

Life Is Brief

by Paris Reidhead

The comfort of the Christian is the good news of the gospel, which is only available to those who have prepared the way of the Lord through repentance and turning to God.

Duration: 41:35

Scripture: Luke 3:4-14, Romans 12:1

Topics: "Eternity"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the concept of availing oneself of God's mercy and the preparation required for it. He mentions a book called 'Life in the Sun' by Shank, which explores the high cost of a free gift. The preacher emphasizes that there is more to the cost of God giving his son than meets the eye, and that sinners must recognize the price they need to pay to receive God's grace. He refers to the scripture in Luke 3, where John the Baptist urges people to prepare the way for the Lord and bring forth fruits worthy of repentance. The preacher also mentions the advancements in technical knowledge and the possibility of humans going to the moon, highlighting the difficulty in convincing such a self-sufficient society of their need for a savior's love and mercy.

Transcript

Life is the comforting hope of the Christian, and the prophet Isaiah was instructed by God to comfort his people. Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned, for she has received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins.

Comfort is another word for glad tidings, another word for gospel, another word for good news. And the good news that the prophet announces here, he perfects in the 53rd chapter. In the ninth chapter we are told that unto you a son is born, unto you a child, unto you a child is born, unto you a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder.

His name shall be called Counselor, Wonderful, Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. And because a son is given and a child is born, here we have comfort. Comfort ye, comfort ye my people.

But it isn't just comfort. We are told, and probably wisely, that the prophet of God has two responsibilities, to comfort the afflicted and to afflict the comfortable. And this is exactly what has happened in the 39th chapter.

They were comfortable. Hezekiah was a good king, a king that God had honored and a king that God had blessed, but a king that had failed somehow to understand the nature of his responsibility in effecting a complete and permanent repentance in the hearts of his people. And so in the midst of prosperity, in the midst of blessing, Hezekiah had proudly shown to the son of the king of Babylon the treasures in the Lord's house.

He'd taken him on a tour. I suppose it was pride. I suppose that he rather felt that the king should realize how rich and prosperous Israel, Judah had become.

And so Hezekiah, very foolishly, took the son of the king of Babylon down into his treasure house and showed him, them, the house of his precious things--the silver, the gold, spices, precious ointments, the armor, everything that was there. There wasn't anything that he had that he had not shown to the son of the king of Babylon. I say pride, complacency, resting in what he possessed, resting in prosperity.

But you understand that strength cometh not from the abundance that a man possesses, nor does contentment, nor does happiness. And so the prophet Isaiah came to Hezekiah and said, Behold, the days are going to come when everything that is in your house, this that you've had, all the treasures that you've possessed, and everything that you've shown to the son of the king of Babylon, is going to be carried away. It's going to be taken away.

But, said he, it won't be during your lifetime, because God has honored your obedience and honored your faith. It's going to come after your God. Hezekiah bowed to this.

He realized he could not fight against God. This is the background. This is the thirty-ninth chapter of Isaiah.

And so, in the light of the fact that the prophet had said, You will go into captivity, your good things will be spoiled, you are going to lose all that which you've counted, and everything that seemed to be valuable to you is going to be taken away. He then is instructed by the Lord to put into this, right into this stream, and remember the chapter divisions were effected by the King James translators, and are not inspired. And in the text it would be a flow, a continuous stream of revelation, without any of the divisions so arbitrarily placed.

Here we find that he said, Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people. Write hard upon the announcement that the walls of Jerusalem are going to be broken down, the temple is going to be despoiled, the rich things taken away, everything upon which they've leaned and counted is going to be taken from them. Then he said comfort.

Because you see, this is exactly what the Spirit of God has to do. Until he has taken away from us all that upon which we would rest, and everything upon which we would lean, and everything upon which from which we'd find our confidence, we're not even candidates for comfort. The comfort of the Lord, the gospel of his grace, is to a particular kind of people.

The only kind of people that God was able to help through the Lord Jesus Christ were the helpless. The only kind of people that he endeavored to bless were the unworthy. The only ones for whom he could perfect any plan or any provision that would deliver them were those that were utterly bankrupt in and of and by themselves.

This is one reason why the Church is making such little real genuine spiritual progress in the twentieth century, because we are finding it extremely difficult to convince people that they are candidates for grace, and they need the kind of a Savior that's set forth in the Bible and the kind of a salvation that he's provided. Today we have the deification of man ever since the advent of humanism as a religious system, 150 years ago and with its roots far longer earlier than that. Man has been looking into himself for resources.

He's been looking at his own ability, and really when you consider the things that he's accomplished in terms of technology, scientific advancement and achievement, medicine and so on, it's an impressive list of things that have taken place, especially in my lifetime and in yours. More progress in these fields in the last sixty, seventy-five years--not that I'm putting myself in that period, I'm simply bridging it--more has taken place in this period of time than in the previous seven thousand years. A great acceleration in knowledge, technical knowledge.

In the twentieth century, man is making definite plans to go to the moon, and there's no reason to suspicion that he won't get there and probably, after a try or two, get safely back. And it may be that my grandchildren will move there and take up residence there, and simply feel that this is a nice place to get away from it all. Look down on Earth, it's easy to do from here, but not with quite the vantage point the moon would afford.

So these are prospects that are before us. To convince a man that's able to devise a space vehicle that will allow a man to circle the world six times, and as one did for four days from Russia, we begin to realize that it's very difficult to convince this man that he is bankrupt, and hopeless, and helpless, and that he needs a savior's dying love, and that he must stand at the door of grace, a self-confessed criminal, desiring only mercy, pleading only for pardon. This is difficult, very hard.

But you see, Guadalupe said to this people that had something in which they could trust. I'm going to take it away from you. So when we find the Spirit of God preparing a person for comfort, for grace, it's always the same process.

And if there is some loved one of yours that you long to see come to Christ, I do trust that you're praying in accord with divine operation. You know, many times we say, Oh God, save, and God's desirous of saving. But he can't save until he's slain.

It seems a little heartless to pray, Oh God, slay my father, my mother. Slay my children. Let the arrow of your truth pierce them through the heart.

Divide soul and spirit. Expose their bankruptcy. Disclose their need.

Unveil their lostness. Crush them to thee. Crowd them to thyself.

Break down everything on which they'd lean. Strip them from everything in which they'd find confidence. Take the treasures from the house of their self-sufficiency, and cast them away.

Break them, Lord. And when they hear us pray this way, if they do, they suspicion whether or not we do really love them. But we that understand divine operation realize that the only kind of people God can help are lost people.

And we have to see them lost. Oh, we know they're lost, but they must know it. And so this is the order.

And on the basis of the fact that God is going to strip and God is going to break, that he's going to crush and bring, this might be viewed by some as cruelty, but it isn't. It's the greatest of mercy. It's the highest of love.

And we are grateful to the Lord for this. But we don't stop here. This is but introduction.

We find in verse three that the prophet's instructions begin. Here we find the preparation that God requires is set forth in detail. If one is to avail themselves of mercy, there is certain preparation must be done.

A man by the name of Schenck, a Southern Baptist, has written the most challenging and disturbing book, one that is destined, so we are told, to be one of the most talked about books in the decade 60 to 70. This was the opinion of the theology instructor at Southern Baptist Seminary who wrote the introduction. In this volume, *Life in the Son*, he has this intriguing title as the first chapter, *The High Cost of a Free Gift*.

And if you'll ponder that a little, you will discover that there is more to it than the cost that God paid in the giving of his Son. For there is a certain price that you must pay. And I believe we're only honest with sinners when we equate them with what he asked.

Some say, what can I do to be saved? And the answer that came so explicitly from the Apostle Peter was, repent. Of course, there were some Bible students who thought to escape from the implications of this high cost of a free gift by eliminating repentance from the teaching and the parlance and the theology of this period called the Age of Grace. But when you find the Apostle Paul at the close of his ministry, 35 years after he's begun, or very nearly, standing before King Agrippa and giving account of what he's done, he says, Wherefore, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, but I delivered to them of Damascus and Jerusalem, the Jews and the Gentiles, how that they must repent and turn to God and bring forth works meet for repentance.

You will understand then that this is that which is set forth in these next two verses. For here is the preparation required if one is to be comforted by the grace of God. It is the word prophetically uttered that was to be proclaimed by 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, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain.

We turn, and I believe profitably, to allow the Apostle John the Baptist to apply this to us, even as he did in his own generation. I think we should recognize that the scripture is probably the very best commentary on itself, and when John came, he was prepared to make it absolutely clear that there was expected a price to be paid on the part of those that would come to know the free gift of God's grace. As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, and I read from Luke 3, verse 4 and on, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness.

Prepare ye the way of the Lord. Make his path straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low.

The crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places shall be made smooth, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God. Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abram to our father. For I say unto you that

God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abram.

And now also the axe is laid under the root of the trees. Every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire. And the people asked him, saying, What shall we do then? He answered and said unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none, and he that hath meat, let him do likewise.

Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do? And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you. And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely, and be content with your wages. Here he is applying this that is set forth as the fulfillment and the application of the preparation that God requires.

What is it? You'll notice, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert. And in this sense the desert is used as a place of death, a place where death reigns. And this is a picture of the human heart.

We are described as being dead in trespasses and sins, alienated from the life of God, separated from him. And thus we are instructed, because in this death it is not the abandonment of or the disintegration of moral responsibility and faculty, but the absolute misuse and abuse of moral ability. And the desert is not one because somehow there has rusted and dissolved all the capacities for choice in the human spirit.

It's that the desert results from man having committed himself to the principle and the policy and the practice of selfishness as the end of his being. If you will analyze what he said to the publicans and what he said to the people, what he said to the soldiers, it will be in every case that he's putting his finger right on this root of selfishness. And he is equating selfishness with sin.

Self-love, self-pleasing, self-gratification being the very essence of sin. I will is against the will of God, is the epitome of it, and the essence of it is selfishness. And so John is saying, recognize that you've governed your life by a principle of extreme and absolute selfishness, that wherein you have even proved that by some action unselfish, this again has been reflected in the sense in which you've done it for the credit you'd receive or the pleasure you'd receive, some honor that would come.

See yourself, said he, understand that the nature of God's conflict with you is that you've lived to please yourself and made your own pleasure and whim the rule of your being. Recognize this. Realize this.

Come to grips with the fact, the essence of your problem. See it from these particulars. Let your abuse, said he, let your selfishness be a window into which you can look into your heart.

Some weeks ago in Denver, Colorado, I had an unusual experience. Through the past years, I've stayed in many hotels and many motels across the country, but I've never had the proprietor take any particular interest in me. But there at Denver, the proprietor of the Rocking Arm Hotel on, out west of Denver, it was very gracious.

And one day he said, would you like to go out to the mountains? Now every morning we could see the sunshine and the snow in the mountains west of Denver, and I had never been in the mountains, the Rocky Mountains, and so was intrigued by it, but there looked to be no prospect of going. Well, there was some talk of the pastors going, but it didn't materialize in time for me to share. And so I said, oh, I'd be so delighted to go.

So one afternoon we started, and we drove in his car round through the foothills and then up around Mount Evans. Got out at 11,000 feet, the highest that I'd ever been on land, and felt the little wooziness that comes from the rarefied oxygen. And we went even higher, the view continuously gorgeous beyond words.

But the roads were narrow, twisting and turning. Oh, they'd been improved, but they were still rather hazardous. But finally we came down to a fascinating thing.

There, cut right through the mountains, was a thruway, Interstate Highway Number 80, the extension or replacing 6 and 40, the two famous highways across the country. And at great expense, they have filled up the valleys, taken the machinery that's now available, the blasting power that they have, blowing the mountains into the valley and filling them up, cutting down the hills and putting road across so that it is sand. Now within a very short time, that is maybe 18 months, 24 months, three years, something like that, it'll be possible to go from Denver to the Pacific Coast at 65 miles an hour right through the mountains.

But my friend, it's costly. Just a short piece there, but when I saw the number of millions of dollars that it required, they could have paved the road with dollar bills, you know, and had them about two inches thick and it would have probably been approximated. The cost.

It's always costly to make a way through difficult terrain. And you see what sin has done is this. It's raised great mountains, precipitous ranges in the human spirit, mountains of enmity, mountains of rebellion, mountains of anger, mountains of disposition that rise up to strange one and separate him from God.

Then there's valleys of iniquity and valleys of uncleanness, valleys that are there. And so here when God would come to the sinner, God would meet him. There's this mountain of rebellion that arises and there's this deep valley that cuts down of uncleanness and immorality of thought and mind and word indeed.

And since the mountain is of man's making and the valley is of man's digging, God properly says, take down the mountains. And you say, is this going to be to atone for sin? Are you trying to say we work for our salvation? No, I'm not at all. Salvation is by grace through faith.

It is the gift of God. It is not of works, lest any man should boast. And this is not in conflict or contradiction with the scripture.

This is an attitude, for it is attitudes that make it impossible for the judge to offer pardon to the criminal. It's attitudes that make it impossible for God to offer salvation to the sinner. And it is a changed attitude.

To take down the mountain is not to atone for the sin, but to cause the attitude of the heart toward God, an attitude of rebellion, an attitude of enmity, an attitude of blaming God, of finding that he's at fault. These attitudes are changed. And as one discovers that the reason that he's a sinner is that he himself has been in love with himself, following the inclination of his nature and the spirit of his day and generation and the axioms and principles of his culture, he's raised these mountains of attitude against God.

And he's dug these chasms of sin. And it is now necessary for him to recognize that he's got to first stop the digging on the one hand, and he's got to be prepared to change his attitude on the other. And so he said, bring forth works, meet for repentance.

You see, since the man is consciously and volitionally and deliberately committed himself to sin, he must consciously and deliberately recognize the enormity of the crime of sin, and he must be prepared to

forsake it. And this, we are told by the word of God, is preparing the way of the Lord, making a highway for our God. It is called repentance.

It's a changed attitude, let us see for a moment, a changed attitude about who is properly boss and ruler in the life. Oh, the sinner has deified himself. This is the essence of it.

Selfishness that leads one to self-worship. Sinner is an idolater who has discovered, seen, and known that his own whim, his own fancy, his own pleasure is the highest rule of his life. And so there rises step upon step this high mountain that separates one from God.

There on the top of the mountain he sits, demanding that all of time and space bring its offering at his feet, and that he's going to do just what he wants to do. Now before God is ever going to have comfort or blessing or forgiveness, the sinner has got to see this mountain turned down. It's got to be taken down.

And he's got to see that the only one that's qualified to rule in his life is God, Jesus Christ. You see, the Jewish people said when Pilate offered them their king, they said, we will not have this man to rule over us. This is the attitude of every sinner toward God and toward his son, Jesus Christ.

We will not have this man to rule over us. It may be that you have a profession of faith. It may be that you've learned the gospel, that you've been baptized and are a church member.

But all of this, as valuable as it can be, is little value to you unless you've torn down the mountain, unless you've made a way for the Lord, unless there's been repentance. You see, one can intellectually grasp the fact that Jesus Christ was God come in the flesh, that he lived a sinless life, that he died an atoning death, that he was bodily and miraculously raised from the dead. They can grasp this and rest on it and still sit on the very top of that mountain of their selfishness and self-worship and self-adoration.

But they've not made a way for the Lord. They've not prepared a highway in the desert. And so this mountain has got to be, what is done? Is it digging? Is it lifting it rock by rock and boulder by boulder? No, indeed.

It's simply that self, that I, that ego comes to that place of laying at nailed pierced feet and kissing those feet and saying to the one whose feet they were that were nailed to the cross, thou and thou only art worthy to rule in my life. And with that one capitulation and that one surrender, that mountain, that mountain is down. And then if one has seen this as the great range that separates it, then he turns to the other side and there's the chasm.

There's the chasm of lying. There's, next to it is the valley of immoral thoughts and actions. And beyond that is some other valley.

But because he's dealt with this first mountain that's separated from God, who's going to rule? Who's going to govern? Who's going to be in charge? And he's seen that Jesus Christ and him only is the one that is qualified to rule and adequate to rule, prepared to rule. And this is down. Then he's prepared to recognize that I shall no longer go on in immorality.

I shall no longer go on in lying. I shall no longer go on in thievery. And so valley by valley is filled up as mountain by mountain is taken down.

These are attitudes. It isn't a matter of work. It isn't a matter of years.

It isn't a matter of process. This is a matter of purpose. This is a matter of standing at a given place in history, at a given moment of self-revelation.

And we discover that the attitudes we've had toward God and the attitudes we've had toward ourselves and toward others have created this impossible, impenetrable terrain. And so when the word of God says, prepare a way for the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for us, our God, he's talking about an attitude. Now when the person is dealt with this mountain, who's going to rule? And when he has said, I shall no longer continue in my lust and I shall no longer continue in my thievery, I shall no longer continue in my disobedience.

And he has prepared thus. He's filled up the valley. He's still standing at the same place.

And all of the change of attitude is not atoned for one past sin. You understand. It has not taken care of one deed of evil.

It has not removed one gram of guilt. But what it has done has made a way for God to come in grace and mercy. Here he is, and he speaks as it were, by the change of his attitude and the change of his purpose.

Now there's a way that God can meet him. Now there's a highway there where God can come to him. And in this we find that John the Baptist was being philosophically and psychologically absolutely sound.

That God has so much respect for the man that he's made and the manner in which he's made that man that until the man's attitude changes, until his desire changes in respect to God, God will not violate it. He has so much respect for you and the nature that you possess, for it came from him, all but the sinful part of it, that he will not save you against your will. He will not do it.

He provides every means and grace. He provides every power necessary, everything requisite. But he will not take you by the scruff of your neck and shake you and bend you.

The word that comes is this, As I live, says the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn and live. Turn ye, turn ye, for why will you die? And it's a change of attitude. It's a change of disposition.

It's a change of action. This is that which God has required. But notice quickly the promised revelation of himself.

He doesn't simply say this in order that there should come to you some new process of self-improvement. He's asking that the road be made so not that you can come to him, but that he can come to you. And he comes to you bringing everything you need.

Since your attitude toward him has changed, the barriers are removed, the hindrances are gone, and then God comes to you. He comes to you in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. He comes to you in the sinless Son, the man who lived in the life similar to yours, tested in all points like as you are, yet without sin, that reached down to the years and took you to himself and became what you were and died in your place instead and died as you.

This is the gospel. That Christ died for our sins according to the scripture and that he was buried and that he was raised again the third day according to the scripture. And because the Lord Jesus Christ has dealt with your sin and died in your place, accepted the sword of God's wrath into his own heart for you, God

can be mercy seated as far as you're concerned.

He can. The blood has been sprinkled. The fire has consumed that blood that was put upon the altar.

The Lord Jesus on the altar of the cross poured out his soul unto death. And you can be forgiven, not because you have, in the sense that your attitude changing, has atoned for your sin. No, no.

This was on the basis of the sacrifice of his son. This was on the basis of his poured out life. But the fact that your attitude has changed has made a way for God to come in grace, marvelous grace, manifest at the cross when the Lord Jesus died in your place instead.

And so he comes to you bringing pardon. He comes to you bringing forgiveness. He comes to you bringing eternal life in him.

And he then becomes your life. But you'll notice that it isn't just this. When John the Baptist spoke to his generation, he said, Repent and be baptized, every one of you, for there's one coming after me who's preferred before me.

He it is that baptizes you with the Holy Ghost and with fire. And this is exactly what we have here, other in other words, but the same principle. And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it.

As he did say, he's going to gather his grain into his garner, but he's going to burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire. Hell is here indeed, and the consequence of an unchanged attitude, an impenitent heart, uncleansed, unforgiven sin, is certainly eternal separation from God. But the consequence of repentance and of forgiveness and pardon is not simply that you'll go to heaven when you die.

Oh, it's this, but it isn't restricted to this. Heaven comes to you in the person of God, revealing himself in you and unto you and through you. And the glory of that which is to be revealed is not when he returns.

We find that a little later. We find that on down in the latter portion. But the glory that's to be revealed is the glory that's to be revealed in us.

And this is why we find that the Apostle Paul writing to the church at Colossae said, Christ, in you the hope of glory. Not only glory to come, but glory now. He it is, said John, that baptizeth you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.

The end of repentance wasn't just pardon and escape from hell and home in heaven. The end of repentance was to know God, to know him experientially, to know him as the human spirit to man that he be known, to know him as the way God desires that he be known. And so this is the promise that's held out before us, that when we've met and the preparation required and when we have been willing to meet him on his terms, he gives himself.

He gave himself to the cross and death that he might himself come into us and live in us. Thus we have it set forth throughout the scripture. I am crucified with Christ.

Nevertheless, I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. And the glory of the Lord is revealed in us, in the person of his Son. And thus we have it in this same order here.

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 be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed. And this is the goal of his grace, the revelation of himself, for his glory is in himself, the revelation of himself in you, filling you, possessing you, not simply taking you where he is, but coming where you are.

But, oh, notice the warning so solemnly given here, and how it ought to press on our hearts this morning. The voice said, Cry. And Isaiah said, What shall I cry? Cry, plead, beseech, implore, any word you wish that carries strong desire.

And it's God that's expressing this strong desire. What is he saying? All flesh is as grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the grass, the field. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, because the spirit of the Lord boweth upon it.

Surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the word of our God shall stand forever. What is he saying? He is saying your life is just as a man's hand, as a little vapor that appears and vanishes away, as a tale that is told in the beginning and a few moments later at the end.

The longest of our life is but a hand's breath. And so said he, there's a strong danger that you're going to postpone and put off and be content to go on with the possessions that you have in your house, the gold that's in the treasure house and the buildings and what you have. He said, Oh, cry, warn them, warn them, entreat them.

And you know, I hear that same entreaty in Romans 12, 1. I beseech you, I cry, I implore you by the mercies of God that you present your bodies a living sacrifice. Oh, don't just use them as the vehicle of your own ambition, the instrument of your own plan, the tool of your own purpose. These bodies made by him and redeemed by him weren't simply to be clods of clay to be clothed and fed as their end.

They were but vehicles in which God could come and tabernacle with man and reveal himself to man and then reveal himself through man. You're here such a little time. So many years are spent helpless in the arms of mother, dependent upon teachers.

From the time you're of age where you can make choice until you're past the time of choosing and helpless again in the hands of friend. For we come into the world dependent upon the care of others and we go out of the world dependent upon the care of others. He said, there's just such a little time in between.

Don't waste. Don't waste it all when you feel God drawing, when you feel a spirit of God pulling, when you feel him lifting you out of yourself and out of your lethargy. Don't ignore.

Don't wait. For all flesh is this grass should be gone so soon. And he ought to have every day, he ought to have every moment, he ought to have all the time and life and strength there is in you at his disposal.

Don't waste your life for it's just so very short. And this is his warning. Have you heard in the past about the fullness of God? Have you heard that the spirit of God wants to fill you? What did you do when you heard? How long has it been since you heard? When were you filled with the spirit? Have the years gone on and the grass beginning to wither and the flower beginning to fade? And you still not know? He said, this ought to be of paramount value.

This ought to be of greatest importance. This ought to be of the highest concern. Because you're here just such a little time.

And when you know that God wants to fill you and reveal his glory in you, what else should have meaning? What else should have value? What else should be important? Let us bow together in prayer. The preparation, our Father, is always the same. There's the preparation that the sinner friends among us today must make.

And seeing that the cause of their guilt before thee is that they've loved themselves and ruled their lives. And, oh, if they'll but take down the mountains and fill up the valleys, change their attitude toward thee, thou will come in pardon and cleansing and deliverance, forgiveness, eternal life. But, Father, the same principle is extended into the lives of thy children.

Pardon with the purse past sins. Now to discover that there's only one way that they can allow him, the Spirit of God, to fill them. And that's to let the cross pierce all the self-confidence until all the treasures of talent and ability and strength have been taken away.

And the cross has gone right through. In the Christian's heart, we hear the Apostle saying, I am crucified with Christ. The things I counted gain to me, I count loss to Christ.

That I might know him in the power of his resurrection, in the fellowship of his suffering being made conformable unto his death. Grant this morning, Father, that those who heard and learned and know that there's a life of the fullness of God, the normal life filled unto thy fullness, will realize that they're just as grass. And we're passing so quickly from the scene.

We're going so rapidly. Time is so short. This ought to be of major concern, of primary interest, of deepest intensity of feeling and longing, that thou shouldst have in us and from us all that thou dost desire.

And since we can know thy fullness, not one of us here ought to be content or rest with less than thy fullness. And so, Lord, let us view ourselves today as the grass thou hast said we are, just such a few days in time. Time so short, eternity so long.

Bring us to a renewed commitment, a renewed seeking, a renewed waiting, a renewed abandonment, renewed expectancy and anticipation that the months of this winter to come shall not find us going as we have in the past, but allowing him who died that he might live in us his life, the freedom to live that life in us in the fullness of his Spirit. Bind the truth upon our eyes and forehead-like phylacteries, that we may think about it, help us to meditate upon it until it becomes a triumphant, glorious reality in our lives. Comfort ye, comfort ye my people.

Oh, we know the frailty, futility, and weakness of ourselves, but oh, the marvelous grace and power of our Lord Jesus, and to think that he is willing to live his life in us. Oh, Father, so may it be in each of our lives. For his glory, let us stand for the prediction.

Now unto him who is able to do exceeding abundantly, above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

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