

Calculating Future Glory

by Michael Durham

This sermon emphasizes the concept of calculating future glory in the midst of present sufferings, highlighting the idea that our struggles are connected to a greater purpose and a future exaltation. It encourages trust and obedience to God as the Master Weaver who designs our lives intricately, even in our failures and weaknesses, to ultimately reveal a glorious tapestry. The message also includes a powerful warning about the consequences of rejecting God and the importance of seeking salvation through Christ's sacrifice.

Scripture: Romans 8:18, Hebrews 11:24, Matthew 17:2, 2 Timothy 2:10, Matthew 25:21

Topics: "Future Glory", "Trust in God's Plan"

Description

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Transcript

Before I announce my text this morning, I want to thank you all from the bottom of our hearts for your love, your prayers, your kindness in these days. One of the few cons, negatives of my kind of ministry is that it takes me away from you. And I feel often that I have little contribution to this body because I'm gone so much.

And Karen has not been able to be as involved as she has wanted because she gives care to two special needs people. But in these last few days, you have demonstrated that you don't love us for what we give. You love us because you love us.

And that's been very special to us and has been strengthening and encouraging. I visited with Mother this morning, and she wanted me to make sure I communicated her love for you. She is nearing the end of her race, the very thing that you and I are running to do, to see Him.

And so, we appreciate your continued prayers. She's at peace. They began comfort medications last night, meaning she's on hospice.

We don't know what the progression will be from this moment, but I can tell you as Karen testified earlier, she is resting and reclining in the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Amen. Well, the text I pray the Lord be pleased to speak to us this morning is Paul's epistle to the Romans chapter 8 and verse 18.

Romans chapter 8 and verse 18. I want to speak on the theme calculating future glory. Calculating future glory.

Romans chapter 8 and verse 18. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. Have you ever wondered if all the pain, all the struggles, all the frustration could be somehow tied to a future glory? And if you have, do you consider the present struggles, the trial right now, how it is connected to a future exaltation? Believe me, the struggle, the dilemma, the concern, the weight is tied to glory.

This is not wasted on you, therefore do not waste it. Think of it this way. What if the struggles we endure are not isolated events but threads woven into a greater tapestry, a more purposeful story, and each story ends with the triumph of a king and his loyal subject? I mean isn't that your story? It's my story.

We serve a high king and he is working in us by his grace for a great victory. And isn't it the intense challenges that we go through that makes the story more interesting in the battle won, more glorious? I mean you take out of the story the lion, the witch, and the wardrobe. Take out the white witch and her evil henchmen, and what happens to the story? Well, you don't have a story.

And take out your present sufferings right now, and there's no glory. No, there is none. Paul says this light affliction, which is momentary, is working for us a greater weight of glory.

There is a reason for the struggle, for the pain, and the adversity. The conclusion is meaningless without the antagonist. Every good classic story always has an antagonist.

There's always this plot of good versus evil. And without your personal issues and adversities, the conclusion becomes meaningless. It's like a diary where the entry every day is, it was a sunny day.

Week after week, month after month, year after year, it was a sunny day. No, life is much more intricate than that, and God the master weaver is working in your sorrows, your burdens, your pains. And as we navigate the challenges of living in this hostile world, what would happen to your spirit if you thought that your endurance through present trials would be shaping you for a destiny beyond your imagination? Many of you can't think that way.

You refuse to think that way. You look at your life as so ordinary, so mundane, nothing out of the common. But dear friend, you've been bought with a price.

You don't belong to yourself, you belong to Him. Are you telling me the great storyteller of the universe is not working His magic, His power, His majesty in you? Of course He is, even in your ordinary and weak life. How might your perspective shift if you viewed your struggles not as stumbling blocks but as stepping stones to a future bright with purpose and fulfillment? That's what the Apostle Paul is telling us in this text.

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. And so Paul begins by stating there must be a proper consideration. That's what I want to direct your attention to just briefly.

He says, for I consider. To consider here is to calculate. In fact, it is an accounting term.

We're in the midst of the tax season. Most of us are gathering our tax information to take it to our accountant, or some of us are rolling up our sleeves and getting out our calculator and sharpening our pencil, and we're doing the accounting ourselves. Either way, we're calculating.

We're totaling up numbers and trying to find the bottom line. That's what Paul says in this word. It's to reason, it's to think, it's to calculate, it's to take account.

And there is to be a proper evaluation of suffering. Here's where we must begin in this moment, in this hour, if you're to profit from our tax. You need to properly consider your suffering, your adversity, your challenges, and yes, even your susceptibility to temptation.

How do you think properly about them? There is a proper evaluation of our suffering. And then Paul says there's a proper comparison. I consider the sufferings of the present time not worthy to be compared.

There's a proper comparison, and this proper comparison devalues present suffering. Now, don't misunderstand me. Paul is not trying to deflate your problems.

He's not trying to encourage you with positive thinking and come to the conclusion that, hey, I don't really have any problems. These aren't problems. They're just opportunities.

So often we misinterpret Romans 8, 28, for all things work to good to them that love him and are thee called according to his purpose. And we think that the Bible is saying that these things aren't bad. They're good.

Well, listen carefully. Cancer is still cancer. Financial ruin is still financial ruin.

A rebellious teenager is still a rebellious teenager, and death is still death, and they are not good. The text doesn't say they're good. It says he works them to our good.

No, no, they hurt, they sting, they afflict, they wrinkle the brow, they bend the back. They're not good. Paul's not devaluating your suffering.

No, the problem is we over-inflate our sufferings. We over-consider them. We think too highly of them.

We overestimate the pain and the agony. The apostle Paul is recognizing here or accounting suffering by comparing it to future glory. This is the way to put your present dilemmas and challenges into the right perspective.

It has to be measured against something else. Future glory is so much weightier than present suffering. In fact, this is where we even find the etymology, the meaning of the word glory.

It comes from a pair of balance scales. You've got a plate and a plate over here, and they hang in suspension. And it goes back to the days where you didn't have coins stamped with the amount and dollars printed with the amount.

You would take your gold and silver to conduct transactions, economic transactions, and they would put your gold and silver on one plate of the scale. And then there would be these standardized weights that they would put on the other side until the scales balanced, and that would determine the value of your

gold, your silver, your copper. This is where we get the word glory.

It simply means heavy, weighty. And of course, the more weight, the more value. Can you imagine if you were to take a small coin and put it on one side of the scale, and then you would drop a large weight on the other side? What would happen to the coin? It would go flying through the air.

It would be catapulted off the balance, wouldn't it, by the severe weight on the other side. And that's what Paul is doing. He's placing an imaginary scales in your mind and showing you put your present sufferings on one side, and then drop on the other side the future glory that is ours.

And your troubles go sailing off into the air. It's not devaluing your suffering, it's appropriately calculating them by making a proper comparison. This is not all there is to life, these momentary few days of woe.

We must suffer with Christ if we would partake of His glory, but what is that? If such sufferings are offsetted by this kind of glory, they evaporate into insignificance. That's the reasoning of the Apostle here, and it's the reasoning of Scripture. You see it all through the Bible.

In Hebrews chapter 11, Moses is accommodated here as a man of faith for this very reason. Hebrews chapter 11, begin reading in verse 24, by faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin. Now notice verse 26, esteeming, calculating the reproach of Christ's greater riches than the treasures in Egypt.

How come? He says, for he looked to the reward. He measured the present suffering, the reproach of Christ in comparison against the reward, and he found the reward outweighed the reproach, the sufferings, the agonies. I'm often asked this question.

In fact, I was recently asked, yes, yes, but isn't this dealing with persecution, that kind of suffering only? Listen carefully. I stand ready to be corrected if I can be shown in the Scriptures, but it is my reading of this text that our sovereign God attends all things, even my affliction, even my problems, even my issues. And if I will submit myself to His glorious sovereign care, even physical pain, sufferings, financial, relational, all of these things can demonstrate the glory of the master, and I therefore can suffer for Christ even if it may not be persecutorial.

Do you believe this? I believe it. We submit all things to Christ who works all these things to our good. My problem is spiritual myopia.

You know what that is? Spiritual nearsightedness. We don't have the long-term in view. We don't have the eternal perspective.

The proper view of what you're enduring now comes by a proper view of the future glory, which leads us to a question. Well, what is that future glory? What is it like? How do we understand it? And I now confess to you my inadequacy and failure. I will not be able to define it.

I will not be able to tell you in detail what that future glory is and what it is like. But do not despair. The Bible does give us some indications.

Example, verse 17, the verse preceding our text, And if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with him, that we may also be glorified together. Our future glory is the

shared glory of Jesus Christ. Now that is incredible.

I mean, it's one thing to take vile wretches and forgive them, pardon them, save them. But it's quite another thing to then bring them in and share the glory of your Son who obeyed you perfectly and did it all and finished the race without sin and to be able to be brought into His glory and that He would share that with you and me. That's what we're dealing with here.

But again, the question is asked, well, what is the glory of Christ? And once again, our finiteness and limited intellects can't answer that question. How can we know such infinite glory? However, the Bible does give us sufficient clues, and I want to share those clues with you here this morning. Now, someone may argue, well, I don't need to know what that glory is in order to believe it.

No. But Paul writes as if we are to have some way of comparing it with the present sufferings, I must therefore have some understanding of it. What is this future glory that you and I are going to share in? Well, as I said, I think the Bible gives us clues, doesn't define it, but they illustrate it.

And I'm indebted here to C. S. Lewis for the first two clues. In his sermon I read many years ago, the weight of glory. Unfortunately though, Lewis does not give any scriptural reasoning for the two clues that he mentions, though they are luminosity and fame.

We'll touch on them in just a moment. And so through the years I've studied and looking, trying to understand this glory, and I believe I have scriptural justification. Lewis gave us philosophical arguments.

While they are fine in themselves, they are not the Word of God. I need God's Word. Amen? So I would direct your attention to Matthew chapter 17 and verse 2, as we discussed the first of three clues.

Matthew chapter 17 verse 2. The first is light or luminosity. If you were to describe the glory of Christ, light has to come into the discussion. Matthew chapter 17 verse 2. It's the mount of transfiguration.

What mount is this? I don't know. Some scholars say this, some say Mount Hermon near Caesarea Philippi. I don't know, doesn't matter.

All I know is that it did happen. And the Bible says that our Lord was transfigured before them, Peter, James, and John, the three disciples He took up on the mountain to witness this. And His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light.

The transfiguration of Jesus here on the mount of transfiguration is a precursor to the glory of Christ revealed to the three apostles. It's a precursor of what He was going to inherit at the conclusion of His life here on this earth. But what the transfiguration event shows us is that He already possessed that glory, being the eternal Son of God as well as the man Christ Jesus.

The Godhead was veiled, veiled in flesh the Godhead see. And at this moment in the ministry and life of our Lord, the flesh became no longer a barrier to see the glory. Somehow the glory penetrated through the veil.

And there it was, bright as the sun at noon, so bright that even His clothes became white. How, I don't know, the Bible doesn't tell me, but it was the power of the luminosity, the light of Jesus Christ breaking through. And there Peter, James, and John saw it.

Peter refers to it in his elderly years as he writes, 2 Peter chapter 1 verse 17, for he, Jesus, received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to him from the excellent glory. This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. This is glorious.

This is a viewing of the glory that would be His. But I still think it wasn't the fullness, because Paul testifies that on the Damascus road when he saw the resurrected Christ, that the brightness was brighter than the noonday sun. Not as the sun, but brighter even still.

What is this light? God is light. God dwells in unapproachable light. All of these metaphors can be confusing to us.

What does it mean? Well, they are saying something. These metaphors are saying something. Is God light? Yes, I believe it literally is true.

But I think it's referring to His glory, and His glory manifested through the light, please listen, is His beauty. I have thought a lot about this many years. The luminosity, the illumination, the light of God, should He appear to us unveiled, we would see nothing but piercing, blinding light.

But do you know much about light itself? It's interesting, I'm not a scientist, and I won't pretend to bore you trying to pretend to be a scientist. But light can appear in two different ways, as a particle and as a waveform. It's interesting, isn't it, when you get to the book of Revelation, and John is there in the fourth chapter, and he's witnessing God on the throne, how he describes what he sees.

He describes it in terms of light. He who sat on the throne was as a jasper. You go to the twenty-first chapter of Revelation, he's describing the New Jerusalem as a city shining like a jasper, shining like crystal.

He's describing light, the light of God. He mentions a Sardis stone there in the fourth chapter. Sardis was a deep red.

What is John seeing? He knows he's seeing God, but he doesn't know how to describe Him, and so all he can do is take what he sees and try to cram it into the confines of language. And all he can do is describe colors, light. I'm here to say that the glory of Christ shining is a metaphor of His beauty, His beauty.

He's pure. He's holy. There's no contamination, and light emanates.

Have you ever been to the Grand Canyon, and you see all the different colors in that chasm a mile deep? And what are all those different colors? It's the light bouncing and moving around across those rocks and ledges, a beautiful sunrise, a beautiful sunset. What is those colors? It's nothing but light refracting on the particles. God is light, and He is most beautiful beyond description.

In fact, it defies description, and John strains, and all he can do is say, well, it's like a crystal, and it's like a Sardis, and like an emerald. It's His beauty. And beloved, here, listen to me carefully.

We will not just behold our Lord's beauty, but we will be brought into it, brought into it. You will not just get to enjoy looking at it. Somehow, in that state of glorification, we will enter in it, and we too will shine forth as the Son.

You think I'm exaggerating, or I'm just wishful thinking? No, listen to Jesus, Matthew chapter 13 and verse 43, the righteous will shine forth as the Son in the kingdom of their Father, and he who has ears to hear,

let him hear. In that sermon, *Weight of Glory* by C.S. Lewis, he in passing, he doesn't develop it. He just makes this statement, I want to read it to you.

Yet be careful with Lewis, I do need to say that. This is not a broad endorsement of his writings. Sometimes he's really spot on, and sometimes he's a million miles off.

But here, he hit the proverbial nail on the head. Listen carefully. It is a serious thing to live in a society of possible gods and goddesses.

I don't like that terminology, but what he's trying to say is what you're going to be is not what you are sitting here right now. You're not going to be deity. No, no, no.

But you're going to sure look like it. That's the point here. It's a serious thing to live in a society of possible gods and goddesses to remember that the dullest and most uninteresting person, the man speaking to you right now, look at me, I am nothing to behold.

The most dull and uninteresting person you talk to may one day be a creature which if you saw it now, you'd be strongly tempted to worship. That's what awaits you. That's future glory.

I look at you here. Some of you, you're in your youth, your prime, your skin glows, radiates. Some of us have seen our prime and then some.

And time is effacing the beauty of youth and the strength thereof. But no matter your physical shape or appearance, there is coming a certain day when if we could see you now as you shall be then, Lewis is right, we would immediately fall to our knees. If you don't think that is fair or biblical, all you have to do again is go back to the book of Revelation.

Here, John has seen the resurrected Christ. He's revealed himself early in the chapters 1, 2, and 3. He's now seen him on the throne, but he has an angelic guide who takes him through these visions and explains what he's seeing. And more than once, not once, not twice, I think three times, he's tempted, he begins to bow and worship the angel.

And he has to be stopped and said, no, you can't do this. Why is he tempted to worship? Listen carefully, because that angelic creature is so beautiful. And if you understand worship, the very heart of worship, it is to be mesmerized, taken over by the beauty of something else.

I don't want to be too philosophical on you. This is real practical. We worship that which we deem beautiful.

And that doesn't always equate to physical beauty, but could be value that we place upon something. The attraction, the satisfaction, the pleasure, the delight, all of these things cram into this word beauty. And he's tempted to bow down, this shining one.

Isn't it interesting that the word in Genesis 3 for the serpent is the same Hebrew word for shining one. This creature was more beautiful than any other that Adam and Eve had seen. Well, of course, Satan, the angel coming as an angel of light to deceive.

And this is that glory. And so I look today upon you, even as I looked upon Mom this morning lying there in her bed. Time has done much to her body in eighty-five years.

The curse has afflicted much. 2014 took her sight. Last year, cancer.

And now the presumed end. And I saw her laying there, lying there. And I remember, I remember to what she looked like when I first met her in her early forties.

It's hardly recognizable as the veil of death slowly comes for her. And I look at that frame ravaged by sin, time, disease, and now the final enemy, death. I thought about what I was preaching to you today.

And I thought, hallelujah, one glorious day I'll look upon this woman and I'll see beauty like I've never seen before. In the last few weeks, I'm having to tell two dear people goodbye. Mom and then a dear friend in Oklahoma who's getting weaker day by day.

Just recently talked to him and not knowing if I should talk to him again and told him how much I loved him and told him how much I appreciated him and that I would see him again. And goodbye. He's about my age.

That's not old. Don't care what, don't you snicker. That's not old.

Strong as an ox. Why? Just a couple of weeks before he was diagnosed fourth stage lung cancer, he was cutting down a tree and trimming it and hauling it away for a neighbor. Now he's wasting away.

I'll be one day when I see, my dear Scott, I shall behold a creature of unfathomable beauty. And if I should see that now, if we could see the spirits of just men made perfect now, yes, Lewis is right here, we would be tempted to worship. But there's a second clue also from this text.

It is the word fame or reputation, or I want to use a different word here in a moment. At first you're going to cringe, but I'm going to say it unapologetically and listen to me and let me defend the word. And you'll see why it's an appropriate word.

Matthew chapter 17, five, again, the Mount of Transfiguration while he was still speaking, that's Peter, of course, don't know what to do. Just start talking. That's that was Peter's remedy.

Behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud saying, this is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased. Hear him. What was this declaration? Well, in succinct, in short, it is the approval of the father for his son.

It is the father expressing his approbation, his approval of his son. And I assure you that I am convinced that the future glory that shall be revealed in us is very much on this same order, the father's approval of you. This is my beloved son.

This is my beloved daughter in whom I am well pleased. It is, here's the word, praise. It is the praise of God for us.

Don't be shaken by the word praise. I do not mean worship. We're not talking about worship.

God will not worship anything or be tempted to do so. But praise is not necessarily worship. It can be, but it's also something different.

Praise is giving your approval. It is giving someone the understanding that you take pleasure in them. You're pleased with them.

It's the same when a little boy or girl comes and shows dad their marks, their report on their grade. And the father looks at the grade, and he looks at the child, and he smiles. And just the smile.

Look at Abigail. She's already smiling. It just warms that child's heart.

Why? Because father is pleased with me. This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased. That's what I'm living for.

How about you? This is why we run the race. This is the prize. This is Moses's reward.

Now, if you don't understand that, may I say to you in charity, kindness, that if you don't understand, and if that's not the sentiment of your heart, that the father's approval of me and his pleasure in me is my greatest joy, then, friend, you cannot be a Christian. There's no way, because when God births His children, when He takes a sinner and transforms them and makes them His child, He gives them a new heart, and the greatest joy of that heart is the Father Himself and His good pleasure in them. Look at Matthew 25, 21.

Here is scriptural proof of what I'm saying. Jesus tells a parable of three servants. One's given five talents, one's given two, one's given one.

You know the story. The one with the one talent buries, it doesn't produce any kind of dividends. The one with two multiplies, it doubles, it comes back with four.

The one with five multiplies, doubles, comes back with ten. And in Matthew 25, 21, His Lord said to him, the one who had doubled his investment. What do you read there? What do you read there? Well done.

Did you know that one commentator said that you can really translate the word bravo, bravo, well done. Thou good and faithful servant. You were faithful over a few things.

I will make you ruler over many things. Well done. The Lord's praise or accommodation of us is the fulfillment of why we serve Him.

It is the fulfillment of our commitment to Him. And forever upon ever the Father's pleasure will be yours. And when your name is spoken in the corridors of heaven, the angels with holy reverence will stand at attention.

Why? Because you have the pleasure of the Father, one who shares in His glory. And your glory, you who've been made a little lower than the angels, your glory will exceed angelic glory, for it will be the glory of the Son. Well, lastly, sadly, Lewis stopped.

He didn't go far enough. There's a third clue, and it's also from Matthew 25, 21. And that is, this future glory is the ability to fulfill your purpose to the maximum, to be able to do what you were made to do perfectly, completely, fully.

Again, Matthew 25, 21. This is my understanding of the text. He said to him, well done, good and faithful servant.

You were faithful over a few things. I will make you ruler over many things, enter into the joy of your Lord. In this life, right now, these hands, they want to do the Father's will.

Oh, my heart wants to please Him. But I find within me an insufficiency, an inability, even in this sermon to you, I know that there is a limitation. I cannot do what God designed me to do to my maximum.

Let me explain. It goes back to the garden. When God made Adam and breathed into that clay statue, His spirit, Adam became a living person, soul.

And his chief responsibility was to be the vice-regent of God, a governor, if you please, to take the rule and reign of God and superintend it and spread it throughout the world. He was to multiply and to replenish the earth. What Adam had in Eden, he was to transport and take to the four corners of the world.

And he could do that in the power of the Spirit because the Spirit of God lived within him, energized him. He was God's earthly representative. That's what it really literally means to be created in the image and likeness of God.

You're God's image representative doing God's will, implementing His rule on the earth. But man fell. Man sinned.

Now, as a part of the curse, doing the same work, Adam was told now when he tills the soil, when he cultivates the earth, now it's not going to produce the luscious fruit and the beautiful trees and the gorgeous flowers, no, thorns and thistles it will be conducive to more so than what you try to cultivate. He can't now, he can no longer do what he was designed to do to the maximum. Now, listen carefully.

Many of you love your work. I love what I do. I love to preach.

But no matter how much you enjoy your occupation, your profession, even if it's full-time ministry, you're saddled, you're burdened with this sense, this agony. I just can't do it. Just don't do it very well.

A frustration that I'm not, I'm not representing Him to the degree He should be represented. And in your occupations, no matter how much you enjoy getting and going to work, isn't there frustrations that attend your labors? Aren't there challenges and aren't there difficulties and burdens and problems and issues? And we never find the satisfaction in the labor of our hands, even in spite of Ecclesiastes that tells us that that's really one of our chief ends and purposes. But dear friend, listen, here's the glory.

There's coming a glorious day when you are not going to pluck a harp sitting in a crowd. Hallelujah. Thank you, whoever said yes, because that would be, that would be the epitome of misery to me.

No, I'm now restored. Listen carefully. The first Adam failed, but there's not, he's not the last Adam.

There came one likened to the son of man, born of a virgin, and he obeyed the father. He represented the father. He could say, if you've seen me, you've seen the father.

And when he hangs on Calvary doing the father's will, he can say, it is finished. He did it. He did it all.

Every jot, every tittle, nothing's left undone. And now through him, we've been reconciled to God. And one day we are going to enter in to a place where here we've been given a few things.

There we're going to give, be given many things. Dear friend, I don't know what that looks like. I've heard men wax eloquent for hours trying to explain all of these details of the eschatology of Revelation and other apocalyptic books.

But this I know, God does not have plan B. Never did. The fall didn't jolt him, surprise him and make him shift. He's still on plan.

And his plan is that you are going to represent him in a material realm, a world, and you will rule and reign under the high king forever and ever. And you will do it to your maximum. Oh, the joy that must be to labor for the king in full powers and abilities.

And he be pleased with it all. Now that's glory. That's glory.

Listen to 2 Timothy, Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. Not just being saved, but saved with eternal glory. This is a faithful saying.

For if we died with him, we shall also live with him. If we endure, we shall also reign, reign with him. It is true, I'm talking to kings and queens here.

And for that reason you ought to respect one another because you're talking to future kings and queens. Oh, I must hasten. In the eternal ages we'll live in the fullness, completeness and totality of what we were meant to be.

But I cannot conclude this sermon. I cannot. As much as I don't want to do what I'm about to do, I cannot conclude this sermon without warning those of you who are not in Christ.

What I've tried to poorly describe to my brothers and sisters, I must warn you that it's just the opposite for you. This is your destiny. This is what awaits you.

What awaits you makes your present sufferings look like heaven, because if we are elevated into glory and become what God designed us to be in even better, what must be the penalty of those who would rebel against him? I say it's the very opposite. The moment you breathe your last breath here, you will find yourself collapsing within your own depravity. What does that mean? You are going to sink into your own sinful nature.

And if you could see what you will become, you would be horrified. You would be literally scared to death. There is no way in which I can describe what I believe shall happen to the sinner in judgment.

He will become a twisted form of himself. He will no longer be identified as he was once here. All beauty, all symmetry, all goodness is stripped from him or her.

Listen carefully. At this moment, whether you acknowledge it or not, you are being shrouded, enveloped, enveloped by the common goodness and grace of God. That means, according to the scriptures, that God is good to you even though you don't deserve it.

He causes you to be able to prosper. He causes you to be able to achieve. And he's even given you the abilities to achieve what you have achieved.

I know you want to take the credit. That's your problem. That's the essence of what sin is.

Sin isn't killing people or lying or stealing. That is the fruit of sin. The sin is that you want to steal God's glory.

You want the place of God in your life. I heard one man describe it this way, borrowing from Tolkien and the Lord of the Rings. He said, the whole problem is the ring.

The ring you can draw around you. And who's going to be Lord of that ring? That's our problem. You have rebelled against your creator, your maker, your high king.

And now you're his criminal. You are against him. And justice must win the day.

Or he's not good. But he is merciful. And so currently, right now, as long as there's breath in your body, he is restraining you, keeping you from being as evil as you possibly could be.

But the moment you die, the moment the body ceases to function and the spirit is set free from this body, no more restraint, no more kindness, no more goodness keeping you from being what you are naturally. All of that restraint is removed and you will plunge. You will plunge into your own wickedness and become a hideous creature, unrecognizable, a monster, a monster that no artist could render, no Hollywood's makeup could portray, a twisted person.

And if you ever achieved fame in this life, it'll be stripped from you. For all those whom you cheated and betrayed and wounded, they will know of it and they will no longer speak your name with honor. But you will be a curse, a byword to them.

And forever and ever and ever, age upon age, you will not be able to complete or function according to your desires. Listen carefully. If the saint is going to be elevated to a place of perfection and being able to complete what God created him, the great designer made him to be, then hell is the opposite.

The same intellect that created heaven has created hell. And one of the results of being removed, cursed from God, separated from His kindness and goodness is that your desires will mushroom, enlarge, gorge to a capacity you've never experienced. You think you have problems with lust now? My friends, you don't know what is awaiting you.

You'll be concerned as a flame burns the ember. You'll be consumed with your lust, your desires, your ambitions, the things that you lived your life for here. They will only grow, they will only swell.

The problem is you will not be able to satisfy them in the least. You'll be like that rich man begging for one little drop to be dripped from the finger onto the tongue, but no satisfaction whatsoever. And as the ages roll, 10 million years, another 10 million years, you will only intensify in your propensities of evil and hate, but not able to satisfy them at all.

What must you do? Don't promise to do better. Don't make pledges to God. No, no, no.

You're a rebel. You're a criminal. You've got to pay the penalty.

Then what must I do? Here it is. Go to the Lord while there is still mercy and throw yourself at His feet and say, Oh God, be merciful to me, a sinner. Please Lord, I have with a high hand rebelled against you and I've robbed you of your glory.

I've taken your abilities and talents. You've given me and I've used them for my own advantages. And I, I'm sorry.

Look, look at Christ and see that the payment of all that you have done against God has been satisfied in Christ because at the cross, He was cut off. Listen, He was cut off from the goodness of God for those who would believe upon Him and trust Him. Yes, God rejected His own son.

Why? Because the sins of those who would go to Him for mercy and believe Him was placed upon Him. He suffered in their behalf. He is the substitute.

Believe man, sir, please believe. You can, you can go to church. You can be baptized.

You can pray prayers, give money. You can even do what I'm doing here and still perish. Only Christ can save.

Only Christ, only a bleeding Savior has the power with His blood to wash your sins and make you white as snow. Renounce your goodness. Renounce your righteousness.

Claim and own what you are, a sinner that deserves nothing but judgment and damnation. And He will take mercy upon you. Why? Could it not be considered a mercy that you've listened to this poor preacher today? And God in loving kindness has warned you once more, perhaps in a way you've never heard.

That is the kindness of God. Don't, don't spur it. Please, in the corners of the world renowned for crafting top-tier weavings and tapestries, the age-old practice persists much as it did centuries ago.

A father is stationed on a platform above his son and he's surrounded with spools of thread that he masterfully gathers and he twists. The son's only task is to sit there at the loom with the shuttle in his hand and to move that shuttle at the father's nod, not until, to the left and back to the right. That's all he's to do.

When the father nods, he moves to the left and then he moves it back to the right. And then the course of the weaving, that will happen a thousand times. And as he back and forth with the father's urging, a beautiful, magnificent pattern starts to emerge.

The son's duty is simple, a responsive movement guided by his father. And throughout that process, the father's vision orchestrates the convergence of the right threads to bring forth the intended design. Now listen carefully.

You and I cannot do what our Heavenly Father can do. Weave the threads of our lives, especially the suffering, in such a way to create a masterful, artistic, beautiful design. You and I can't do that.

But we can do what the son does, who responds to his father's promptings. We can trust our Heavenly Father and His wisdom and move as He directs. We can trust and obey.

And what may seem monotonous, mundane, and very ordinary becomes the means to triumph under the supervision of the loving kindness of our Heavenly Father. Now listen, I'm almost done. I want to speak to my brother, my sister.

And you say, I wish that was true. I used to believe that's true. But I despair of that today.

Because look at me, what have I done? What have I done? I've just failed one failure after another. Oh, if I could grab your heart and your mind. Listen to me.

I so believe in the Master Weaver that He can take all of my failures, all of my weakness, all of the poverty, and somehow in His inexplicable manner, create something that He is pleased with. You see, the problem is you've got your image over here. The Father has an image of what He's doing in you over here.

And you're struggling against it. You say, only the great ones, people like you, Brother Michael. Oh yes, God's interested in your life.

Look at that Hebrews 11 that Brother Jeff is teaching us. All of these people who put the armies of aliens to flight and drew water out of the rock and all of these wonderful things. Yes, but don't forget the remainder of the chapter.

Others, others, you know what that means? The nameless multitude, the countless throngs of nobodies, ordinary, mundane, everyday living, people who wandered about in sheep's clothes, goat skins, lived in caves. Nothing extraordinary to write beside them. They didn't move a mountain.

They didn't call or do a miracle. They just trusted and obeyed. They just moved the shuttle to the left and to the right when the Father nodded.

And God says of them, heroes. That's my story worked out in their lives. Do you hear me? Are you listening? What you think is going nowhere, look to your Father and trust and obey.

He's making something that one day, one day, future glory will make all of these present sufferings not worthy to be compared with. God's designing your life and weaving a tapestry of beautiful. And as he looks at you and nods, nods through the word, nods through prayer, nods through the church, nods to you in circumstances, trust and obey.

Just trust and obey. And at the end of your life, when you stand before him, I know what you're going to say. I know what I will say.

Oh God, oh Lord, if it weren't for your grace, I would not be here. But the Father shall say to you and me, well done, thou good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of your Lord.

Truly the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. Amen. Father, we thank you for Jesus today.

Without him, none of this is possible. It's only through him, by him, and for him. Lord, I feel, I feel as the object of undeserved grace.

I feel it so, Lord, and I thank you for that. Thank you that you've been merciful and kind to me. And yes, Lord, I think I should be further down the road of progress than I am, but I trust you.

Help my brothers and sisters this morning, in whatever the challenge of life, to do a proper calculation, to properly consider and calculate their present sufferings in comparison to a glory that yet awaits them. Help them to see the distance and help us to keep running, Lord, to run with endurance, holding, keeping our confession to the end that you, you are good. Lord, I pray for the lost man, woman, child.

Please, we beseech you. Where is the God of redemption? I beseech you, O Most High, have mercy on sinners here today. Don't let them perish.

Don't let them sink into their own misery. Don't let them become the monsters that lies within without restraining grace. O God, save them.

Save them, we pray. Save them, have mercy, in Jesus' name.

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