

# Pride Expressed by Self-Promotion & Self-Sufficiency

by Jamey P. Tucker

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*Pride is expressed through self-promotion and self-sufficiency, and it leads to speaking against one another and living a life independent of God.*

**Duration:** 51:29

**Scripture:** James 4:1

**Topics:** "Pride"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the brevity and temporary nature of life. He encourages the audience to consider their own mortality and to prioritize their commitment to God and serving Him. The speaker reminds both young and old that life is unpredictable and that they should not delay in living a life that matters. He references Psalm 39 and Psalm 90 to support his message and urges the audience to live with wisdom and purpose.

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## Transcript

It's good to see all of you tonight. I'd like to open to the book of James as we continue our study through the epistle, the epistle of James. Last Wednesday night, Brother Anthony taught us from James chapter 4 verses 1 through 10 on worldliness, its symptoms and solutions.

Tonight we'll look at verses 11 through 17. The message is titled Pride Expressed by Self-Promotion and Self-Sufficiency. So let's read the entire chapter together.

James chapter 4 beginning with verse 1. What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? It's not the source, your pleasures that wage war in your members. You lust and do not have, so you commit murder. You're envious and cannot attain, so you fight and quarrel.

You do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive because you ask with wrong motives so that you may spend it on your pleasures. You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore, whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

Or do you think that the spirit, or do you think that the scripture speaks to no purpose? He jealously desires the spirit which he has made to dwell in us, but he gives a greater grace. Therefore, it says, God is

opposed to the proud but gives grace to the humble. Submit, therefore, to God.

Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

Be miserable and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and he will exalt you.

Do not speak against one another, brethren. He who speaks against a brother or judges his brother speaks against the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge of it.

There is only one lawgiver and judge, the one who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you who judge your neighbor? Come now, you who say, today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit. Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow.

You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. Instead, you ought to say, if the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that. But as it is, you boast in your arrogance.

All such boasting is evil. Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it to him, it is sin. So tonight we want to notice how pride is expressed by self-promotion and self-sufficiency.

So first of all, in verses 11 and 12, James admonishes us not to speak against one another or to speak evil against one another or to slander, do not slander. So notice in James 4, verses 11 through 13, this exhortation, do not speak against one another, do not speak evil against one another, brethren. So think of the verses preceding this commandment not to speak evil against one another, not to slander one another.

Paul, or rather, James here is showing how God refuses to have fellowship with the proud, but how he gives grace to the humble. In verse 6, God gives a greater grace, therefore it says God is opposed to the proud. So tonight we're noticing how pride is expressed in self-promotion and self-sufficiency.

And the reason I say pride is expressed by self-promotion, when James is saying do not speak against one another, is because slander or speaking evil against someone else, at the root of that is pride. If we can put someone else down, there's a twisted way in which we think we are elevated. So Paul, James, James.

If I say Paul and don't correct myself, I'm speaking of James. So James here says God resists the proud, but he gives grace to the humble. So if a person is humble, they're not going to be a person, right, who is speaking against another.

It's incongruous. You can't be a humble slanderer. You can't be humbled by God's grace and at the same time feel to be proud and have arrogance and put others down, speak against others.

So here James admonishes this congregation or these people, these saints, not to be divided because of pride and don't further the division by gossiping, by speaking against one another. Don't say harmful statements about your brother or your sister. Don't let speech characterize you that runs down someone else.

Don't let your conversation, your life be characterized by defamatory language. Don't gossip. Someone might say, well, what I'm saying is true.

So James here is not only condemning lying, but he's condemning that which would be harmful and hurtful to someone else. Listen, your duty as a Christian is not to expose the sin of others. It's not to broadcast either publicly or privately behind others' backs sin or characteristics just to somehow make others appear sinful and to make you seem more righteous.

See, that's what is at the heart of this speaking against one another, making these harmful statements in order to elevate the person that is speaking against another. So James writes, do not speak against one another, brethren. He who speaks against a brother or judges his brother speaks against the law and judges the law.

So here's the reason you are not to speak against one another, because in doing so you are speaking against the law. You are disobeying what God has commanded. You are acting contrary to what God has revealed in his word.

So don't speak evil against one another because in doing so you speak against the law and you judge the law. How do you judge the law? You act as if the law is unimportant or that what God has revealed is somehow non-authoritative. It has no authority over your life or it's somehow contrary to what you deem to be right.

So when he says, when you speak against one another, you're speaking against the law. What does he have in mind? What specifically is he referring to? Well, I believe he's referring back to Leviticus chapter 19, verses 16 and 18. When God said to his people, you shall not go about as a slanderer among your people and you are not to act against the life of your neighbor.

I am the Lord. So you're not to be a slanderer. You're not to be gossiping behind others' backs.

You're not to be running other people down. The law forbid that type of activity. And then in verse 18 of Leviticus chapter 16, you shall not take vengeance nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself.

I am the Lord. So you're not to slander someone else, but rather you are to love them. That's what James here is referring to.

Do not speak against one another, brethren. He who speaks against a brother or judges his brother speaks against the law. You're violating God's word and you're judging the law.

You're sitting above God's law. You are acting as if you have ultimate authority. But he goes on to write, if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law, but a judge of it.

There is only one lawgiver, one lawgiver, and judge the one who is able to save and destroy. But who are you who judge your neighbor? So you're not the lawgiver, James is writing. God is the only lawgiver.

Therefore, we as the people of God cannot be characterized by slander, by defamation, by destroying someone else's reputation. We don't want to be defined by criticizing chatter or hypercritical prattle. That's not what we want to be characterized as, as people that have a very critical spirit.

And that critical spirit has always been expressed by the way others are put down. Doing so, we speak against the law by disobeying it. And we judge the law by saying the law is unimportant.

Even when we see the law through the person of Christ. In James chapter two, notice what James wrote about the royal law. And again, he's referring back to Leviticus chapter 19.

If however you are fulfilling the royal law, according to the scripture, you shall love your neighbor as yourself. So here in James chapter four, when James is speaking to us as brethren, he would go on to write in verse 12, there was only one lawgiver and judge the one who was able to save and destroy. But who are you who judge your neighbor, your neighbor, the one that you are to love.

And there are scriptures throughout the Bible. The Bible is chock full of scriptures that warns us to be very guarded about how we speak about one another. For instance, Peter wrote in first Peter two one, therefore putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander like newborn babes long for the pure milk of the word so that by it you may grow and respect the salvation if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord.

So we are to put away slander. We're not to speak against one another. Ephesians four thirty one, let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you along with all malice.

So you roommates. Especially if there's more than two of you, so be careful about sitting around in the living room when the other roommate isn't present and and speaking against him or speaking against her or you couples as as you at the end of the evening in your home, husbands and wives, be careful that our conversation is not marked by speaking against other brethren here at at Christ Church. You young people, this is a temptation oftentimes that that faces you.

Be careful when you are playing together or getting together and and doing certain activities that that you're not talking against other young people in your church. They may seem to be different. Maybe you think they're a little strange, but very careful about putting others down.

Listen to what Matthew Henry wrote in his commentary on this verse. It is required of us that we be tender of the good name of our brethren where we cannot speak. Well, we had better say nothing than speak evil.

We must not take pleasure in making known the faults of others, divulging things that are secret merely to expose them, nor making more of their known faults than really they deserve. And least of all, in making false stories and spreading things concerning them of which they are altogether innocent. So we want to guard our conversation.

We want to guard our lips, not to speak against one another, because in doing so we speak against the law, we judge the law, and we must remember that God alone is the lawgiver and judge. God is the one that has established his law, and he is the one that executes those who breaks his law. God alone as the lawgiver saves and destroys.

So not only are we breaking the law, we're trying to usurp the authority of the true judge, aren't we? God is the lawgiver. He's the only lawgiver. Now certainly he delegates authority to principalities, to government, to parents.

There's authority in the church that's exercised or should be exercised properly, but ultimately God is the one that is the lawgiver. We do not write the law. We do not make up laws.

God is the one that reveals his will in the word. And when we are guilty of speaking against one another, at the heart of that again is pride. We seek to exalt ourselves by putting others down.

It is a twisted way of trying to exalt ourselves, and it's so contrary to what the Bible has revealed back in James chapter 4 where Anthony preached last week. We are taught that God, he exalts the humble. The way to be exalted is to be filled with humility, and yet we seek to be exalted through pride and putting others down.

I feel better about myself if I see your flaws. I feel more intelligent if I put down your intelligence. I feel to be more holy if I can expose your sin.

That's twisted. Do not speak against one another. Now perhaps this raises the question if or when we are to make judgments.

Certainly we are. As Christians we're called upon to make righteous judgments, but we do that by using the standard of God's word by which we judge what's right and wrong. So tonight we're not gathering together confused about what's right and what's wrong.

Is there right and wrong? Are there such things as moral absolutes? Certainly there are moral absolutes. It's the standard that God has set forth in his word, and we want to understand the word of God and seek to be discerning with the evidence that is presented to us when we have to make righteous judgments. We're all familiar, I'm guessing, with Matthew chapter 7 verse 1. Do not judge so that you will not be judged.

So we're never to make a judgment. We're not to speak and expose sin. Is that what James is writing? Is that what Jesus is advocating? Of course not.

Jesus is here condemning hypocritical judgment and saying whatever judgment you use you will be judged by that same judgment. So Jesus went on to say before you expose the sin of another you need to get the log out of your own eye. Oh you've got this splinter in your eye and I've got this big log.

That's the image. So before before you get the speck out of your brother's eye you need to get the log out of your own eye. And then Jesus would go on to say do not give what is holy to dogs.

So there Jesus is saying be discerning with your judgment. Here are false teachers. They're dogs.

Here are those that continually resist and reject my word. You have to make that discernment. You make that judgment.

Do not throw your pearls before swine. And then later in Matthew chapter 7 he said a fruit a tree is known by its fruit so you're making judgment. But the judgment is based upon the standard of God's word and it's made through wisdom that God gives and asking God for discernment.

Later in James chapter 5 this takes judgment. On our part James takes wisdom to make this judgment. Listen to James 5 verses 19 and 20.

My brethren if any among you strays from the truth and one turns him back. If he strays from the what? Is there any truth? Certainly there's truth. It's God's word.

So we have to make judgment. This is contrary to God's word. This is false.

This is not true. This is error. Let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way.

So that takes discernment based upon the rule of God's word. This is sinful. This is wrong.

This is error. And our goal in turning a sinner from the error of his way is that his soul will be saved from death and will cover a multitude of sins. So do not speak against one another.

For in so doing you speak against the law. You judge the law. We have to make judgment from time to time.

It's difficult. It's hard. But we're called upon as Christians to do that.

There are times when we as a church have to make judgments. When we have to remove affirmation from people's profession based upon a lifestyle of impenitence. That's required of us.

But that's different than speaking against one another and judging the law in the way that James is presenting that. So don't speak against one another. For in so doing you are expressing pride and self-promotion.

If I can make myself look better by making you look worse, then I've sinned. I've expressed pride in my life. And James is condemning that.

So tonight we want to be very careful of what we say about one another. Does that mean you never go to a brother or sister and talk to them about their sin? That's not what James is writing. That's not what James is saying.

That's helpful. You know when it's harmful. You know when it's harmful.

You know when you are speaking against someone other because there's pride and there's bitterness in your own heart. Be careful about having just a hypercritical spirit. Listen, a lot of times we, you know, personally, I know about some of the things I struggle with.

So it's good to have someone to come and talk to me about it. But a lot of times there's people, they know they've got struggles. So they don't need a hypercritical spiritual, a hypercritical, a person that's hypercritical coming and exposing their sin or talking to them about their sin in a critical way.

So just consider your motives. What's behind your conversation when you feel that you need to confront this particular sin? Then James goes on to write in verses 13 through 17 about the danger of living a life independent of God, which again is pride. It's the pride that expresses itself in an idea that you're self-sufficient, that you really don't need God.

Now, as professors, we would never come out and say that, right? I don't need God, but he's condemning here practical atheism. Listen again to verses 13 and 14. Come now, he's saying, listen up.

Come here. Let me talk to you. Come now, you who say, today or tomorrow, we will go to such and such a city and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit.

There you go. There's a verse against capitalism, right? That's not what James is condemning. He's condemning this idea of self-sufficiency, that I'm not dependent upon God.

Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. All right, I had some people tonight say, come on, we need you to bring it.

Then pray that the spirit of God will anoint. You can't turn it on and off. And then you sit down and here's what the word of God says.

Your life is like a vapor. It appears for a little while and then vanishes away. Wow, that's really encouraging.

So James is, well, you can just imagine the merchant men in the church. You know, they're having a meeting. They've got a map.

All right, we're going to travel to this city. We're going to stay there for a year and we're going to engage in business and we're going to make a profit. And James is saying, think about this, life is not that certain.

Life is uncertain, in fact. Life is unpredictable. There are, from our vantage point, there are unforeseeable events.

So I was running late tonight because the state or the county or someone decided they were going to paint the lines at five o'clock. It's ridiculous, right? So I didn't foresee that event. So there are events that take place that you and I do not know ahead of time.

And not only that, not only is life unpredictable, we are transient. Our life is temporary. It's short-lived.

Anthony and I were talking about this today, that it's October. It's October. Another year has quickly passed by.

Think about this. It's this way with me. When there's something that I'm looking forward to that's weeks in advance, it seems like it takes forever for that day to finally come.

And then you look back on events and it seems like it was just yesterday. It takes forever. When you're looking into the future, it seems like it's forever.

You look back and it's short-lived. It's temporary. And James is reminding the people that are making these plans, you've got to put God into the equation.

You've got to remember that your life is temporary. Your life is short-lived. Listen to Psalm 39, verses 4 and 5. This is really good because a lot of us, we don't like to think about our own mortality.

You might begin to squirm and feel like sweat's breaking out on your forehead tonight. But the fact is, you and I, we're only here for a short time. And we ought to think about our own mortality.

We should do that. The writers of the Bible did. Listen to the Psalm.

Psalm 39, verses 4 and 5. Lord, make me to know my end, and what is the extent of my days. Help me to realize my frailty. We don't want to think about our frailty.

But the psalmist understood it was important. Let me know how transient I am. Behold, you have made my days as hand-breaths, the breadth of my hand, short, and my lifetime as nothing in your sight.

Surely every man at his best is a mere breath, a vapor, and then it vanishes. Job is even more explicit, maybe, when he's speaking about the reality of life. Listen to this.

Man who is born of a woman, two things, is short-lived and full of turmoil. So here, let me tell you what life's going to be like. You're not going to live very long, and the short time you have here is going to be filled with turmoil or trouble.

I'm glad you came. Man who is born of a woman, is short-lived, is a few days and full of trouble. We need to have that perspective of life that I'm going to give you something to balance it with, because I don't want you going home hanging your head.

And it's easy to remember, Job 14.1 and John 14.1. Job 14.1 says man that is born of a woman is a few days and full of trouble. That's reality. But for a Christian, there is a spiritual reality that helps balance the difficulty of life.

Jesus said, let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in me. For in my Father's house are many mansions.

If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go, I will come again and receive you unto myself that you may be there with me.

So life is full of trouble. And Jesus says, let not your heart be troubled. Life is full of trouble, and it's short, it's transitory, it's filled with heartache and difficulty.

That's the reality. We don't want to paint a picture of life as Christians that is contrary to what God has revealed. Life is short and it's filled with trouble.

But because Jesus came to this earth and made a way for us to have a relationship with God and live with Him forever, He can say to you that are troubled tonight, you that are perplexed, those of you that are sorrowing, you're going through trials, you're facing difficulties, let not your heart be troubled. Believe in Jesus because He has performed the work of redemption. He's gone back to heaven and one day He's coming again to receive us unto Himself that we might be with Him forever.

So the next time you're hanging your head and you're saying life stinks, remember Jesus is alive and you're going to live with Him forever. So we do need to know that life is short-lived, it's transitory, it's fleeting, it's fleeting. So be careful that you don't live your life in such a way that God's not in your plans.

So therefore, James writes in verse 15, this is what you ought to say. If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that. So it's not planning that's a sin, it's not making a profit that's a sin, it's not that James is condemning the entrepreneur spirit, he's condemning the planning and the entrepreneur spirit without thinking of God, without realizing that our lives are dependent upon the Lord.

If the Lord wills, then we will. What James is saying is if the Lord doesn't will, you're not going to the city today or tomorrow. If the Lord doesn't will it, you're not going to move there and be engaged in business and if the Lord doesn't will it, you're not going to make a profit.

God is sovereign. Our plans and our purposes are contingent upon God's plans and God's purposes. So plan, it's good.

Make a profit, that's good. But don't seek to do it apart from God's purpose and God's plan and God's will. If the Lord wills, now that's more than just a formula, it's an understanding in life that God upholds, He directs, He disposes, and He governs all creatures and things from the greatest to the least.

He's sitting upon His throne tonight and He's in charge of the world. That's good news, isn't it? See, I hear some people, when they hear that God is sovereign and that He is the one that works His will in the army of heaven among the inhabitants of the earth and none can say to Him, what doest thou? People say that makes me nervous to think that somehow I'm not in charge. Praise God, tonight God is in charge.

Now that doesn't mean that our planning, our choices, our actions are unimportant because the sovereign God works through our planning, He works through our choices. I'm not saying tonight be stupid and go home speeding without putting on your seat belt, that's stupid. That's against the law, that's against God's will, that's fatalism, that's wrong.

But we understand that God ultimately is in charge. If the Lord wills, I will marry. If the Lord wills, I will have a family.

If the Lord wills, I will graduate. If the Lord wills, I will find employment. If the Lord wills, I'll sleep safely in my bed tonight.

If the Lord wills, I will wake up and go to the coffee shop, not me, maybe you. If the Lord wills, I will celebrate my anniversary. If the Lord wills, I will preach again next Wednesday night.

But if God doesn't will it, none of those things are going to happen. So we live lives that are dependent upon God. We're dependent upon God.

In Him, Paul writes, we live, we move, and we have our being. We live. Our life is a gift from God.

He gave us life and He sustains that life. If He withdraws His protection and His power from us, we're dead. We live in Him, we move.

Your ability to be here is because God willed it. He gave you the ability to move. In Him, we live, move, and have our being.

Our existence and our continued existence is owing to a sovereign, gracious, benevolent God. If the Lord wills, we will do this or that. But pride appears when we try to make plans apart from God.

When we pretend that we're in charge, verse 16, but as it is, you boast in your arrogance, all such boasting is evil. It's pride. Listen, you are not autonomous.

You do not live independently of God. Your life is not self-determining. You do not control your destiny.

You are not the master of your fate. You are not the captain of your soul. God Almighty is.

God is. And when we begin to make our plans and purposes to do these things by our own ability, that boasting is evil. God is the one that gives us life and sustains our life.

No guilt in life, no fear in death. This is the power of Christ in me. From life's first cry to final breath, Jesus commands my destiny.

He commands my destiny. Does that mean I'm not worried about my cholesterol? Certainly. God works through doctors and diet to give you life, to prolong your life.

Again, we're not stupid. We're not fatalist. We're not presuming on the sovereignty of God.

But ultimately, God is in control. God is in control. So he's condemning pride that boasts in human accomplishments as if God was not the one that was blessing.

God was not the one that was directing. God is the one who orchestrates all the events of our life. Your very hair, the hair of your head, they're numbered.

Yours too, Jeff. God is in control. That's good.

That's a good thing. I know people that feel very uncomfortable when you begin to talk about God's sovereignty over their life and that he is in control. That's good because he's a benevolent God and he's all-powerful.

Why would we want to be in control? So pride manifests itself into self-sufficiency. I'm going to accomplish all of these things without considering God's aid, God's assistance, God's presence, God's direction. So therefore, in verse 17, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it to him it is sin.

What's the right thing to do? To live in dependence upon God. To live a life of faith. Is God somehow untrustworthy? Do you think God's untrustworthy? Is anybody here? We need to talk if you do.

God's trustworthy. We can depend upon God. He doesn't lie.

He doesn't fail us. So the thing that we are to do, the right thing to do is to live in dependency upon God. When we don't, we're committing the sin of omission, failing to do what God commands.

God says that we're to live in faith, live in dependence of him. Earlier he talked about the sin of commission, doing what God forbids, that's slander. Don't slander.

God forbids slandering, speaking against one another. We often forget about this idea of the sins of omission, right? Normally we confess our sins of commission and that's right, but what about the things God has commanded us to do that we fail to do? When we fail to live in constant dependence upon God, even the plans that I am making for today must be based upon my dependence upon God. Well, the old saying is, I'll do this, what, this week, if God wills and the creek don't rise.

Listen, if God wills it, it doesn't matter about the creek. Let the creek rise. God willed it.

Be encouraged by that. Live in dependence upon God. So let me express this in conclusion.

So I want you tonight to consider that you are mortal, okay? You're mortal. Your life is short. Your life is short.

Some of you young people, you may be thinking, this isn't applicable to me. It is. Listen, you're not promised tomorrow.

You're not. I don't care how young you are. All of us, or many of us in this room have lost people that we loved when they were young.

You're not promised tomorrow. And you need to remember that life is short. You're mortal.

And that's a good thing when you can apply it in the right way. So listen to the Psalmist, Psalm 90. So teach us to number our days, that we may present to you a heart of wisdom.

See, life says, life is short, play hard. That's a Reebok slogan. I don't know if it's still something that's wildly advertised, widely advertised.

Maybe wildly too. Life is short, play hard. So that's the, you know, the paradise, the viewpoint of the world.

Life is short. I'm not against playing hard. If you're going to play, play hard.

If you're playing the right things, play hard. But there's more to life than playing, right? Life is short, serve Jesus. Life is short, be committed to a local church.

Life is short. Let's try to spread the gospel and see his kingdom expanded. Life is short.

Don't think if you're young, well, I'm going to get around to being really committed to the service of God when I get older. You don't know if you're going to live to be older. And in the meantime, use your strength.

Remember that you're a creator in the days of your youth, Solomon writes. And if you're older, then certainly don't say I'll get around to it later. Lord, help us to remember our frailty because we want to live in a manner that really matters, in a way that really matters, in a way that can please you, God.

Life is short. It's here today. It's gone tomorrow.

So consider you are mortal and life is short. Serve Jesus. Serve him with all the spiritual tenacity that God has given you.

And then second, another point to consider. Consider you are immortal. You've had immortality conveyed to you by God.

Now, God is by his own nature immortal. He's from everlasting to everlasting. He's undecaying.

He cannot die. You and I, we're decaying, right? Hair is falling out, hair is graying, muscles are aching. And yet there's a sense in which we are immortal.

There is life beyond the grave in this world. That's the reason we're exhorted. Seek the things which are above and not the things on the earth.

Set your affection on things above and not on the earth. Remember your life is hid with God. Seek those things which are above.

Your life, there's more to life than here, the here and now. There's a sense in which we are immortal. We're mortal and immortal.

God has conveyed to all of us in this room, whether we're saved or unsaved, immortality. We will live beyond this world, either in heaven or hell. There is an eternal duration that all people will experience

Have you ever heard the old tune, and am I born to die? I like it.

I like minor, sorrowful hymns from time to time. Now I need those cheerful, encouraging hymns as well, but some deep reflection in some of the old hymns. Part of that hymn, I think it's Charles West that wrote it, expresses this.

Soon as from earth I go, what will become of me? Eternal happiness or woe must then my portion be. Wake by the trumpet's sound, I from the grave shall rise and see the judge with a glory crown and see the flaming skies. How shall I leave the tomb with triumph or regret, a fearful or a joyful doom, a curse or blessing meet? Who can resolve the doubt that tears my anxious breast, that tears my anxious breast? Shall I be with the damned, cast out or numbered with the blessed? I must from God be driven or with my savior dwell, must come at his command to heaven or else depart to hell.

Yes, we're going to die, but we will live eternally. And how we respond to this man, this God-man, Jesus Christ, ultimately determines whether or not I am cast out with the damned or numbered among the blessed. See, tonight there is one lawgiver and there is one judge and he alone has the power to save and destroy.

And destroy there is not annihilation, it's an eternal destruction. Separated from God in eternal torment, he is able to save and destroy. See, this judge, this judge can declare you righteous.

He can declare you righteous through the perfect righteousness of Jesus. Jesus, who lived the perfect life, who obeyed his heavenly Father, who performed the Father's will perfectly, he that was without sin, without blemish, he was the one that offered himself to God as a sacrifice, dying in our place. He was our substitute, bearing the wrath of God so that those that place their faith in Christ might be forgiven and justified.

Justified before this judge, standing before the bar of justice and declared by the eternal judge of the universe, not guilty, righteous. That's the gospel, my friends. Yes, you and I are immortal.

We will live eternally. Young people, listen. Those of you that are without Christ, listen.

There is more than just this life. There is a life that is to come. There is a world that is to come.

There is eternity. And if we spend, if we are to spend eternity with God, we must place our faith in Jesus. We must cast ourselves upon Christ.

Maybe you are saying, but I'm so sinful. The good news is all that come to God through Christ are saved. He will never, he will never, he will never cast one away.

He is the judge, but this judge is merciful because of his son, Jesus, because of Jesus, what Jesus has done. He's able to save. He's able to declare you righteous.

He can exalt you through grace to glory. He can exalt you. The ultimate exaltation, exalted in Jesus Christ, the Lord.

Oh, that's good. We can trust him tonight. We can trust him now and our afflictions, and we can trust him for our salvation for eternity.

Listen to Psalm 31, 14, and 15. One of my favorite texts. But as for me, I trust in you, oh Lord, I say, you are my God.

My times are in your hand. My times are in your hand. Deliver me from the hand of my enemies and from those who persecute me.

If you are a Christian tonight, ultimately your times are in the hand of God. The time of your birth, the time of your death, your bad times, your good times, they're in the hand of God. And God will see us through all the difficulties.

Our times are in his hand. Our sorrows, our difficulties, our trials, our sadness, our gloom, our times are in the hand of a sovereign, omnipotent, benevolent God. This God who is trustworthy enough so that we can cast our life into his hands now.

It's the same God that is trustworthy that we can depend upon for eternity. This is the ultimate exaltation. Tonight, there's no room for pride in this place.

But there's plenty of room for humility, right? His grace is good. Let's pray. Father, we thank you for the kindness that you have shown to us.

God, we ask tonight that you would please forgive us when we've talked about our brothers and our sisters, and we've defamed their character. We sullied their reputation. God, would you help us to put a guard over our mouth that what we say would be edifying and upbuilding? God, we also ask for forgiveness when we've lived life without even considering you as the sovereign, when we've neglected to appreciate providence.

God, we thank you tonight that Jesus upholds all things by the word of his power, and that by him all things consist. Lord, we thank you for the breath that you have given us, for the strength that we possess. God, for the mind that you have given us, would you please allow us to use these gifts of your kindness in such a way that we would please you? God, we need to be allured to you by your grace.

We need for holy inclinations to constantly draw us to you. We need righteousness empowered in our lives. So, God, we look to you tonight.

We thank you for what you've done. We thank you for the promise of what you will do. God, help us to long for your return.

Help us to remember that we are pilgrims, we're sojourners, that we're looking for a city that is eternal, where you dwell in the splendor of your glory. God, we thank you tonight for grace. We thank you for the forgiveness of sins.

We thank you for your word. Would you work through what has been taught tonight, that which was in harmony with your truth, to make us more like Jesus, we pray, and amen.

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Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/28/SID28886.mp3>

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