

God Is a Rewarder of Those Who Seek Him (2 of 4)

by Paul Washer

Paul Washer's sermon highlights the necessity of faith in seeking God and receiving His rewards, contrasting it with a works-based approach to righteousness.

Duration: 1:19:32

Scripture: Genesis 6:9-22, Matthew 6:33, Hebrews 11:1, Hebrews 11:6-7

Topics: "Seeking God"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of faith and believing in God's commands. He highlights that true faith is optimistic, trusting that God has a reason and an end result for every command He gives. The speaker contrasts this with the idea of gaining approval through works or performance, emphasizing that approval before God is always obtained through faith. He also mentions the concept of being recipients of God's grace and encourages listeners to reach out and receive that grace through faith in Jesus Christ. The sermon references biblical examples such as Noah, who believed in God's warning about the unseen destruction of the world.

Transcript

Around the dinner table tonight, we ate our bread with tears. And that's a phrase that can be used in ancient literature to mean to eat your bread with sorrow, to be in great pain. But we ate our bread with great joy tonight.

All of us recounting many of the great things that God has done on our behalf. And you know what's amazing? I've never sat around a table with a group of individuals in which they were talking about the great victories they had won that caused the hearers to break out in tears. But only when we speak about the great victories that God has wrought in our lives do the tears come forth.

When we realize how undeserving, how unwilling, how pitiful, how small, how faithless that we truly are as men and women and how good our God is. This is always about Him. And it is always about His goodness.

Always. Always. And our joy comes not from our performance, but our joy comes from His.

His faithfulness and His performance. I've been counseling a young seminary student and he's just totally distraught. He just lives in anguish.

He lives in doubt. He looks at his failures, his problems, his shortcomings and everything else. He loses all joy and he lives in despair.

And I spoke to him recently and then wrote him again over the same matter. And I said, young man, I said, there's a really good chance you're more spiritual than I am. But I'm a lot happier than you are.

And the reason for that is your eyes are placed upon you. You hope to find your satisfaction, your peace, your salvation, your joy in your performance. I've lived long enough with God and failed enough times to know that's an impossibility.

I look to Christ. And His perfect work is never a cause for a ceasing of joy. I always have joy regardless of my circumstance, regardless even of my failure, my shortcomings and my sin.

I have joy because my life, my salvation is founded upon the finished work of Christ. And that is so important. That is more than just words.

That's salvation. Now, I want us to go again to Hebrews chapter 11. We've been studying faith, walking by faith.

And in verse one, we learned that we could have assurance of things that we hope for. And we could have convictions that things exist and things that are that we have never seen only for one reason. And that God has spoken, that God has spoken.

And if you and I are to ever have faith, we must be filled with the revelation of God. We must be filled with the knowledge of God. It is so important to understand that faith is nothing more than presumption.

It's nothing more than a leap in the dark. If it is not based upon, thus saith the Lord, and so our God has promised us. And in verse two, we saw that men of old gained approval by faith.

This is always the case. And yet this goes totally against every form of man-centered, man-invented religion. All of that has to do with gaining approval by works, gaining approval by performance, gaining approval by doing this or doing that.

But we understand that men of old in the Bible, and women of old as we will see, they always gained their approval before God through faith, through believing Him. Something very important about this, and something I always tell people, that you will never be anything except a recipient of God's grace. That's all you will ever be.

And we reach out, we extend our hands to be recipients of that grace by faith, by faith in Jesus Christ. In verse three, by faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the Word of God so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible. This is such an important statement.

If we can believe, if we believe that there is a God, and we believe that this God has such power that He can not only create, but also sustain the entire universe, then is there anything impossible for Him? Is there anything impossible for Him? We wonder sometimes, can I trust God with my family? Can I trust God with my finances? Can I trust God with my children? You trust Him every day with these things, whether you know it or not, because He sustains the very universe in which they exist. And if we come to

the conclusion that He can do the most miraculous, which would be to create a universe and sustain it, then every other thing is trite before Him. Every other thing is simple, it's a tiny thing.

If I can solve this one question, is there a God? Is He who He says He is? Then everything else is over. I can trust Him. I can trust Him.

Now, in verse 4, By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain. This is very, very important. That his sacrifice was not acceptable because the difference between blood and grain and this and that and every sort of thing.

His sacrifice wasn't more pleasing to God because of something that was in it. It was more pleasing to God because it was offered by faith. He truly believed, as we are going to see later, he came to God believing that God was and that God was the rewarder.

I can imagine Abel taking his offering, offering it to God in knowledge that he had something to offer because God gave it to him. And that he was giving something back to God, knowing that it was the right thing to do and that God is the rewarder of those who seek Him. What Cain, on the other hand, is probably thinking, as so many people do, I don't know why I'm having to give this to God.

I had to earn it with my own sweat. How many people speak that way with regard to their time, their employment and their finances? Well, I don't know why I need to offer this to God. I'm the one that had to go out there and earn it.

Little do you know, old proud and stupid man, the very breath that you drew every second of every day came from Him. The power, the ability, the intellect, whatever is required to do your job, it came from Him. And Abel recognizes I have something to offer because God gave me something to offer.

And Cain's thinking he did it all by himself, all by himself. And that offering it was just some pathetic, stupid, little religious ritual. Why do I even want to bother with this stuff? I'll do it because it's to be done.

There's really no use in it. Now, none of us would say that, but we spoke last night about something very important. We do many religious things, even good things, not by faith.

When we sing a hymn unto God, when you sang here this evening, it should have been by faith. Believing that God is, believing that God receives such a sacrifice, believing that it was pleasing to God, that it was actually doing something, that it was actually reaching the throne of God, that God was actually hearing your song, your singing, your heart. It just wasn't some empty religious activity that you were doing.

This is also good for the servant of the Lord who is burdened by many, many years of service and many, many years maybe of not seeing much fruit, but realizing, no, there is a reason to offer. There is a reason to give. By faith, by faith, by faith.

And then we see that through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous. Something very important. Righteousness comes through faith.

Always through faith. And this is very important because faith is the opposite of works. And being the opposite of works, it is also a denial that God could ever be a man's debtor.

You know, when I study religion and I study things of that sort and study cults and everything else that sometimes I have to study, I'm well aware of something. That every religion on the face of the earth, with

the exception of true Christianity, is a religion of works. Now, why is that? Why are men glad to receive a religion of works and yet will practically kill a messenger who comes to them and says, it is free.

It is a gift. Receive it by faith. Why is that? I'll tell you why.

Because men want to be God. You say, well, what on earth does that have? No, men want to be God. Men want to be the greater.

You see, the lesser is always blessed by the greater. When you have a religion of works, what you're saying is you have blessed God. You have made yourself greater than God.

God is the one receiving from you. And now God owes you because of the things you have done. And that's why men love works so much.

They would rather have a religion of works than a religion of salvation through grace and by faith. But we see that men have always been approved. They've always been declared righteous only by faith.

Then it goes on in verse five. By faith, Enoch was taken up so that he would not see death. And we spoke about that last night.

There's a very, very important part here. It says and he was not found because God took him. I love that.

Oh, I would like for God to do this to me. You say, well, that's preposterous. God doesn't do that anymore.

Where did you read that? God can do it if he wants to. God can do anything. But I would like that to happen to me.

I really would. It would be nice not to die. It says here something very important.

He did not see death and he was not found because God took him up for he obtained the witness that before his being taken up, he was pleasing to God. Who witnessed this? God witnessed. God witnessed and saw that this man was pleasing.

Now, here's something very important to the carnal Christian. There is no such thing. But people who call them Christians call themselves Christians, though they live in carnality.

Here's something very important. There is a doctrine out there that seems to say that that men get saved. If they never really grow in the Lord, they never have a passion for the Lord.

They're always carnal. They never grow in sanctification. But bless God, they're saved.

And then when they cross over, they're transformed when they're in heaven and they become pleasing to God. But look at what it says about Enoch. He was pleasing to God before he was taken up.

Before he was taken up, he was pleasing to God. Do you know if you could take away absolutely everything with motivation in the Christian life and just replace it with one thing? If you could just 24 hours a day or every waking moment live with the greatest motivation to simply be pleasing to God, not to do great things, not to be an important person in Christendom, not to be well known, not to be well thought of. Just one thing.

I desire only one thing of the Lord, and that is to be pleasing to him, not to satisfy self, not necessarily to satisfy others, but to be pleasing to God. That's your one goal. What would that fix? Absolutely everything.

You say, well, would it fix my marriage? Yes, it would. Because your problem in your marriage is always trying to please yourself. If you set it upon yourself to please God, then you wouldn't have any problems with that selfishness anymore.

You say, will it fix my relationships? Most certainly it would. Would it make me a better father? Yes, it would. Would it make me a better mother? Of course.

Would it make me a better church? Yes, it would make you a better church. To have one goal, I desire to be pleasing to God. What do you desire? Well, I want to get out of seminary.

I want to be in a ministry somewhere. Oh, really? And what if God doesn't want either of those things? Well, I want to get out of college and I want to get a job and go. Oh, really? We'll have movers and shakers a lot of times.

Those are the, I don't know, kind of guys in Christianity that just know how to move things around, know how to get things going, know how to motivate. Sometimes I talk to these guys and they go, well, what's your vision at HeartCry? What? What's your vision at HeartCry? Jesus Christ? No, no, no, no. What do you want to do? Because you get scared when they start asking you these kind of questions.

Get up in the morning and pray. And then I want to read the Bible. I want to love my wife when she comes downstairs.

I'm going to play with my children and go over Ian's Bible verse. Then I'm going to go to church and I'm going to pray with Darren. No, what's your vision? I said, I don't have a vision except for Jesus Christ.

I don't want to be anything. I don't want to be a big shot. I don't want to be important.

I don't want to conquer the world. I just want to be pleasing to God today. And that is enough.

That is enough. And strive as I might. If I haven't obtained that goal, so why should I look for another? See, the more I walk with the Lord, the more I realize this child likeness stuff is really important.

Visions. Should we have a vision except Christ? Isn't He the heavenly vision? Should we have plans? I mean, what sort of plans? Day timers, they don't really work well in planning ministry. I know the necessity of organization.

I know the necessity of all that. But what I'm trying to say is simply this. So many times we can have plans and schemes and all sorts of things that we want to do and we want to be in, even in the name of the Lord.

And yet they're all just fodder. They're all just sawdust. And God will come and tear them all down and say, I just want this from you.

What would it be like if tonight we just simply captured this one thing of, I want to be pleasing to the Lord. When we dismiss, while we're sitting here listening to the message, my thoughts, I want them to be pleasing to the Lord. And when I walk around and meet with brothers and sisters in Christ, well, in that time of short fellowship, I want to be pleasing to the Lord.

And when I go home tonight and sit around the table over those marvelous cookies you made, I might say, over those cookies, I want to be pleasing to the Lord. And that's all I wanted. And then I want to go to bed.

That's so different than much of what's being promoted as evangelical Christianity today. He was pleasing to the Lord and he was pleasing to the Lord before he died. This is such an encouragement to me.

It is such a great encouragement. Now, here's something that I want you to look at. Now, a lot of times when we listen, we hear about Old Testament saints and things like that.

We just almost we canonize them. We make them into people that they weren't. We think too much of men.

When I look at Enoch and I think of this man, I think of what was he as a young follower of Yahweh? I mean, how was he? Didn't he probably stumble like me? Didn't he probably grumble like me? Didn't he have all the faults that I have? Wasn't this life of his of walking with God? I mean, he had hundreds of years to do it. It wasn't in a process of growing, but in the end, he was so pleasing to God that God took him. I love what one old preacher said.

You've probably heard it a thousand times, but his explanation of this, I'll never forget. As a little boy, I heard him saying this. He said, well, this is just very simple to explain.

Enoch had grown so accustomed to walking with God. They were walking one day and walking and walking. And Enoch just forgot how far he'd gotten away from home.

And God looked at him and said, Enoch, we're closer to my house than yours. Just come home with me. I look at this.

And I have had the privilege in my life of knowing men like this. Old, old men and old, old women, saints of God. And they carry upon themselves this mark.

One time a college student said, sir, you're a man of God. I said, no, I'm not. I'm 42.

I'm a boy of God. You've got to be at least 65 before you're a man of God. They carry upon themselves this mark of having walked with God.

They carry upon themselves this mark of having been loved by God and even chastised by God. They're broken. They're different.

They glow. And then they go to be with him. It gives me great hope.

Now I'm in the middle part of my life. I've walked with the Lord just a bit over 20 years. And there is enough in my life to discourage me to think that I'll ever make much progress.

But there is scripture that calls me on to hope that I will make progress. That in the end of my days, Paul Washer will be pleasing to God. Because it is a thing that the Lord will see to.

It will be done. And he'll see to it in your life. He who began a good work will finish it.

He will finish it. He will finish it. He did that in Enoch's life.

He'll do that in ours. Do not become discouraged. Do not become discouraged.

By faith, realize that he who began a good work can heal. Finish it. Now it goes on, verse 6. And without faith, it is impossible to please him.

Now, why is that? The faith or lack of faith we have with regard to anyone, any person, is a demonstration and a declaration of what we think about their character. If you say to someone, listen, I know what I'm talking about. Trust me on this.

Just do it. And they say, well, you know, I just don't know. You're saying something about their character.

You're saying something about their ability. You're not just denying that you want to do something. You are saying something about their character.

It is impossible to please God without faith. Because if you do not have faith, you're saying God is not worthy of trust. And that's what we talked about last night.

And it's so important. Many people talk about faith and obedience. And they talk about them as two separate entities.

In a sense, they are. But in a sense, they're not. Why do I obey God? Because it's the right thing to do.

That's legalism. Why do I obey God? Because I love Him. Yes, Jesus said that.

But let's throw in another element here. I obey God because I believe Him. He tells me to walk a certain way or He tells you to walk a certain way.

You do that not just because obedience for the sake of obedience. You are obeying Him because you believe that what He says is right. When you disobey God, you're looking up at Him and you're saying, as I said last night, one of two things.

One, God, you are ignorant. When you do not obey God, you're saying, God, you simply do not understand. You simply don't know how the world is today.

You treat God almost like a teenager would teach an old grandfather. Oh, grandfather, you live in the past. You really don't know what's going on today.

You really can't understand. And I can't listen to your counsel. That's one possibility.

When you disobey God after He has told you to walk a certain way, you're saying, you just really don't know. Or you're saying, God, you know, but you're evil. You know what's right.

You know what's best for me. But you don't want to tell me because you want to steal my joy. You want to crush my life.

You want to take away my freedom. But when God sets out a path before us as He has in His word and we obey it, we're saying, God, I believe that you know everything. And that there is no error in you.

And I believe, God, that you are good. There is no darkness in you at all, that what you tell me is the best thing for me, the wisest thing for me. And I will do it because I believe you.

When you believe God or when you do not believe God, you are screaming out what you believe about His character. He's trustworthy or He's not. He's all-knowing or He's not.

See, that's why disobedience is so vulgar. That is why disobedience is so blasphemous. I said this last night.

I want to say it again because sometimes people who run somewhat in our circles are always talking about the law, the law, the law, as though it was something more important than God Himself, as though it was something that God had to submit to. My friend, disobedience isn't a horrible, terrible, wicked thing just because the rule has been broken. It is because a holy God has been offended.

A God worthy of all obedience has not been obeyed. We are declaring that we do not believe Him. We are declaring either that He is evil or that He does not know all things.

We are attacking the very character of God. We are offending Him when we disobey Him. And that is why sin is so terribly sinful, so terribly sinful.

Now, it is impossible to please God without faith. Now, I want you to think about something. Jesus headed off to do what He needed to do.

And the disciples said, look, they want to kill you there. Don't go back in that area. And He says, I'm going anyways.

And they look at each other and kind of shrug their shoulders and say, let's go die with Him. Now, in a sense, they were loyal. In a sense, they were being devoted.

But they weren't believing. They were doing something, believing that it would result in nothing. You say, what are you trying to say? I'm trying to say that there is a, I hate to use this word, but there is a real optimism in faith.

There is a real optimism in faith. And I know you can take that and do silly things with it, so don't. But there is a sense of being optimistic that when God has commanded me to do something, there is a reason for it and there is an end result.

Although I might not see the promise, although I might not grasp it in my hand, there is an end result. There is a reason. I will do this.

Why? Because God is true, because He is and He is the rewarder of those who seek Him. If I obey Him, there is a reason for it and end result that is good. I see so many people that almost treat themselves as though they were martyrs and martyred by God.

I'll serve Him for the sake of nothing. I had someone come up to me one time and they said, you know, you just give so much to God and being a missionary and doing all this stuff. And I said, what are you saying? Well, you're just so, you know, humble and giving and full of piety and so selfless.

I said, man, you have been reading all the wrong books. I said, you've got it all wrong. He said, well, then why are you in the jungles of Peru and doing all these things? I said, because I studied finance at the University of Texas.

He said, what? I said, yeah, I studied, you know, a lot of things like that. I was going to be a lawyer and I was going to do investments. I studied all that.

That's why I'm doing this. He goes, what are you talking about? I said, I'm talking about investment. That's what I'm talking about.

Young person, I'm talking about investment. It has very little to do with piety. It has very little to do with being selfless.

It has to do with, do I believe that God is and that he is the rewarder of those who seek him? I have one life. And as I was sharing to the young people this afternoon, this is not a dress rehearsal. I don't get a second chance.

I have one life. Now, the question comes down to how am I going to invest it? If God is and he is the great rewarder of those who seek him and seek him, I shall. I mean, I've got two options here.

I've got two portfolios, don't I? I've got Satan, CEO of a company called The Whirl. Sending out every kind of advertisement possibly I can be bombarded with to invest everything I have in him. I don't know about you, but if I'm going to do any kind of investment, I'm going to check out the CEO.

I'm going to check out the company and I'm going to check out those who have invested and see how well they are doing. Well, I'm going to tell you something. I looked at the CEO.

He's never kept a promise as long as he has existed in his fallen state. And I've looked at his company. It is in shambles.

It is an absolute shambles. And I've looked at those who have invested their lives in his way and they are in hell. I don't want to seem trite.

I don't want to seem irreverent, seem irreverent or anything. But I've looked at the other portfolio and there stands the Lord Jesus Christ. Truth incarnate.

Faithfulness incarnate. Selflessness incarnate. Who's laid down his life on my behalf and offers me a kingdom that will not perish.

This has nothing to do with some little missionary and his piety. This has to do with finance. This has to do with investment.

How are you going to invest your life? Do you believe that God is and that he is the rewarder of those who seek him? Do you believe that? Do you believe that this world is passing away? Do you believe that there is a kingdom coming? Do you believe in things that eyes have not seen and ears have not heard? Have you caught a vision of the one who died? He rose again from the dead. Have you had a glimpse of his faithfulness? I was very young, very strong. I'm middle aged.

Tomorrow I'll be old. Just imagine right now if for the last 20 some years I had been an unbeliever and invested my life in this world. Here I am.

I'm 42. I'm not going to get stronger. I'm not going to get younger.

I'm definitely not going to get better looking. What's happening? I've hit the other side. And if I had invested these last 22 years of my life in this world, if I stand here right now, would I have such joy? No, I would be saying glass half empty instead of glass half full.

I would be saying half my life gone. The rest of it, it's just rolling downhill. But you see, it's completely the opposite for me.

This candle is going out because the sun is rising. When the sun rises, you don't need candles. I've got max.

Who knows? My luck, I'll have to live here until I'm 120. But, you know, 40 more years. 20 in Christ has flown by.

40 is going to go faster. And then I'm there. You say, yes, the end comes.

No, the beginning comes. The beginning. The beginning comes.

So here's the question. Do you believe that God is? Yes, I do. Well, do you believe that He is the rewarder of those who seek Him? Then seek Him.

That He might work out His purposes in your life. Don't worry about the purposes of others. The purposes of God in others.

Just God's purpose for your life. Seek Him. A lot of people today, they don't want to talk about rewards.

And a lot of people, that's all they do is talk about rewards. I talk about rewards because the Bible talks about rewards. Now, I don't have a clue as to what they are.

I just know much has been promised to me. I just know that God is. And He is the rewarder of those who seek Him.

I hear sometimes people will say to an old saint or say to a missionary, You've given up so much. And they just look at the person like, You don't even have a clue as to what I'm doing, do you? I've given up so much? What does that say about your view of God? What have I given up? Sin? Death? The grave? A torturous, meaningless life on this planet? What have I given up? Please, write out the list really quickly so I can speak to God about these things. Surely He'll want to know.

What have I given up? And something else that's very important. Some of you He will call to be missionaries maybe. And He will send you to the most horrible places on the face of the earth.

And maybe even you'll die there on top of a mountain half frozen and starving. I don't know. And others of you He will make very, very successful.

And cause you to prosper in all your ways. But demand of you the same dedication to use what He has given you for the advancement of His kingdom. You see, it's not God's purpose for me that ought to be thrown on you.

Or your purpose for God should not be the thing I'm striving for. Or God's purpose for you should not be the thing I'm striving for. God has called you.

God has given you a specific purpose. God has commanded you to seek Him and to believe that if you do seek Him, He will reward you. And that way manifests itself in so many different manifestations.

Can you believe God? Can you begin to seek Him in your life? You know, so much in our world, and so much in Christendom, so much of our culture is designed to build a wall around us so that we don't listen

to God. A kid studies and he gets 18, and where's he going to college? I don't know if he is. What do you mean you don't know if he's going to college? What do you mean you don't know if your son's going to college? You went to college.

Yes. What about your son? I don't know. What do you mean you don't know? Everyone goes.

No, not everyone goes to college. God could command my son to put on a backpack and go to Iraq, preach one message and be shot down. You see, we assume too much.

God naturally wants this to happen to me. No, God might not want this to happen to you. Well, God naturally wants me to take this.

No, not necessarily. You need to reopen your life and get rid of many of the presuppositions that you have that are built into you, not by the Word of God, but by your culture that has dictated and set out a path for you to walk in. God has dictated and set out a path for you to walk in.

The two are never alike. You need to open. Whether you're a teenager in high school or you're 85 years old, you need to reopen your life and seek God.

God, what do you want from me? What do you want from me? What do you desire from me? You know, one of the most amazing things is found in the message of the church to Laodicea. It's an amazing, amazing thing. The first thing that comes out of Jesus' mouth, amazing thing, He says, Behold.

You say, well, what's amazing about that? Well, let me show you. Behold! It doesn't make any sense that I should say behold, does it? Why? You're all looking at me. Now, if I was in the back of the room and you were all looking in the opposite direction, then I would say, Behold! Turn around! Look! That's what's so amazing about what Jesus says to the church.

The first thing He says is, Behold. When He gives that great admonition, Behold, I stand at the door and knock. When He gives that one admonition, Behold.

Why does He say that? I'll tell you why. The church is looking in the wrong direction. And He has to call their attention back to Him.

And you know what? I'll just bet this, that that church in Laodicea is looking in the last place that they saw Jesus. Now, what do I mean by that? So many times, I told a missionary one time, he was talking to me, an old missionary, and he said, Brother Paul, you know, tell me about what's going on. I said, well, Brother Trammell, I said, Peru is God's will for my life.

He said, hold it. He said, Peru is not necessarily God's will for your life. He said, Peru is God's will for you today.

And he said, and if you close yourself off from God thinking that Peru is God's will for your life, you could really miss out on what God's going to do in the future. It's the same way with you. Possibly Jesus came to you and said, behold, I want you to do this.

And so, you started going, but you fall into the trap of this is God's will for my life. And you're missing the fact that maybe now He wants you to go into another direction, or maybe He wants you to run in a different way, or do a different thing. And so we always have to be seeking Him, always believing that He is the rewarder, never getting trapped in some spiritual rut, thinking, OK, this is what I do.

This is what I do. Now God doesn't have to talk to me anymore. We have to believe.

We have to believe that He's the rewarder of those who seek Him. And you have to begin seeking Him again if you're not seeking Him now. Every aspect of your life, you ought to seek Him.

Every aspect. I don't care what it is. You're going to go buy a pair of socks tomorrow.

Lord, I'm going to go to the store today. I need some socks. Give me wisdom.

Help me. You ever stand in a mall and just sit there for four hours trying to figure out which tennis shoes you should buy? You can't even decide what tennis shoes you should get. How are you going to make major decisions in life without the will of God? Every aspect of our life.

I was teaching the young people today. It was young people. I didn't use this word, but I use it often.

You're practical atheists. There is so much you do in your life, so many decisions that you make in which God is not involved. There is no idea of deity here.

There's no idea of sovereign ruler here. Every aspect of our life, God should be consulted. We should seek Him.

Seek His wisdom. Seek His direction. What do you desire from me, O Lord? Because I believe that you are the rewarder of those who seek Him.

He is. He is. Let me just stop here for a second and say something very, very important.

You've probably sung songs or heard songs that uses the word Adonai. It's a word that means Lord, owner. It was often used by the Jew in substitution for the word Yahweh.

It's one of the most beautiful words in the Bible. And of all the Hebrew words in the Bible that describe a relationship with God, that's the one most dear to me. Because it means owner.

Not just Lord, but owner. Adonai actually has the idea of owner of a house. The owner.

Now, in that relationship, God is the owner and I am the slave. OK? Now think about this. Because this will set you free, if you can learn this.

God is the owner and I am the slave. Now, as a slave, slaves actually can be, slavery can be actually very liberating. As a slave, I get up in the morning, I go to bed at night, I have only one concern as a slave.

The will of my master. That's it. Think about how, talk about reductionism, simplifying life.

I only have one concern. The will of my master. I get up in the morning.

Master, what is your will? Midday. Master, that was finished. What is your will now? Go to bed, right before bed.

Master, I'm going to bed. Tomorrow, start again. I say, well, what's great about that? I'll tell you what's great about that.

Slaves only have to be concerned with one thing. The will of their master. They don't have to be concerned with what they're going to eat, where they're going to live, who's going to protect them, shelter

them, absolutely anything.

Why? Because that's the master's job. The slave only has to be concerned with the will of his master and the master has to be concerned with absolutely every need that slave has. Do you know how beautiful that is? How wonderful that is? They say, what are you saying, Fr.

Paul, we should all quit our jobs? No, no. What you've got to learn is Christianity is not worked out just in the context of full-time ministers. Christianity is worked out in the context of every believer.

Every believer is a slave of God. Have a doctor in the audience tonight. A doctor.

He gets up in the morning. Yes, he's got to look at patients. He's got to do all this stuff.

He's got to figure out stuff. But underlying every bit of that is only one thing. What's your will? Well, God says, it's my will that you be a doctor, that you be good at it.

But underlying all of that, there's just one question. What's your will? And then what happens? Then God has to take care. It's almost a covenant relationship, the word Adonai describes.

I have made covenant with God to do one thing, to be His slave and concern myself with His will. God has made covenant with me to take care of me and my own. And in 20-some years of walking with God, He has never broken His covenant.

I have broken mine. He has never broken His. There has never been a time a need has not been met.

There has never been a time I have not been cared for. He is the rewarder of those who seek Him. Make this a little pastoral.

I had a church in Barranco in Lima, Peru that while I was pastoring it, it grew. It had about 200 people. It was going extremely fast.

A lot of things were happening. And a man who was used of God to really be a blessing to me down there, he came to me one day and he was watching all the services and all the activities and everything that was going on. And he walked up.

He's like the Apostle Paul of Peru. A bald-headed man. He walked up and he goes, It's not good, Paul.

And I said, What, Brother Ortado? What's not good? It's not good. You're leading your people into idolatry. And I said, What do you mean? He goes, You're everything for them.

He said, They've got a problem. Where do they go? I said, Well, they come to me. I'm the pastor.

Oh, I wasn't aware they were supposed to do that. And he had me restructure, helped me to restructure my entire ministry. You've got a problem.

Where do you go? The pastor? Let's say I'm your pastor and you come to me with a problem. You say, Brother Paul, my marriage, I'm having trouble in my marriage. Things aren't going right and I just need some counsel.

I need to know what to do. I say, Okay. What has God shown you? What do you mean, Brother Paul? What has God shown you? In your time of seeking Him and the Word of God in prayer, what has He

shown you? Well, I came here.

I need help. You see what's happened? They have not gone to God. We've developed some popish system that isn't biblical.

I say, Listen, dear brother, we can't work it this way. Here's what I want you to do. I want you to go home.

And I want you to go home for the next week or two, however long it takes. And I want you to seek God in prayer. I want you to seek Him in His Word.

And I want Him to tell you what you ought to do. He says, But I don't even know where to look, Pastor. Oh, well, that's where I come in.

I start writing out verses, passages for Him. Here. What has He shown you? Well, I just didn't have time to seek.

I'm sorry, I can't help you either. Or, Pastor, I've sought, but there's still some confusion. Well, now I can work with you.

You've gone to God. You're seeking God. You're believing that He is the rewarder of those who seek Him.

It is to take the congregation and to not substitute ourselves and put ourselves in the place of God, but to lead the congregation to run to God with every need, to be there in counseling, to be there to help clear away confusion, to be there to help with doctrinal issues, but to always send the congregation immediately and first of all to God and teach them to learn to seek God and to believe that He is and He's the rewarder of those who seek Him. We have to be very, very careful about the things that we do in church. To turn to God.

To whom do you turn when you've got problems and different things in your life that are going on? Usually, we'll confide in a friend even before we'll confide in God. Usually, we'll talk to all sorts of people, get all sorts of opinions, but we won't wait upon God. Or we'll cry out to Him for a minute and then become discouraged and immediately get on the telephone.

Whatever happened about enduring in His presence and waiting upon the Lord? When the Bible talks about waiting on the Lord, it's usually always in the context of trials and needs and confusion and problems. But we want a quick fix. We want to send Him to heaven now.

We want to go to a man. We want a king. And we should be seeking the only one.

The one who is. The one who is the rewarder of those who seek Him. I remember growing up early in my Christian walk, being in a church with a tremendous, tremendous pastor.

And throughout my life, I've known, my younger life, I had the privilege of meeting men that were tremendous, tremendous men of God. And you know what was so amazing? God never allowed me to enter into any of their inner circles. God never allowed me.

He never allowed one of those men to befriend me. He never allowed one of those men to take me under their arm. I always felt like I couldn't figure out why am I the outcast? I mean, all my friends are discipled by Him.

They won't even look at me. And sometimes it was resentment. Sometimes I would get mad.

I'd think, well, what am I? Just some dead dog somewhere? No one wants to help? I knew. God was training me. He wanted me to learn to look to Him and to Him alone.

He sent me to Peru for years and years alone with no missionary organization, no anything. Just a little church in a cornfield back in Illinois that was willing to send me. Wanted to teach me.

Look to Me alone. Alone. Alone.

I'll give you no king. I'll give you no help. I will be your helper.

Now, can God use men in mentoring and discipling? Of course He can. Can He use women in mentoring? Of course He can. Are there a lot of people who influence our lives and help us in our daily walk? Of course.

All that is biblical. But when it comes down to it, with everything in your life, whom are you seeking? Whom are you seeking? So many people want second-hand revelation, don't they? Moses, we can't stand to be in the presence of God. You go there and then you talk to us.

What a thing they traded off on that day. What a privilege they traded off on that day. Can you go to your pastor for counsel? Of course you can.

But to whom should you go first? To God. Because He is the rewarder of those who seek Him. Before I go on to verse 7, I want to iterate something that is of such importance.

Something of grand importance. I have met missionaries who have given their lives on the mission field. I have met people who have lost it all on the mission field.

But if you were to even hint to them that they had somehow given some great sacrifice to God, they would become nauseous. And I mean that. Because God is the rewarder.

No one can out-give God because God is no man's getter. You cannot out-give Him. You cannot be kinder.

You cannot be more faithful. You cannot be more generous. You cannot be more selfless than God.

One preacher told me one time, look, you got a little shovel, God's got a big shovel. You shovel it out, He shovels it in, His shovel shovels more than your shovel. And I have seen that.

I have seen that. Over and over and over again. So many stories that I could just right now tell you that God has worked for me.

So many testimonies of His faithfulness in our mission. So many times Him coming through at the last hour in unbelievable deliverance. So many times.

I set myself many years ago to follow the example of George Mueller. Because in his day, he desired to show people that God would meet the needs of a ministry even if that ministry never made their needs known to a single man. And we have set upon ourselves to do that very same thing.

In all the days of my life that I have practiced this, not one time has God failed. Not one time. We were in tears this evening talking about God's faithfulness in the mission because some of you know of George Mueller.

He would present a presentation twice a year, once a year, about how God met all their needs. Now, he would never make that presentation when they were in the midst of a trial because he didn't want people to see that they had needs and then be motivated to give. He would always wait until the trial was totally over and the victory was won.

About two months ago, for the first time in my life, I sat down in my office and I felt God say, Okay, now, write. Write. Tell, write from this day forward of my faithfulness.

That was in November. We support almost 90 missionaries and their families and we tell no one our needs. In November, the moment he told me to stop and start writing, support stopped.

It stopped. We were at the 25th day of November and not one missionary on the field had been paid. The staff had not had salaries for a month and yet not one staff member went hungry.

Not one staff member failed to pay a bill. As a matter of fact, all of us got together and figured out that somehow we prospered more without getting a paycheck than when we got one. And then, it started coming and coming and God met every need of every missionary.

He has never one time failed. Never one time in all these years. Do you know how many missionaries, 90 missionaries and their families? Do you know what that requires? And do you know that God has met it every month, every year and never one time has he failed.

Never once having to call, never once telling someone our need and then all of a sudden, people just start giving. Go out to the mailbox after receiving almost nothing and the mailbox is filled. God has never failed.

Never failed. So many times I have sat there in my office, I have cried, I have grumbled, I have doubted, I have been miserable. So many things not trusting my God and in spite of my lack of faith, he has never failed.

This is not about the faith of some super spiritual saint. It is about some weak grumbling little child who can't even learn one lesson about faith and yet God never, never, never, never fails. Can't you trust a God like that? Can't you begin to trust a God like that? I have a little plaque in my office that said, God gives the best to those who leave the choices up to Him.

Can't you trust God with your finances? Can't you trust God with your needs? Some of you want different things and need different things and you go in debt to get them when only if you would have waited upon God, He might have provided that very thing for you without cost. You see, this is not just something dealing with missionaries. This is about every aspect of our life.

I've been praying for shoes and last week someone bought me these shoes. Do you see what I'm saying? Every need of yours, lift it up in prayer. Every need of yours into prayer.

God, so much a priest, so much loves. Prayer is so much a part of who God is. Why? Why? Prayer to me is like singing in a round.

Do you know what singing in a round is? Sing hallelujah to God. Sing hallelujah to God. When you sing something and sing it back, singing in a round, that's the way I see prayer.

Someone asked, well, how does the sovereignty of God and prayer and all that work together? Well, I'm going to explain it all to you right now. This is the way I look at it in a simple childlike way. God sings to me a prayer.

In His sovereignty, there is something that He wants me to ask Him for so that He can get glory out of giving it. And so He sings to me a prayer so that He will lead me into praying a prayer that I will pray back to Him and that He will answer. Why doesn't God just give it? Because He wants double glory.

See, if I didn't pray for it and He just gave it, I would give Him glory for giving it. But not only do I give Him glory for giving it, I give Him glory for answering prayer. Singing in a round.

I had a friend, Herb Williams, and I love him so dearly. You know, when I get around a bunch of Calvinists and they start bad-mouthing Armenians, I just think about old Herb. He loves God more than I think I ever will, and he's as Armenian as he can be.

And if that offends some of you, well, you can just get glad in the same pants you got mad in. But I remember one time he wanted a guitar. He prayed for six months.

And one day he walked out at like 8 in the morning getting ready to go to the ministry. We all worked in the street ministry. And he opened the door, and there on the porch was a guitar.

You say, highly impractical. Everything my God does is highly impractical. You see, one of George Mueller's greatest desires was that people would see the ministry that God had given him and that those people would trust Him, would trust God to meet their daily needs, would trust God to take them by the hand and lead them.

My greatest desire for heartcry is not missions. It's really not. The main purpose of heartcry, and God would never allow me to do it before, would be to tell people He never fails.

And the wonderful thing about it is that spiritually, I am a loser. If you only knew what I really am. If you only knew how much I whine, how much I doubt, how much I'm faithless.

If you only knew the times I can't even have a quiet time. I can't even get up enough gumption to read my Bible for two days. I know most people don't want to hear that because they want to honor men more than they should.

And people get mad at me for saying that. It's true. I have trouble being... You know, talking about theology, I'm still working on trying to figure out how to love my wife.

I can't think of one reason except that He set His seal upon His children to do them good. You see, one day when I get to heaven, you know, Brother Jennings is not going to come up and throw his arm around me and say, I want to glorify God by telling you all the wonderful things Paul Washer did for Him. He's going to throw his arm around me and say, I want to glorify God by telling you all the wonderful things that God did for Paul Washer.

You see the difference? You see how twisted we can become? Well, if I can only reach this spiritual level, if I can only learn to pray this way, then yeah, God would do that too in my life. That is just stupid. Do you

know what my most powerful prayer is? The most powerful prayer, I mean, when I'm in trouble, when I have to pull out the big gun, do you know what my most powerful prayer is? The one that gives me most comfort at 3 o'clock in the morning in the dark? This.

Lord, You know, You know, I'm going to bed now because You know, You know. Creep into the bedroom and try to wake up and say, how goes it, woman? You know. Go to bed.

Oh, He's so good. I glory. I know this is going to go, just listen to me before you throw a stone.

I glory in my weakness. I glory. I don't want to say in my sin because that just sounds so theologically wrong.

But, if God can get glory out of my darkness, how do all these missionaries get paid? How the hell does this happen? There's three guys of us sitting in office. Me, a Lutheran who's been converted and now goes to my church. He's been a Christian for about four years.

John Green from England. He came in, he didn't know how to tie his shoes. And he's been converted for about a year and a half.

And we get in there and sometimes, what are we going to do? I don't know, pray. God help us, help us, God. That's it.

It does. And He does. I remember one time when the blessings, this was so funny because God showed this to me and Darren and at the same, very same time, to the point we looked at each other and started laughing.

There was a time, it was like a year ago or a year and a half ago, I forget. And it was just like all the blessings cut off. Everything.

And I walk in the office and Darren's in there and we're praying and then we start talking. I said, Darren, you know, is there some sin in my life? Is there some sin in your life that's, that's, you know, blocking God's blessing on us? Soon as I said it, I looked over at him, he looked over at me and we just busted out laughing. And I go, are you thinking what I'm thinking? He said, yeah, I'm thinking what you're thinking.

I'm going, well, a couple months ago God was pouring out blessings all over the place. I was just as sinful then as I am now. So that can't be the reason.

Now, I'm not making light of sin and I'm not making light of holiness. You ought to hear me preach on holiness. It scares you to death.

But the point that I'm trying to make is that God is not doing this because men have done some, God has set His seal upon His people to love them and to answer their prayers and to be faithful to them. You see, if it was any other way, you would walk out of here tonight, especially some of you young Christians thinking, man, gosh, if just one day hopefully I could arise to Paul Washer's level of spirituality and faith, then God would do something great through me. If that's the way you feel, come listen to me pray sometime.

You'll walk out of there going, God can help this guy. He can help anybody. He is the rewarder of those who seek Him.

And here's something about seeking God. It doesn't have to be a lot of noise. I know I'm telling you a lot of things just from experience tonight, but I want you to realize this.

How unorthodox seeking can be as long as it's seeking. I remember when I first set upon myself to seek the Lord. I know it was a sovereign work of God, because I don't know how this would ever happen in my life.

It was never repeated. But when I was a young Christian, God set it upon my heart to seek Him. And He gave me grace so that hours a day, I was seeking Him.

And I had all these promises, you know, seek the Lord, and He'll show Himself to you, and all this different stuff I'm quoting from Jeremiah and Matthew 7. And it got in turn from minutes into hours. And that's something, because I fall asleep all the time when I pray. I really have this problem.

When I first started seeking the Lord, I said to myself, Lord, I'm going in there in that closet. I went into the closet. They said prayer closet.

Literal closet. Took all the clothes out of it. Went into the closet.

I said, Lord, I'm going to seek You, and I'm not coming out of there until I know You, or until I die. Fifteen minutes later, I fell asleep, and all my roommates came home, found me in the closet sleeping. They said, this Christianity stuff has just gone wild.

So I took an alarm clock and set it for 15 minutes, because that's about how long I would last pray. I'd go to sleep, I'd go off, I'd wake up, I'd set it again, start praying for another 15 minutes. And something unusual started happening.

As I prayed more and more, I said less and less, to the point where it was simply this. Lord, it's now four months and six days. I've been doing this, and You haven't come yet.

I'm here again, and I'll be here for the next couple hours. Okay? I'll see You tomorrow. Just wanting one thing.

God, You said You would come. I don't have anything else to say. I'm just going to wait here until You do, and come back tomorrow, and come back the next day, and the next day, and the next day.

You still have not shown up. I was a young boy. I knew nothing of the presence of God.

I knew nothing of the power of God. I knew nothing about how terrible God can be. Getting ready to go to the... There was a Bible retreat in Colorado or something for college students during spring break, and I thought, man, that would be great.

And I felt like God said, no, you're not going there. Go out to the hill country of West Texas and sit on a hill. I would walk around that hill for four days.

Grab rocks and throw them up at heaven so they would hit the gate. I'm still here, and You have not answered. Dear Reverend, I don't know.

Maybe it's the most reverent I've ever been. I'm still here. It's been so many months, and You have not come.

And then one day He came. He came. If you seek Him, you will find Him.

He came. You say, how do you know He came? Because when He comes, you know it's Him. He came and touched my life.

And not everything changed, but some things tremendously changed. I can tell you right now that the presence of God is more real to me in this room right now than the presence of any of you looking at me. And I am not making big flowery statements.

God is my way. What I'm trying to tell you is that Christianity is not just a few things you do. It is not just a little quiet time.

I hate that word. Quiet time. It's like putting your wife in a closet and coming to her at 4.30 for a half an hour saying you can come out now, and then at 5 o'clock putting her back in there again.

It's quiet time. It's not just this quiet time. It's not just this rules of do's and don'ts.

It's not just being faithful for no reason at all. No, there is a God out there, and if you will seek Him, He will be more real to you than anything. More reality in Him than in all the faces you can see with your physical eyes.

Seek Him. He is the rewarder of those who seek Him. Not seeking to be a missionary.

If you're seeking to be a missionary, stop. Not seeking to be a missionary. Not seeking to have a ministry.

Not seeking to do something. And most certainly not seeking a vision. Unless it be a vision to Christ.

I seek Thee. Lord, I come here with noble purpose in my heart. I speak not this night for China, nor for India, nor for the lost, nor for ministry, nor for any other thing.

God, I come here with much more noble purpose. I seek Thee. Audience with Thee, and I'll not be content until I seek Thee.

The difference between secondary revelation and primary revelation, and what I mean by that is this. John Piper speaks a lot, says a lot of wonderful things, but in his voice, in his voice, I detect a bit of reality. I detect that what he is speaking, he has felt, he has seen, he has experienced.

But I see, I go to colleges all over the country, and I hear little boys quoting Piper. I hear preachers quoting Piper, and quoting this, and quoting Edwards, and all these different things. But they're just like little parrots that are parroting something that they heard from someone else, but did not go to the mount to find it themselves.

The difference between boys and men, women of God and girls of God, triflers and pilgrims. Oh, that one day my boy would come to me so disturbed, finding no peace, and I'd take him by the hand and lead him out into the desert and leave him there. And say, son, there's an abundant amount of rocks here.

Make noise at heaven's gate until it's open. He is the rewarder of those who seek Him. And His greatest reward is Him.

His greatest reward is Him. What are you seeking? Are you seeking comfort? You seek not God. Are you seeking security? You seek not God.

Are you seeking personal prosperity? You seek not God. Are you seeking a ministry? You seek not God. Are you seeking to do great things? You seek not God.

Seek God. Lord, on this day I choose this, Lord. Before You, with all the angels listening, take whatever reward might be accounted to me, whatever thing in heaven that might be granted to me, and take it away and replace it with a greater portion of You.

And that will be enough. That will be enough. He is the rewarder of those who seek Him.

I want to go on just a little bit farther. By faith, Noah being warned by God about things not yet seen, in reverence, prepared an ark for the salvation of his household. Now look at this.

By faith, Noah being warned by God about things not seen, in reverence, prepared an ark for the salvation of his household. We have been called to do the very same thing as Noah. I am, my primary concern for my household must be the salvation of my wife's soul, the salvation of my son's soul.

Their sanctification, their growth, that must be my primary concern because look, by faith, Noah being warned by God. I have been warned by God. You have been warned by God that this world that we see is going to be burned up with fire.

That judgment coming. That we are to flee from the wrath to come. That there is a new heaven and a new earth and this world is passing away and all those involved in this world, no place shall be found for them.

We have been warned by God and when God sent his son, he sent his son to warn. You have been warned by God. Now by faith, you must decide, does God tell the truth? Does God know what he's talking about? If he does, you better respond.

If he doesn't, then quit playing Christianity and go out and clench your fist and curse God's name. We have been warned of God. Young person, why do you not get involved in the tantalizing things of the world? You have been warned by God and you believe him.

You believe him. Noah was warned by God about things not yet seen. Here we go back to faith.

Here we go back to invisibility. Here we go back to standing upon not blind faith, but God's word. I have never seen the destruction of the world.

I have never seen the coming of Christ with countless angels arrayed in garments of war. I have never seen the wrath God poured forth in indescribable measure. But I have been told of such things.

I have. I have not seen them, but he has told me and he has told you. He has warned us.

And so how are we to respond? By faith. What does it mean? By faith. In reverence, he prepared an ark for the salvation of his household.

Now the word that's important here is reverence. The worst way to not show reverence is to ignore. I mean, even to get angry with somebody, it shows some importance.

But when you just totally ignore them, that's the worst thing to do. Anybody who's ever done street preaching, the worst thing is not when everyone gets mad at you and gathers around you and starts arguing with you. The worst thing is when you stand out there in the middle of a tavern street or something

and start preaching and people literally walk by you like you don't even exist.

You want to feel foolish. I mean, you talk right in someone's face and they look right through you like you're not even there. How did Noah reverence God? He believed God.

And he believed His warning and he acted upon it. Sir, you show no reverence for God when you do not heed His warning by faith. When you do not heed His warning in your household by faith, you do not reverence God.

You are not taking His warning seriously. The Bible, one of the reasons why the book of Revelation is written in apocalyptic literature, that means symbols and signs and everything, is because I'm convinced it is speaking of the judgment of God. Why? Well, for this.

Apocalyptic language, in my opinion, if I had to write a definition, apocalyptic language is when the prophet sees something so beyond the human mind to comprehend that it almost sends him to the border of insanity. And he cannot understand it. And not only can he not understand it, it is so awesome, so otherworldly, he cannot describe it.

And so he is there just grappling for words, trying to do the best he can with this limited human language to describe something that goes beyond the mind to comprehend. And that's why the Bible goes into apocalyptic language when the wrath of God is described. It is so far beyond anything for the mind to comprehend.

You revel in the fact that the love of God is beyond description? Well then, tremble at the fact that so is His wrath. And Noah, he showed that he revered God because when God gave the warning, he took it seriously. I've got one task now.

Build an ark for the salvation of my home. Build an ark. That's an amazing thing because no one has ever seen it rain.

And when you build an ark, you start building an ark right in the middle of Missouri. What's going on? Are you out of your mind? An entire investment of your life, the massive work involved in this. Why are you doing this? Because God has spoken about things that seem unbelievable.

You may be a college student and you've been, you know, on the road to prosperity and everything else and God does a work in your life and you go home to your parents and say, I'm going to be a missionary or something like that. They go, you know, the sacrifice, the loss, the everything else that you're going to have to go through Why on earth would you make a decision like this? Because I've been warned of things not seen. They're offering you the most incredible job in the world in that place.

I mean, it's just like you're going to triple your salary. You're going to do this and that. Why don't you take it? Because I've been warned of things that doesn't go along with the will of God.

And he built an ark for his household. I tremble at being a parent. I'm so afraid.

I know my inability to teach, my inability to lead, my inability to know when to discipline. I know the depravity of my children. They deserve hell.

I know the only hope for them is God. And I know that I'm called to prepare, to act, to heed the warning and reverence, to do all that I can. He goes on.

Now, this is very, very important, especially for those of you who are involved in work. I don't want to say secular work because there's nothing secular or Christian. Those of you who are not in full-time ministry, you're out there in the factories, you're out there in the plants, you're out there in the stores, you're out there doing the work, you're out there farming, I want to give you something that maybe will help you.

It says he prepared an ark for the salvation of his household by which he condemned the world. I have a friend right now, his wife about a month ago just left him and the boys. Gone.

Just left him for another man. Before she left him, he knew there was problems, he knew all this stuff was going on, and he would pray. He was too passive in my mind.

The only thing, he would pray. He would pray and pray and pray. He wouldn't condemn her.

He wouldn't fight against her. He wouldn't try to make her feel horrible about things she was doing. He would pray and pray.

And every time she would walk by the door and just see him pray, she hated him. She'd say, you religious hypocrite, you this, you that. He wasn't talking to her.

He wasn't rebuking her. She was not even in the picture. He was talking to God and she hated him for it.

For the same reason that when Noah built that ark, he condemned the world. When you, sir, sit down at your factory and you go over by yourself, you don't do anything to anybody else, you're just lunchtime at your factory, and you go over there at the lunchroom and you sit down with your meal and you fold your hands just to pray, you're not making a big scene or anything, you're just asking the Lord to bless your meal, and someone cracks some wisecrack remark to you and gets mad. You didn't say anything to them, you didn't judge them, you didn't do anything, but now they're calling you holier than thou, hypocrite, goody-two-shoes, you think you're better than everyone else, and you haven't done anything.

Why? Because one act of faith and righteousness, when a wicked man sees that, it rebukes him and condemns him. Even though you don't say anything. You're at your job at some store somewhere and there's several of the salespeople there on the floor and they're all telling you, you're sitting there and they begin to tell a joke that's off-color, that's not right.

You don't say anything bad to them, you don't tell them they shouldn't do it, you just calmly and politely and quietly walk away. And the moment you do it, they begin to call you everything that they can possibly call you. They begin to hate you.

Why? Because when the wicked see the righteous, it condemns them. It condemns them. That's why if you're simply living a righteous life, there's power in that.

You don't have to be a flaming evangelist that jumps up on top of a bench somewhere and starts preaching to everyone. If you live as a righteous man, you will undergo persecution and people will see you and people will be affected by your life. Noah built an ark and condemned the world.

That's one part of that meaning. But another part is this, do you condemn the world? Just really quick, look in chapter 12, verse 2, Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the saints. Do you despise the world? Do you despise the world? There is a healthy, sensible way in which you and I are both to despise the world, to condemn it, to treat it

with contempt.

We're to treat it as something not a part of us. The approving pastors used to get a big kick out of it all the time. One of them asked me one time, he says, Brother Paul, one day they'll make you president of the United States.

And I said, No. No, I said, that's never going to happen. He said, What? I said, I would never step down from my high position to be something as small as the president of the United States.

And they remembered that for years. They used to laugh about that. Brother Paul, he's bigger than the president.

But in a way, it is to despise, to treat with contempt this world. You are not my home. This is not my place.

This is not my time. You will not come into my household. I have nothing to do with you and you have nothing to do with me.

I have been crucified and you're crucified to me. How dare you bring that into my children? How dare you bring that into my household? How dare you tempt me? That sickens me. It nauseates.

Your world nauseates me. We don't go about saying that verbally. We don't go around saying that.

But there is a real sense of burning zeal in the heart of a spirit-filled Christian in which they look at the world with contempt. They despise it. Just like Jesus despised that shame.

He turned His nose up to it for the joy that was before Him. You will not affect me. You will have no power over me.

I will back down from you. There's a fight out there, folks. A real fight.

I'm not talking about political conservatism. I'm not talking about right-wing or left-wing because in my opinion, both wings are on the same bird and it's no count. I'm talking about a real spiritual battle.

We are to be praying. We are to be watching. We are to be guarding.

We are to be going on in our faith. Condemn the world. The cross before me.

The world behind me. I'll not be like Lot's wife. I'll not turn around and turn into a pillar of salt, a lifeless, stupid thing.

I'll not put my hand to the plow and then take it off. I'll not run back to my fishing boats. I'll walk the way of the Nazarene.

And that's what Noah did and that's what I appreciate so much about Noah. By which he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith. Here we go again.

This is not just... This is what's so wonderful. It's not just Abraham. We hear the same thing about Abel.

We hear the same thing about Noah. This righteousness that we so desire to be clothed with. This righteousness that gives us perfect standing before God is by faith.

It is always by faith. Always by faith. Tomorrow morning we're going to start with Abraham.

I want to encourage you to condemn the world. To turn your back on it. To lift your nose to it.

To treat it as a disgusting thing. Not worthy of an heir of salvation. To turn away from it.

And I want you to look to God as the rewarder. As the one who is and the one who rewards His people. And the one who is faithful on behalf of His people.

The one who can be trusted. To live at risk. That's what we're going to talk about tomorrow.

To live not knowing where you're going. To follow Him. That's all you need.

Remember what I said last night an illustration of faith? It's not looking across an abyss and seeing a very narrow road that you're going to walk on. That's not faith. Faith is looking across the abyss and seeing no road.

No bridge. And God's saying, step, because I said step. And when you step you find it was there.

But then you look for the next step and there's nothing there until you step. It is a daily thing. God wants you to walk all the days of your life just like Enoch.

Just like Enoch. You say, this is so hard for me. I have such little faith.

I don't know about this life of faith. Neither did Enoch when he started. But he came to know greater and greater measures of God's grace and goodness, which built up his faith.

Do the same. And don't get trapped into this mold of, yeah, I heard from God back then. Well, God might be speaking now and telling you to go in a completely different direction.

Are you living at risk right now? I want to talk about it tonight, but I don't have time. The risk. Are you living at risk? Someone asked me one time, Brother Paul, real quick, definition of faith.

Definition of faith would be this. Oh Lord, if you do not move on my behalf this very moment, I'm dead. That's living by faith.

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