

# Set Your Affections Above - Part 2

by Derek Prince

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of setting our affections above earthly things and being prepared for heaven by living a life of righteousness and obedience to God.*

**Duration:** 23:00

**Scripture:** Isaiah 40:1, 2 Corinthians 5:10, Revelation 19:7-8

**Topics:** "Affections"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the prophecy of John the Baptist and the need to prepare the way of the Lord. He emphasizes the importance of raising up valleys and bringing down mountains, symbolizing the need to let go of pride and arrogance. The speaker also highlights the need to straighten out the crooked areas of our lives and fill in the rough places. Ultimately, the sermon emphasizes the temporary nature of worldly pleasures and the eternal nature of God's word.

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## Transcript

And listening to the music of Bach. God bless Bach. I tell you, I feel sometimes I can take off through the ceiling and just leave.

We won't go into that now. All right, we're going back to the situation with our home in heaven. My wife brought up, you know, a number of girls.

My wife brought up, you know, a number of girls in Israel. Most of them were Jewish girls. And one of them was called Rahama, which is a very beautiful Jewish name.

She was a very spiritual child, very, very spiritual. She quite often saw angels. One day my wife had a little sick baby boy that she took in and Rahama said to my wife, she said, Mama, I saw an angel come and take Joseph.

The next day the boy died. Rahama had seen it the day before. But one day she came to my wife and she said, Mama, she was nine years old at the time, she said, My house in heaven has fallen down.

And my wife said, What do you mean your house in heaven has fallen down? She said, My house in heaven has fallen down. She said, I've got to pray and I've got to fast. My wife said, Well.

And then she realized she was talking about the 14th chapter of John in my father's house. How many mansions. She said, I've sinned.

My house in heaven has fallen down and I'm going to fast. So my wife said, Well, if you're going to fast, I'll have to fast too. So they fasted all day.

And my wife said, By the end of that day, the house was just filled with the glory of God. It was just like being in heaven. So remember, you have a house in heaven.

And if it falls down, that's serious. So Paul says, now let's come to this in the scripture. Verse 3, he says, Verse 2, For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be closed upon with a house which is from heaven.

If so be it that being closed, we shall not be found naked. Now I think the New American Standard translates it a little differently. And I have great respect for the New American Standard.

But I really think the King James brings the meaning out better in that sense. So how could we be found naked? What is Paul talking about? And I, you know, I've wondered about that at the back of my mind for years. And this morning as I was preparing this message, the Lord I believe showed me.

What would it be like to be naked in heaven? Well, keep your finger there and turn to Revelation 19 for a moment. Verse 7 and 8, Let us be glad and rejoice and give honor to him. For the marriage of the Lamb is come and his wife hath made herself ready.

That's the wife's business, isn't it? The bride's business is to make herself ready. And when this time comes, it'll be too late for us to be getting ready. We'll have to be ready.

How did she make herself ready? The next verse tells us. Verse 8, To her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright. For the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints.

That's the King James translation. I imagine that the New American Standard says, it's the righteous acts of the saints. Is that right? That's correct.

See there are two words for righteousness in Greek. One is the general abstract word, just righteousness. The other is a very concrete specific word, which means a righteous act, an act of righteousness.

Well when you receive Jesus Christ, by faith as your personal Savior, his righteousness is imputed to you. That's what we call imputed righteousness. But as you live out your life, you work out his imputed righteousness, in your acts of righteousness.

It doesn't just end up with you having a new label on you. You've got to lead a new life. So you go from imputed righteousness, to outworked righteousness.

Now it says the fine linen that the saints are to wear, is the righteous acts of the saints. So how could we ever be left naked? If we had no righteous acts, we'd have no fine linen. So Paul says, I really want to be sure, that when I get up there, there's some material to make my dress on.

It would be a disappointment to get up there and find there was nothing to make your dress from. Wouldn't it? And if Paul took it seriously, I think we have to. If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.

For we that are in this tabernacle, this tent do groan, being burdened. Not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon. That mortality, that's death, might be swallowed up of life.

We don't want to die. But we want to get rid of the mortal, by exchanging it for the immortal. That's fine.

Now he that hath wrought us for the same self, same thing as God. It's God that's made us that way. That's why we feel the way we do.

That's why we respond the way we do. Because God has made us, for what he wants to do. Who has also given us, the earnest of the spirit.

It says in the New American Standard, the pledge of the spirit. Is that right? The down payment. The guarantee.

Let me tell you the same little story, that I told this morning. My mind is right back in Jerusalem today. 1946, my wife and I were living in Jerusalem.

We moved into a new house. And we needed to buy material for the drapes. So we went to the old city, to the little streets there, where they had the cloth merchant.

And we looked at all the bales of cloth, on the man's counter. And we saw something we thought, was what we needed for our curtains. We acquired the price.

I don't remember what it was, but said it was \$2 a yard. And we needed 20 yards. So that was \$40.

And he only had just, a little more than 20 yards on the bale. So we said that's what we want. Said the price will be \$40.

I said well we don't have it all with us now, but I'll give you \$5 now. And I'll come back tomorrow, and pay for the rest. And take the bale.

Meanwhile I said, you take that bale off your counter, because nobody else is free to buy it. You know the word for the \$5? The word that's used here, Arbonne in Arabic, Arbonne in Hebrew. So when Jesus gives us the Holy Spirit, it's the down payment.

He says I'll come back, collect the bale, when I've got the rest of the money. Meanwhile he says, you're not for sale. You're withdrawn from the counter.

You're set apart to me. So God has given us the down payment. And that's the guarantee.

That's the way we know the rest is going to happen. Because the Holy Spirit says, that's right. How it's going to be.

Stay ready, he's coming back. All right, going on verse 6. Therefore as we, we are always confident, knowing that whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord. See that? If you feel too good in this world, you might not feel good in the next.

But these two worlds are in opposition to one another. And if we feel totally at home, in this earthly body, there's something wrong with our spiritual condition. Now, I'm not preaching a message of misery.

I think if you let me get to the end, I'll show you. I'm really showing you how to be happy. That's the truth of the matter.

How to be a realist and be happy. All right, we are always confident, knowing that whilst we're at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight.

We do not depend on what our senses tell us. Is that right? Have you made your mind up about that? When God says one thing in his word, and the senses tell you another. Which are you going to believe? The Word of God.

That's right. Because we don't walk by the senses. We walk by faith.

Verse 8, We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord. Now, some of you are quite, possibly quite young Christian. And most of you are younger than I am.

And I'm not saying that 20 years ago, I would have felt exactly the way I do tonight. So, I don't want you to be under condemnation. But just bear in mind, there's something more.

This world is not the ultimate. It doesn't have the answers. It never will fully satisfy.

And everything it offers is impermanent. I'll tell you another story, about a Swedish girl. Stayed in our home in London.

Very, very talented, beautiful young girl, a beautiful singer. She lived in our home like one of our daughters for about three or four months, I believe. So, we came to know her really very well.

She's always been a friend of ours ever since. And, she grew up, the Pentecostal people in Sweden are very strict. You didn't go to the movie.

You didn't cut your hair. You didn't wear lipstick. I mean, you were different.

And it wasn't all bad. Believe me, they commanded the respect of the nation. When they were right with God, the royal family of Sweden would go to their meetings.

And that's something. But, it's difficult for a young person, especially a rather, unusually pretty, talented young girl, to grow up in that kind of setting. So, Barbara told us this story herself.

She said when she was 14 years old, she went to her father. She said, Father, I want to thank you for all that you've done for me and the way you've brought me up and trained me. And I've always done what you asked.

I've gone to church and I've done all the things you asked. But I just want to tell you, she said, from now on, I want to find out what the world has to offer. I want to find out what my friends enjoy that I'm not enjoying.

So, I'm just telling you, I want to try it. And her father was a very wise man. He didn't argue.

He said, Thank you, Barbara, that you've been willing to come along with us this far. And your mama and I will pray for you. And Barbara told, I'll never forget this.

It's as vivid to me as when she told it. She said, the course of that week, before the next Sunday, she had the most vivid dream of her life. And she saw in this dream, two beautiful, brightly lit, brilliant cities.

And while she was looking at the two cities, a very attractive, educated, cultivated man came. And he pointed to one of the cities, and he said, Let me show you around. And he was so charming, and so cultivated, she thought, I'll go with him.

And he began to take her all through the city, and it was full of neon lights, just like a very large city in the world today. But as they were walking through the city, the lights began to go out, one after the other. And as she looked at this man, his countenance began to change, and she realized it was Satan himself.

She found herself there, alone in that city, in the dark, with that man. And she looked across at the other city, and it was still radiant. Not a light had gone out.

And she knew, God had shown her the choice. The one is temporary, the other is eternal. The one is very bright, very attractive, very exciting, but it doesn't last.

So Paul goes on to say, verse 9, Wherefore we labor, our ambition is, I think the new American standard says, it's our ambition, whether we're present or absent, that we may be accepted of him, we may please him. Is that your ambition tonight? To please God. Then verse 10, which is the last verse I want to read in this chapter.

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ. We, that means you and me. All of us, no exception.

We're all going to appear before the judgment seat of Christ. And in Romans it says, we're all going to be made manifest. Everything that there is to be known about us, is going to be revealed.

Now this is not the judgment of sinners. That's before a great white throne. This is the judgment of believers.

When God starts to judge, whom does he judge first? The world or the church? Church. The time has come, scripture says, that judgment must begin at the house of God. So in the judgments of God at the closest age, the first group to be judged, will be the Christians.

Now our judgment, will not be a judgment of condemnation. Because there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. But it will be a judgment to assess the quality of our service.

And to determine the measure of our reward. And Paul says in 1st Corinthians chapter 3, there'll be some, who've built wood and hay and stubble. And in that moment of judgment, everything they've ever labored for all their lives, will just go up in fire.

And they'll be saved like a naked soul. But others will have built gold and silver and precious stone. And will be rewarded for their labor.

So Paul says, we must all appear, every one of us, one day before the judgment seat of Christ. That we may receive the things done in the body. According to that we have done.

Whether it be good, or not so good. Mediocre, fairly good. No, bad.

That's a very important thing. What we do, is either good, or bad. There's no half and half.

There's no grave. It's not done in the will of God. If it's not done in obedience.

If it's not done for the glory of God. It's bad. And then Paul says the 11th verse, knowing therefore the terror of the Lord.

Do you believe it's legitimate for a Christian to know the terror of the Lord? Apparently it is. I can preach this tonight, because there's not the faintest desire in my heart to bring anybody here under condemnation. But I just want to acquaint you with the fact.

That's how it's going to be. For me, for every one of you. Going to stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

All right, let's go to the last passage of scripture. Isaiah chapter 40. Isaiah chapter 40, beginning at verse 1. Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.

Praise God for that. I'd rather comfort God's people, than condemn them any day. Leave the devil to do the condemning, let's us do the comforting.

Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem. Where it says speak ye comfortably, the Hebrew says speak to the heart of Jerusalem. Does it say that in the margin? Praise God for the margin.

That's really something. You know you can read the simplest passages of scripture and they take on meaning. To me it's marvellous to be able to speak to people's hearts.

And I think God has given me a certain ability to do it in recent years. I'd like to bypass their haze and reach their hearts. Because when you touch people's hearts, you change their lives.

All right, speak to the heart of Jerusalem. And I hope one day God will give me that privilege. I mean it literally.

Speak ye to the heart of Jerusalem, cry unto her, that warfare is accomplished, iniquity is pardoned. For she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins. There'll come a day when Jerusalem's final punishment is complete.

Then we have this prophecy which was fulfilled in part at least in John the Baptist. The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted.

Every mountain and hill shall be made low. The crooked shall be made straight. The rough places plain.

The glory of the Lord shall be revealed. I believe that if we want the glory of the Lord revealed, we have to prepare the way of the Lord. And I believe those are the four things that we have to do.

The valleys have to be raised up. The mountains have to be brought down. Our pride and our arrogance and our self-righteousness has to come down.

But our humility will be lifted up. The crooked things in our lives have got to be made straight. The rough places have got to be made smooth.

And then God says the glory of the Lord shall be revealed. And all flesh shall see it together. For the mouth of the Lord hath spoken.

And then the Prophet gets his message. And this is what I want to speak about. And here I want to close.

The voice said cry. And the Prophet said what shall I cry. This is the message.

All flesh is grass. And all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field. The grass wither, the flower fades.

Because the spirit of the Lord blows upon it. Your New American sentence says the breath. But spirit is really better.

The word is ruach. Surely the people is grass. The grass wither, the flower fades.

But the word of our God shall stand forever. See again, what have you got. The contrast between temporary and the permanent.

Is that a message of comfort? All flesh is grass. How many of you would receive it as a message of comfort? Let's state it. It's a fact.

Whether it's a message of comfort or not. It's true. Everything that we see is withering and fading and dying.

It's extraordinary how the mind of intelligent men can refuse to face that fact. Paul said in Romans 8. The whole creation has been made subject to vanity. And in the book of Ecclesiastes.

The first verse of that book contains the word vanity. Five times in one verse. Vanity of vanity says the preacher.

Vanity of vanity. All is vanity. You need to understand that the key phrase in the book of Ecclesiastes.

Is the phrase things under the sun. Which occurs 27 times in that book. What are the things under the sun? They're the temporal things.

They're the things that can be seen. And when you're on the temporal realm. All is vanity.

Everything is impermanent. Nothing endures. Shakespeare began one of his sonnets with these words.

When I consider everything that grows. Holds in perfection but a little moment. That this huge stage presented not but shows.

Whereon the stars in secret influence comment. That's vanity. Everything that grows.

Holds in perfection but a little moment. The rose blossom fills the air with its perfume. And does what with it? It happens to the animal kingdom.

And it happens to human life. You can have a happy long life. But at the end you're going to die.

You can live happily together as a married couple. 20 years, 30 years, 40 years, 50 years. One day one of you is going to go.

All is vanity. All flesh is grass. The people is grass.

It's all withering. But the most extraordinary statement is. It withers because the spirit of the Lord blows upon it.

In other words it's God that puts it to death. God passed the decree. Why? Now I can tell you why.

I mean I know why. I've learned why. I learned it through the death of my wife.

I would say it's amazing that I could live with her 30 years. And never really grasp that she would die. But I think that's the way most people live.

And I know probably it's the best way to live in a way. But when the Lord took my wife. I had to face these facts.

Age 60. And be a realist. All right.

And I look at people. I look at married couples. And something in me says.

Warn them. Tell them. Not going to last.

Is that true? Or am I exaggerating? Or am I unrealistic? No I'm speaking the truth. See the only one that can really face us with the truth. Is the Holy Spirit.

And I'm not afraid of the truth. Because it's the Spirit of God that blows. Why? What is God aiming at? Why does God let us see everything so beautiful? And I appreciate creation today.

More than I've ever appreciated. I'm more interested in the sense in life today. Than I've ever remembered being.

And I really enjoy life. Those that know me pretty well. I think they know it's true.

But I enjoy it because I've learned the lesson. I've learned the lesson. That there isn't anything permanent here.

We're going to lose it all. And God has arranged it that way. Why? Let me try to explain it to you.

I hope I can say it right. God gives us things that are beautiful. And lovely.

And lovable. And people. And after all the most beautiful thing in the world is people.

They're the biggest problem too. But you can take all the flowers. And all the trees.

And all the birds. In the last resort there's nothing so beautiful as people. They're the crown of God's creation.

And yet they're on the way out. Why? Well my answer is. I hope I can get it across to you.

It's so simple that you could miss it. But my answer is. God has to get us interested in those things.

To get us desiring what is good and beautiful. And then he says. Don't set your affections there.

Because there's something better up here. And he wings us. From the temporal to the eternal.

God doesn't disappoint us. He doesn't mock us. He says just face the fact.

The whole of this human life and race is corrupt. There's a poison at work. But there's another one.

Another level of life. Another kind of life. That's pure.

Incorruptible. Immortal. Eternal.

Never fade. Never wither. Do you believe that? I mean I do.

I'm not hoping. Or wishing. Or thinking.

I know it is. And so I don't expect too much out of this. I don't set my affections and things on there.

My wife and I knew what it was twice. To walk out of a fully furnished home. And know we'd never walk back.

Just right out into the street in the night. Now I have the most beautiful home. With antiques.

All sorts of things. But it doesn't hold me. I'm not bound by it.

If God said walk out tomorrow. I'd walk out. I'd never look back.

But while I'm there. I enjoy it. I thank God for it.

Every day. Every time I get back to my home. I say thank you God.

For this beautiful home you've given me. I am really grateful. I believe I make God happy by enjoying it.

I also. I have to say this. If there's one message I would leave.

It's this. God is faithful. You can rely on him.

He'll never let you down. My wife. If those of you read her book.

You know she went from a very elegant. High-class home. Where everything she needed.

And for many many years. She lived a very very humble life. Very few luxuries.

Facilities of any kind. And between us. We both gave up everything we had.

Career. Family. Home.

Money. Everything. I don't say that to boast.

But it's an absolute simple fact. We got to the. I was 50 years old.

And I've never owned the house. I was 45 years old. I didn't own a car.

I didn't have an insurance. I didn't have any money in the bank. I didn't know where I was going to live next.

And one day. I got desperate. I said God.

What's the end going to be? And I didn't know what God did. But I'm pretty convinced now. He said.

Just wait and I'll show him. And in the course of about five years. God gave me abundantly.

Everything that anybody could ever materially wish for in this world. And when he called my wife home. He called her from the best home she'd ever lived in.

In all her life. That's God's faithfulness. I mean it blesses me more than I can say.

I don't care about the home. But to see God's faithfulness. That means more than I've ever expressed.

I tell you. The devil never has the last word. The Bible says.

He that sits in the heaven is going to laugh at the devil. Praise God. Hallelujah.

All right. So. What's the lesson? First of all.

Don't look for permanent happiness on the earthly level. Because it isn't there. All right.

Remember you died when Jesus died on the cross. And your home is somewhere else. And that's where you need to be at home.

And when you've made that realization. You can enjoy life on earth as you never enjoyed it before. And thank God for every blessed moment he gives you.

But you're not living here. You've got another citizenship. I hope your passport and his order is in order.

Be embarrassing when you've got to heaven's gate. They said you don't have the right visa.

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