of whom we've been looking at some minor details already.

Who inhabits the heavens and who under his agents rules the nations. Now, we are going to displace him. And the church, I am convinced with some reading of the scripture that these heavenly beings now who are in a frantic furious exercise of movement and activity know in anticipation that they're going to be deposed.

And the church is going to take the place of world administrators in the age to come. That's something to look forward to, isn't it? But you will be you and I will be I, you see. We're not going to be somebody else.

It was Moses and Elijah that appeared on the mount, wasn't it? Uh-huh. Were they different? Were they the same persons? The same persons, exactly. We will always be who we are.

Thank God, apart from the evil that lies within us. Well, the time... Oh, yes it is. It's 30 seconds gone on this one and three minutes gone on that one.

So let's pray before we sing a verse or two of the hymn. Gracious Father, we thank Thee

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