

You've Got to Be in Christ

by Robert B. Thompson

The sermon emphasizes the importance of being prepared for the return of Christ by living a life of repentance and accountability for our actions.

Duration: 1:18:00

Scripture: Luke 17:28-30, Romans 12:1, 2 Corinthians 5:10, 1 Thessalonians 5:2-3, 2 Peter 3:9, 1 John 1:7, 1 John 3:1

Topics: "Repentance", "Judgment Day"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of understanding the day of the Lord and its purpose. The purpose is not to scare people, but to change their behavior and encourage them to get serious with God. The preacher highlights the need for repentance and turning to God, as well as the importance of diligence in serving the Lord. The sermon also emphasizes that God will judge everyone righteously and that what truly matters is what God has done in a person's life.

Transcript

Far and away very little is said about what's going to happen to us when we die. When we die doesn't seem to be all that significant. What is significant is the day of the Lord, sometimes called the day of vengeance of our God, the day of the Lord, the day of Christ, the coming of the Lord, but it's drawing pretty close.

And so we want to be ready, we want to be prepared in our mind, because whether we are in the spirit realm, if we're in the spirit realm, if we have died and we're in the spirit realm, we're going to return with Christ at one point or another. We've got to come back and face the music. You can't hide in the grave.

You can't hide in heaven. You're going to be here at some point to deal with Christ. And all of the words of Christ in the Gospels point to this.

For example, in the parable of the talents, where the man was given a talent and he didn't use it, he buried it, and then when the Lord came, he took it away from him and gave it to someone who had been more diligent. Well, you see, dying has nothing to do with it. Let's say that you die now, and you have not used the talent that God has given you in his kingdom, and you're in the spirit realm.

Then when the Lord comes, you have to be raised from the dead and face that issue. So the issue, am I coming across it? The issue is not, am I going to be saved when I go to heaven when I die? That's not the

issue. You'll go, I can't speak with authority about where you'll go when you die, because the New Testament doesn't deal with it very much.

I can speak with authority on what will happen when the Lord returns, because I've got a lot of, thus saith the Lord, but I don't have much to offer you from the Bible on what will happen to you when you die. I don't have that. But I do know that we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, and I doubt seriously I see no inkling on the scripture that the judgment seat of Christ will take place in heaven.

It's going to take place here on earth, and it will take place when you're in your body, not when you're a spirit. Spirits will not stand before the judgment seat of Christ. People will stand before the judgment seat of Christ, and so we would love to relegate the future to a kind of a mysterious, vague, hope we get there kind of situation.

We hope our death will not be too painful. We hope we'll die and go there, and then our picture of it is as one of the old hymns says, we'll sing and shout and dance about, or we'll be by the river, and I'll meet you by the river, and we'll have our hearts, and we'll see the angels, and we'll see God, and isn't that basically about what we look for in the future when we die? See, that's what we look for, and we look for freedom from dread, and the fears, and the bills we have to pay, and the responsibilities, and that will all be lifted from us, and that is our hope for the future. It isn't bad, but while that may be true for a season, I don't know.

I'm of the opinion that we'll go to the place in the spirit realm for which we are suited, and I take that from an expression that appears several times in the Old Testament. He was gathered to his people. He was gathered to his people.

In the Old Testament, it doesn't say he went up to heaven. It says he was gathered to his people, and I notice in Matthew 24, it says he shall call his elect from one end of heaven to the other, from one end of heaven to the other, so I rather expect there'll be an awful diversity and separation of peoples in the spirit realm. It's not a simple heaven-hell thing by any means.

It is you go apparently to where you are suited, and this is what you'd want. You wouldn't want to be put in some place for which you weren't suited. I mean, if you live a kind of a lackadaisical Christian life here, you wouldn't want to be put up in the company of Peter, Paul, and James, and you'd feel like an oddball.

Rather, if you think about it, you'd rather go where you're comfortable, and you recognize the people, and they're all kind of like you are. See, we've had too much that's been too mysterious, too vague. We don't think about the reality like Moses and Elijah talking to Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration.

See, we can't picture. They were discussing the crucifixion, and we can't picture intelligent life occurring after death. It's like we'll float around somewhere, and we'll sing, and shout, and dance about.

Well, I can't speak authoritatively on it because we have so little in the Bible. We don't really understand that. I read a lady's book writing about the afterlife, and she was saying the Bible is just full of references to heaven and what's going on in there.

It was a great book, and I enjoyed it thoroughly because she gave several accounts of people who had been resuscitated after they had died. They had died clinically, but not biologically, and they had been resuscitated. It was marvelous, but that expression, she was talking through her hat.

She was saying what she thought was true. But see, when you get down and read the Bible, it simply is not true. It is not filled with references to heaven at all.

In fact, the expression, go to heaven, doesn't even appear one time in the King James Version. Not even one time. We would assume it was in there at least 150 times.

When you get up into the 150s, you're talking about words like righteousness, not heaven. So, that I can't speak about, but you see, it affects how we live because if we realize that at some point, whether we die before the Lord comes or not, at some point, we're going to be raised up in our body and give an account to Christ for our behavior. And I told the little anecdote before, but it's so fitting, and some of you were not here about how we were traveling across the country, and we were all disheveled, and we went into a restaurant, as crummy as we were, because we said, they'll never see us again, because we were on route toward California.

We said, well, they'll never see us again. So, we went in filthy, dirty, and we said, well, they'll never see us again. Have you ever done anything like that? They'll never see us again.

Well, see, we have that kind of idea about life. They'll never see us again. In other words, we'll never really be called to account for our actions, so we don't picture the fact that we're going to come forth from the grave, and we are going to, at some venue, as Karen would say, at some point or some place, sometime, there will come a day when you and I will stand before Jesus Christ, and we will answer in detail for our lives.

At some point, there's no hiding in heaven, there's no hiding in the grave. You're going to come forth and answer to God for your behavior, and I think when we realize that, when we realize that Jesus said, every idle word, a vain word, a word without any purpose to it, that a person shall utter, they shall give an account thereof in the day of judgment. And that's to us like, well, I'm saved, I don't have to worry about that.

Well, you know, maybe, maybe, that's kind of far-fetched. But see, God said that. God said that.

And so we know it's true. Now, what about our sinful life? What about the many sins we have committed since we've been a Christian? We take care of that now. We can take care of that now by confessing to Christ what we have done, and not just listing it.

I'm not talking about listing it. And I'm not even talking about listing it and then doing penance. I noticed in an ad in the Smithsonian, no, it's in the Archaeological Review, and it appears in every issue of the magazine.

And it is a Catholic order, and I never downed Catholics. My dear Aunt Annie was a Catholic, and she prayed for me once when I was healed, so I never downed Catholics, because I know there's an awful lot of good Catholics that love God. But this appeared in this ad, and it's an invitation to come to this monastery, and it quotes a verse, and it says, instead of saying repent, it says do penance.

I forget the exact verse, but it's, the idea is from Acts, and it's, I think it's where Peter said, of men and brethren, what shall we do? Repent, you remember? Repent and be baptized. Well, in this little ad that appears every month in the Archaeological Review, it says do penance and be baptized. And with all due courtesy toward your Catholic people, there is a vast difference between repentance and doing penance.

For example, if I commit a sin, let's say I fornicate, or I lie, or I steal. Now, I can confess that, I can list that, I can go to the priest or to God, and I can list, and I can say I've done that. Well, what do I do? Then I do penance.

Maybe I say the Our Father 25 times, or 50 times. That's penance. That's not scriptural.

In fact, penance is not a proper translation of the Greek term. The difference between doing penance and repenting is that in repenting, and let's say that I've stolen something. Okay, I've got to make restitution.

But in the meantime, I have to confess it as sin, and then I have to denounce it as being vile and fit only for the lake of fire. And then I have to renounce it. I have to say never again is that going to happen.

And then I have to draw near to God, and in the future resist the devil. See, that's a lot different than going to a confessional every week, and having stolen something again, and doing 50 more Our Fathers. This is a big difference between doing penance and repenting.

Repenting means you thoroughly denounce and renounce this as evil and wicked, and you just have faith in God that this will never, never happen again. If it ever happens again, you come before the elders of the church and have them lay hands on you, because you have a vicious bondage here. Because it is not God's will that any Christian continue in sin.

Brother in the third heaven, 1 John chapter 3, verse 6. The King James obfuscates this verse with its archaic language. The NIV is beautiful. It brings out the Greek tense in a marvelous way.

1 John 3.6. And it shows you why penance is not adequate. There must be a repentance. There must be a denouncing so strong and so firm in the presence of God that it does not happen again.

And if you look at 1 John 3.6 up here on the board, the NIV has it so beautifully, and the King James does not have it. Maybe in those days it was clear. No one who lives in him keeps on sinning, thus saith the Lord.

See, the King James says it in such a way, you don't get the full impact of that. But see, he's gone into the Greek tense. Greek is more finely tuned than English.

And it will say whether an event is protracted or an immediate... Tony could lecture you on that, but it tells... What is the tense, Tony, that speaks of a continuance? Which one is the aorist? There's one of them that speaks of a sudden action that does not continue. No, no, I want... Which is the name of the tense that denotes a continuation of an action? In the Greek, there's imperfect? I don't know. All right.

Well, anyway, the King James doesn't show whether it's a continuous thing, continuing sinning or sinning once or whatever. But the NIV is very accurate in this respect. See, you don't... It doesn't say... If it said no one who lives in him sins, then it would be contrary to 1 John, the first chapter of the eighth verse, which says if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

See, but the point is, yes, we all sin, but we don't keep doing it because God has made a provision for us in 1 John 1.9. If we confess our sin, He is faithful just to forgive us our sin and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Then there's no inconsistency. You see, then we have the Greek tense that shows a continued action.

See, keeps on sinning. Sure, we're all going to sin once, but then the Bible gives us a way of handling it. And it's not by doing penance because that... Doing penance is like atoning for your own sin.

And that was done on the cross. See, I can make up for this sin by doing 50 hour fasts. Don't let me come across as downing Catholics.

I'm not. I'm talking about preparing ourselves for the coming of the Lord. And we do not prepare ourselves for the coming of the Lord by doing penance.

We prepare ourselves for the coming of the Lord by repenting, by coming before God and by His power getting delivered. There is deliverance from sin. We may steal once, but we don't steal twice.

And if we do, then we come to the elders of the church and get hands laid on us because no one who lives in Him keeps on sinning. Now, this is very important because you see, the Lord Jesus in His goodness... Now, the Bible states, Thus saith the Lord, we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ that we may receive in our body what we have done. 2 Corinthians 5.10. We receive the good we have done.

We receive the bad we have done. 2 Corinthians 5.10. Okay. Now, if we want to escape that and just get good at the judgment seat of Christ, then we have to deal with our sins beforehand.

Does that make sense to you? And you can't deal with them by doing penance because that is making an atonement for your own sin and God will not buy that. He will not buy that at all. He did that once on the cross.

He's not asking us to make an atonement for our own sin. He does ask us to make restitution on occasion and even there we have to be led by the Lord. But He absolutely insists that when we sin, that we confess our sin, that we draw near to God and we resist the devil.

And I mean, when I say you confess your sin, 1 John 1.9, I mean you confess it with the idea you're never going to do it again. You're going to draw near to God until you get the power through the Holy Spirit. And it says in Galatians 5.16, Walk in the Spirit and you will not fulfill the loss of your flesh.

Galatians 5.16. So God has made a provision, again in Romans 8.13, If you live after the flesh, you shall die. But if you through the Spirit put to death the deeds of your body, you shall live. Romans 8.13. So there's an obli-, and then in the 6th chapter of Romans it also tells us because we're under grace and not under the law, we are not bound in sin.

And if we choose the sin, we're going to die. Now, the reason that's so important for us to understand is because at some point we, you and I, by the word of the living God, we are going to stand before Jesus Christ and receive in our body the things we have done, whether good or bad. And if we don't take care of it now, and we've had our opportunity to take care of it now, we're going to face, I mean big time, problems.

Like the outer darkness. These expressions like many lashes in the outer darkness and depart from me, none of those is addressed to the unsaved. They're all addressed to the servants of the Lord.

The parable of the wise and foolish virgins is not addressed to the unsaved. It's all addressed to the servants of the Lord. So what kind of a vision you have of your future will determine how you act today.

If you feel that in the future you'll die and that'll be the end of it, you're going to live with God forever in heaven in peace and joy and you go there by making a statement about Christ or something, then you're not going to get too excited about getting rid of sin in your life. You'll think, well everybody's doing it and nobody's perfect and as long as we're in the world, we quote that famous scripture, you know, as long as we're in the world we have to sin and nobody's perfect and all this stuff. That's what we're going to do because we figure, well, you know, there's no need of getting too excited.

Everybody's kind of doing it. We're in a sinful body. But when I die, then I know the Lord loves me.

I feel that assurance in my heart, which very often is a gross deception. Satan can counterfeit the Holy Spirit because you can't tell the difference in how you feel. I saw on the back of a t-shirt, somebody had a thing on there like, no matter how sincere you are, you'll drown if you don't know how to swim.

And that's very true. No matter how sincere you are, it doesn't affect the word of God. No matter how good you feel, it doesn't affect the word of God because Satan can counterfeit feelings and emotions very readily.

You can't tell the difference. But we do know from the Bible, he who does what is sinful, see verse 8, is of the devil. And so whenever we sin, steal, that's the influence of Satan because that's where it originates.

That's what the Bible says. He does what is sinful is of the devil. No, no, no, not all us nice church people.

That's not us. That's a delusion. We have to go by the word.

The word will never change. God said this to the Apostle John. And so when we see sin in our life, we don't atone for our own sin by doing penance.

We come to the fountain of blood and we say, Jesus, I have sinned. Forgive me. And this is wrong.

By your grace, it's never going to happen again. We go to prayer. We get the Holy Spirit until that bondage is broken.

If you notice also in verse 8 up here in the third chapter, for this reason the Son of God was manifest or revealed that he might do what? Destroy, not forgive. Destroy the works of the devil. He didn't come to make peace with the devil in us or to forgive the works of the devil in us.

He came to take away the sin of the world, not forgive the sin of the world. Now, I'm saying all this because we're talking about the vision of the coming of the Lord. And it is not as we have imagined.

It is quite different from what we have imagined. And the only people who will really have a good time in that day and can look forward to it with joy are people who know that they are walking in the light of God. If we walk in the light, that is in God's will as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanses us from all sin.

Now, see, that starts off with an if. If. 1 John 1.7. If we walk in the light.

If. If. And only if.

And that means in the light of God's will. How do I know God's will? How do you know God's will? Present your body a living sacrifice and prove God's will. Now, what I'm saying to you, dear ones, is this.

That we are not, in America, we, most of us who believe in the blood washed, in the evangelical doctrine, are not prepared for the day of the Lord. We are not prepared for the day of the Lord. I'm not saying we're going to be lost and go to hell or go in the lake of fire.

I'm not saying that. I don't know all the ifs, ands, and buts about it. All I know is we are not ready to see a smiling Jesus saying, enter into the joy of thy Lord, good and faithful servant, when we haven't been a good and faithful servant.

And most Americans, Christians, and it's supposed to be 50% or more of the population, even the president and the vice president claim to be born again. And we know from their actions how accurate a statement that is. But that's what they're hearing in the church they go to.

The minister doesn't skin them alive when they get in the church and say you're not anywhere within a thousand yards of being a Christian. They go blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, we're all saved by grace, everybody's going to heaven, and it's wonderful. Well, we've got a nation that is sinking into moral corruption, and the large part of the reason is because God's people are not prepared for the coming of the Lord.

We're just not prepared for the coming of the Lord. And for us it's going to be a very, very painful experience. Do you want to know something? The things you are doing today are going to determine your status a thousand years from now.

But a thousand years from now you won't even remember what went on today. You won't remember anything about your life. God said I make all things new.

You won't remember anything about the travail of life, your relationships, anything a thousand years from now. They'll all be gone. But what you are doing today, in this valley of the shadow of death that we call life, will determine your state a thousand years from now.

Think about that. You won't remember the joys, and God will wipe away all tears. You won't remember the joys and the pressures of life, the busyness where we run around so feverishly working at this and working at that.

You won't remember any of it, because it doesn't mean anything anyway. The only thing that really matters is what God has done in your life. And your job, and your household, and your relationships are only tools that God uses to test you, to see what you are really made of, and to change you if you are willing to be changed, so that a thousand years from now you will be what God wants you to be.

But you are determining that right now, with your diligence, in serving the Lord. And a wonderful thought, just imagine that, a thousand years from now, that which seems so important today, you won't even remember it, because he makes all things new. But what you are, will be very important, because it will determine your place in the kingdom.

So, when the Lord comes, when the Lord returns, the fat will be in the fire, as far as we are concerned. And if we have been diligent, and we have, as the Holy Spirit has brought up in front of us, the problems in our personality, the satanic bondages in our personality, and we have been faithful in renouncing Satan, and denouncing him, and resisting him, resist the devil, and he will flee from you, and have lived a victorious life in Christ, then when the Lord comes, it will be wonderful, a reward so marvelous that we couldn't describe it, now if we could understand it, we couldn't describe it, but if we have been something

less than that, we will face that, in that day. Any laziness, any indolence, any lack of, see God is a business man, that's why we have the parable of the talents, any slothfulness, any, see we here tonight, and specifically, and in America generally, have much greater access to Bibles, and to the word of the Lord, and to the cutting edge of prophecy, and what God is doing, the great bulk of the population of the world, and we are going to be held responsible for it, much has been given of him, so much will be required, so we really need to think about the coming of the Lord, what it is like, and see what the Bible has to say about it, so that we can understand, it is not a case of dying and going to heaven, it is a case of where we will be, what our situation will be, when the Lord Jesus returns, and we have to stand before him.

Ok, we better just peek once to 2 Corinthians 5.10, just to seal that in, and then we will go on, then we are going to go from there to 1 Thessalonians 4, verse 16. But first I want to just, I have mentioned 2 Corinthians 5.10 so much, now you need to realize people that this verse, 2 Corinthians 5.10 is waved away in evangelical teaching today, they say because of grace this is not applicable, we all will hear something wonderful and joyous in this day, that is how backslidden our nation is, we have absolutely defied the word of God, and you know why? Trying to please people, trying to please people, currying favor with people, that is why we are doing it, we are worshippers of our own belly, instead of God, we are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, and we have made the gospel so to people that you all come and you don't have to do anything, Christ did it all, it is all good news and everything, and next Sunday we will have a potluck, that is exactly what is going on, fill the churches, we need prophets in the land. Brother and sister, 2 Corinthians 5.10 will be standing when heaven and earth pass away, it will never be changed, and it means exactly what it says, like the rest of the word of God, for we must all appear, and that word means be made manifest, it doesn't mean come to the court, to the department at 11 o'clock in the morning, it means be made manifest.

We must all appear before the judge, that is the word, before the judgment seat of Christ, and Christ is the only one who judges, God does not judge anymore, in John 8 we see the father judges no one, he has committed all judgment to the son, now Christ is the judge, and when we are part of him, and living in the spirit, we also shall be judges, and we shall judge the world and judge angels, and that is very clearly taught in both testaments, but all we need to worry about is Jesus, because he is the judge, remember Paul said in Athens, he has appointed a day in which he will judge the world by that man whom he has chosen, and this is important, because we think of Jesus just as being our advocate, our lawyer, our friend, but Jesus is also his honor, when he comes into the court, the

bailiff says everyone please stand, his honor the Lord Jesus Christ presiding, that's right, this is the bima of Christ, in the Greek the bima, the word itself means a step, and it refers back to the Roman court, criminal court where there was a step on which the defendant stood, Pilate came before the bima, Christ came before the bima of Pilate, it is being taught today that this is a sports award banquet, that's right, where everybody gets a prize, some get the gold, some get the silver, some get the bronze, but everybody gets something, the word bima is used about 11 times in the New Testament, it is used to mean a court where accused criminals stand, Jesus stood at the bima of Pontius Pilate, who judged him, now Jesus Christ is the judge, and Pilate will be standing on the step, oh

yes, sometimes short gains are long loses, that each one may receive what is due him, now right here the NIV has tried to make the verse make sense, and I use the NIV because it is very excellent, but you have to know your Bible to know when it does this, and the thrust of the passage is not that we receive something that we kind of earn by our action, the thrust in the original language is more that we actually

receive what we have done, not a reward for what we have done, but actually what we have done, I like to use the illustration of the abortion doctor, who has maybe handled 500 abortion operations, in that day he may find that these fetuses are revolving in his sight, and he can't shut them out, they are ever before him, the thrust of this passage is not that he committed the

abortion and as a result he went and burned in hell, he receives back what he has done, as it says in Galatians 6 verse 7 and 8, what you sow you reap back, if you have sown to your wicked nature, in the day of resurrection you receive back from that nature, so it makes it absolutely just, you see how just that is, what you do you get back, and that shows up in the law of Moses doesn't it, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, you knock somebody's tooth out, you went to the court and they knocked your tooth out, and that is still true in some Islamic countries, I was just reading where a man knocked somebody's eye out, so they took him into the court and they had a doctor there and they took his eye out, an eye for an eye, in other countries they say horrors, but I wonder if brother

Smither if we had that today would that have an impact on crime, if you knew what you were going to do you were going to get back, I just wonder if that wouldn't have quite an impact and some of these guys that appear in court wouldn't be quite so arrogant, because they would know if they were convicted that what they had done was going to be done to them, and so that's the thrust of this verse, and it's very well spoken in the King James, it says that everyone may receive the things he has done, I believe the King James says, while in the body, now see this is everyone, we all, whether good or bad, so you see it's not a sports award banquet, now people have said this doesn't apply to Christians because we're saved by grace, that's the common teaching in America, you need to know that,

but you see the next verse puts the light of that, because evidently Paul felt that it applied to him, because he says since then we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade men, King James says knowing the terror of the Lord, so Paul is not saying I'm not going to experience this, he's saying I know what it is to fear God, and you better fear God, we're persuading you, you better straighten up, how many can see that that's clearly what it says in 10 and 11, can you see that?

Okay, so now that is part of the vision of the future, and you see what a difference in your actions that will make if on the one hand you picture yourself going to heaven, somehow it will come out in the wash and you'll be up there and you'll sing and shout and dance about, or if you realize that what you have done is going to be done to you in that day, unless, as I said, Christ has made a provision for us, if we are willing to confess our sins now, and turn from them by his help, it is an eternal judgment, it will not be mentioned to us again, let's say you have stolen something, okay, you make restitution, you confess it to God, resolve by his grace, you will never do that again, it's an eternal judgment, it will not be brought up at the judgment seat of Christ, so you see the Lord has made provision for us, okay, everyone will be judged righteously, and even the great white throne judgment that is taught, that's where God the Father judges, it is not true, only Jesus judges, and he will judge on his great white throne, he is the judge of men, as Paul said in Acts, he has appointed a day in which a man by which he will judge the world, and he will give proof by raising him from the dead, so Christ is our judge, as well as our advocate, he is both our advocate and our judge, so if we live righteously, right now, for you and for me, Jesus is serving as our advocate, and he is making intercession for the Father on our behalf, right now, he is doing that for you, because you and I are not perfect, and we do things that displease God, every foolish remark that comes out of our mouth displeases God, and Jesus is up there saying, God strengthen them, God help them, you remember where Jesus told us about the tree, and it didn't bear fruit, didn't bear fruit, and the farmer said cut it down, and the man that worked out there, the field hand said give me another year, let me dig around it, let me cultivate around it,

water it, give it one more year, and if it doesn't bear fruit, then we'll cut it down, that's what Jesus does for us, he makes intercession for us, he is making intercession for us right now, before the throne of the almighty God, but in that day, our advocate will be our judge, we must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ, so he's not, I was going to say he's not the general Jesus that we picture, he is the general Jesus that we picture, but he is also a judge, and he judges what he hears from the Father, and he is not simpy, he is not weak, what he says, he will do, how many know that's true?

I'm trying to give you a vision of the day of the Lord, and the purpose is not to scare you to death, the purpose is so that it will change your behavior, so that tomorrow when you're tempted to fiddle around in the world, you remember, I'm going to see this again someday, unless I get this straightened out with God, this is coming back, and hopefully that will give you the impetus that you need to get serious, and as long as you're breathing, there's hope, as the old saying is, where there's life, there's hope, so as long as you're breathing, God and his love is giving you a chance to repent, repent, to turn, and do what is right, don't make atonement for your own sins by fasting or beating yourself, that was done on the cross, turn, turn, men and brethren, what shall we do? Turn! Hallelujah. Do you think that was good preaching? It's not bad, it's not bad, I've heard worse than that. Keith and Laura, it's good to see you.

Alright, now, we're at, we're talking about the vision of the day of the Lord, the altar that faces east, we're in 1 Thessalonians chapter 4 verse 16, and I want to run this down through chapter 5, because Paul did not write in chapters, and this passage sometimes is taken out of context, as though some special kind of translation or something, it's not, it's talking about the day of the Lord, the day that we're talking about. Alright, now, notice, for the Lord himself will come down from heaven, now this is the coming of the Lord, this is the coming of the Lord, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel, with the trumpet call of God, this is the beginning of the battle of Armageddon, right here, and I want you to notice the dead in Christ, now, right there, that's a prepositional phrase, in Christ, now that means much more than the, our American, you know, say the little thing and do the little thing and you're in, forever. To be in Christ is something that you do every day, every morning when you get up, the first thing you say to the Lord is, Lord, I'm in you, you are king, show me what you want done today.

Don't try to get God to go your way, go God's way. Brother Dow used to say, when you can't get God to go your way, why don't you try going God's way, that's good preaching, so when you get up in the morning, don't try to force the Lord to go your way, say, Lord, what is your will for me today? And say it immediately, before you can start thinking, before you drink your coffee, before you read the paper, because otherwise you've lost it by the time you get to the paper, because there'll be something in there that will depress you and cause you to fret. So before you injure your pure mind with the newspaper, and before your brain is all over the place with your worries and everything else, the minute you wake up, say, Jesus, your will for me today, I am your slave, I am your servant, I am your soldier, Lord, I want to do your will today, and stay with it all day.

That's what it means to be in Christ. It doesn't mean in church, it doesn't mean you've made a theological profession of faith, and you believe Christ was raised from the dead on the third day, that's not what it means to be in Christ, that's in the head up here, that's your knowledge up there, that won't save you. You've got to be in the man, you've got to be in the living Lord Jesus Christ at all times.

Because you don't know when you're going to die, you may think you're going to spend six months in the hospice, you may die before you get home. There'll be a lot of people who will die while I'm preaching here, in this country. A lot of people will die while I'm preaching.

And some of them unexpectedly, they'll have heart failure, lean back in their rocking chair, and they're gone. They never had a chance to repent, do penance, or anything else. And if you're not in Christ at that time, you're not eligible here.

You're not eligible. The Bible is a law book, written by a judge. God is the judge of the whole world, and he's given this authority to Jesus Christ his son.

And this is a legal, the Bible is a legal document. And the Lord will judge from it. This is the law book here.

And there's no monkey business about it, it means exactly what it says. And it says the dead in Christ, people who are living in Christ, which is much higher than the standard in our country. Much higher, much higher.

It means people who have taken up their cross and are following Jesus, have denied themselves, are presenting their body a living sacrifice, fighting the good fight of faith, real Christians. And if you can find two of them in the average church, you're doing well. You're doing well.

The rest of them are nice people, church goers. And sure, God loves every one of them, but they're not in Christ. It means something to be in Christ.

And so, the dead in Christ, you'll find it, the dead in Christ will rise first. Now, what that, that does not mean rise into the air, you understand that. It means rise from the dead.

Like Jesus did on Easter. He didn't come out of the tomb and go up like a rocket. He came out of the tomb, stood on his feet and talked to Mary.

After that, he ate fish. He went, played peek-a-boo and went through doors. He had a wonderful time for 40 days.

And so will we. Wouldn't it be no fun to pop out of your grave and zoom into the air? What fun is that? The fun is when you're raised from the dead, you can stand on the earth and realize you've made it and you're glorified and see all your loved ones that were in Christ and be a wonderful time. Wonderful time.

Wonderful time. That word rise has nothing to do with ascend. It means resurrect.

Resurrect. Risen. He's risen.

Not he rose up in the air. He rose from the dead. Easter is no celebration of the ascension.

It's a celebration that he rose from the dead. So when the Lord comes, every saint from the time of Abel will come out of their graves and stand on the earth. Boy, that will be something to see.

Shining like thousand watt bulbs. This passage is not about the going of the church. It's about the coming of the saints.

Saints will very well at that time outnumber the people on the earth. And they worry about Antichrist. Antichrist will be so scared he won't know whether he's a foot or horseback.

And all the sinners will see all the graves. According to the vision the Adullam children had, the graves opened up with an explosion. The graves exploded.

The saints came out. Oh, hallelujah. Boy, don't you want to be part of that? Well, you've got to be in Christ to be part of that.

The rest of the dead don't live for a thousand years. You've got to be in Christ. But just picture, just picture these shining.

Talk about the light shining from the east to the west. It's coming out of the saints. Glorified.

Standing on their feet. They can't be hurt by Antichrist. Crazy teaching.

We have to be raptured so Antichrist can't touch us. What nonsense that is. You can't be raptured until you're resurrected.

And once you're resurrected, how in the world is Antichrist going to harm you? You could sure harm him in that day. And you shall, but you'll do it as part of the army of the Lord and not on your own. Because these people that are raised won't be like the average church member today that runs around presumptuous and does whatever they feel like, like the people in the Bible.

Jesus healed them and then said, don't tell anybody. So they go out and broadcast it all over the place. Typical church person.

There won't be a group running around with all this power and majesty. There'll be people that are used to doing what God says. You want to be on that group.

You've got to do what God says. You can't be the average person running around doing whatever you feel like. Gossiping when you feel like it.

Retaining anger when you feel like it. Giving people a piece of your mind when you feel like it. You can forget about this.

You won't be anywhere near this. You're still part of the problem. You're not part of the solution.

How many here want to be part of the problem? Well, you are until you get in Christ. I'm not talking about accepting Christ as your personal Savior. I'm talking about how you live.

Amen. Say amen, Emily. I know she agrees with that.

That's why I'm calling her. Now, after that, we who are still alive. Now, you want to realize these people have gone through horrendous times.

So these people who are still alive, I'm talking about the vision of the day of the Lord, will be different from all people who have ever lived. Even in it, though he was translated, he wasn't resurrected because Jesus Christ was the firstborn from the dead. So these people will have an experience that no one else has ever had.

With the possible exception of the saints who came out of their graves when Jesus rose from the dead, and I don't know enough about them to talk about them. So these are a very unique people because they don't get to be a while in heaven before they're resurrected. They're resurrected while they're standing on their feet.

I mean, while they're standing on their feet, their bodily processes are changed from blood-driven life to spirit-driven life. And if you don't think that's going to take faith, isn't going to take real heroes of faith to sustain that kind of change while they don't even get to die decently. You can imagine when you go home tonight, stand by your bed and think, how would I feel if my blood started going and just dissolving and all of a sudden I wasn't an Adamic person anymore, but now I'm just working by the Holy Spirit.

See how you like that. You know, it's like people, they want to die and go to heaven, want to die and go to heaven, but when they get a lump, they decide they want to live for a while. Is that true? That may happen.

That's why the Lord warned us, remember Lot's wife. Don't look back because if you do, you'll lose it. You can lose it.

I know of a girl in a Christian school where my wife taught, and I taught later, that was healed. She was healed of something wrong with her foot. Her legs were way off and she couldn't walk right.

And she went and just prayed for it and she was healed and both of her legs were perfect. And it felt so strange to her that she asked the Lord to take it away and he did. That actually happened in the Christian school.

It scared her so much. It was so different. Completely beyond her experience to have both legs normal.

She asked the Lord to put it back the way it was. It scared her. That actually happened.

And so you could be right in the middle of this process. See, Enoch was translated by faith. You could be in the middle of this process and look back.

Jesus said, remember Lot's wife. So these people will be people who have survived everything that Antichrist can put on the earth. And they've gone through and they've survived in faith and obedience to God.

And they're rare people. These people that are going to go through this experience, I believe, will be a small minority of people left on the earth. And they will be rugged individuals.

They're so full of faith they can stand and pass from humanity into divinity just standing there on their feet. Whoa. The people today talk about jumping up and down.

They refuse to be raptured. Crazy stuff. Alright.

Now, first, the dead that Christ brings back with him will be raised. All these will return with Jesus and then get their bodies. Then, we who are still alive, see, expressions like that tell me that Paul believed the Lord was returning in his own lifetime.

He had no idea 2,000 years was going to go on and his epistles would change the history of the world. He had no idea. You can tell from little things like this that he thought it was going to happen in his lifetime.

We who are still alive and are left will be caught up together. Now, before we're caught up, we have to be changed. And the change is described in 1 Corinthians 15.

In a moment, in the clenching of an eye, this mortal will put on immortality. But see, 1 Corinthians 15 does not talk about going up. Only about the change.

So, the change here is presumed because you can't get caught up until you're changed. Because, you know, you're getting caught up where there's not enough oxygen. Alright.

We'll be caught up together. Now, notice, not in heaven. That's very important because it's taught that the church is going to be caught up to heaven.

The church is not going to be caught up to heaven. That's an important thing to understand. That's the great hope that's preached in the church today.

And it's unscriptural. We are not going to be caught up to heaven. He's not coming.

The Lord is not coming down, returning to the earth, and then turning around and going back to heaven. The people that have come with Him, which will be the greatest part, I mean, those on the earth at that time will be a small minority. The Lord's going to bring with Him the saints of all history.

They're the ones that are important. They've been longing all this time to come back to earth and get their bodies so they can rule on the earth. Do you think they're going to be pleased to then turn around and go back to heaven? That's ridiculous.

Nothing to do with going to heaven. If it meant heaven, they would have said heaven. There's no confusion in the Greek between air and heaven.

None. This word is *eros*, and it means air, like we get airplane from it. The word for heaven is *eros*.

It's an altogether different word. They're never confused. The air is the air.

And we're caught up to meet Him in the air. Now, to make this, you've got to be in Christ. This is not for everybody in this Sister Sue that goes to church.

You've got to be in Christ. And very few American Christians are living in Christ. How do I know? Well, just look at their behavior.

The way they talk. The way they act. Why, if the preacher's ever preached to them, take up your cross and follow the Lord.

And if you don't, you're not a Christian. They'd run out of the church screaming. Never heard it in their life.

I don't know what they think the Lord meant when He's talking about being a disciple, but I guess they feel it doesn't apply to them. That's all I can figure. It doesn't apply to somebody, but not to us.

Because we're all saved by grace. Alright. We'll be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.

Now, that's because He's come down to the level of the air, the Commander-in-Chief, to call to Himself His army. And they will be in bodies, albeit glorified. See, that's what I remember one time reading about Colonel Marion, the Swamp Fox.

And after the war was over, I think it was the Civil War, but I'm not sure. Revolution, I guess it was. After the war, there was some of his men, there was something going on in the village where he lived that was not right.

The hoodlums were getting out of hand, or buggers, or somebody's getting out of hand. And Colonel Marion had all these men that had lived with him and fought out of the swamp. They were living on vinegar.

They had vinegar in their canteens to prevent malaria. And Colonel Marion came out and stood in the middle of the town and he said, Marion's men, to me! And so everyone in there that had been part of his group that lived with him out in the swamps gathered around and then they were able to execute law in the village where he was. And that's what Christ is saying.

My men, my army, to me! And that's the call that will lift us up. It has nothing to do with heaven or mansions or anything. It has to do, this is Armageddon, it's to call up the army to be with the Lord.

And they will form in the air on the white stallions of war. And there they will descend on the earth. But first there will be a softening up operation.

Now if you know how that works, and it worked a lot in World War II, which I'm more familiar with than the subsequent wars, because there was a lot of islands held by the Japanese and they had to be attacked one by one to get the Japanese off those islands. Well, the first thing that happened was the battleships would bombard those islands incessantly. You'd think that nothing could be left living on there.

It was a softening up. And then the LSTs went in with the marines and whoever else went in there after had it been softened up. So before the Lord and his army descend, there's going to be a softening up operation.

God is going to pour out his judgment at the hand of the saints on the earth. And then the Lord and his army will descend. So as we go on, therefore encourage each other with these words.

You see, Paul did not say write chapter 5. He didn't write that. This is all one letter. It goes on to tell more about the same event.

He didn't say, well now I told you about the rapture, now I'm going to tell you about something that happened seven years later. Well, that's what's taught. I mean, it's ridiculous, but that's what's taught.

Now, brothers, about times and dates. What times and dates is he talking about? Well, he just got through describing. For goodness sake, by all the laws of hermeneutics.

Bible interpretation. Now, brothers, about the time. We don't need to write to you, for you know very well that the day of the Lord.

So then, this coming that's described previously, what is it? Day of the Lord. You got it. Everybody got A+.

Alright, now, we'll come like a thief in the night. When people are saying, peace and safety, destruction. You see, immediately that the church is caught, the people in Christ, are caught up in the air to meet the Lord.

Immediately the wrath of God will be poured out. Ten days later, immediately. Immediately.

In the day that Lot went out of Sodom, fire came down. Alright, while people are saying, then destruction will come on them suddenly as labor pains on a pregnant woman and they will not escape. That's talking about two kinds of people.

The people of the world and the people in the churches. There are a lot of verses on that. I told you about the sinners in Zion.

The book of Jude. You remember where it says the Lord comes with a thousand of his saints to execute judgment. All that's talking about sinners in the churches.

So the sinners in the churches, they can take the four steps of salvation until they get to the moon. But, that day will be wrath on them because if they don't live the life. Hear me.

They're going to catch it worse than anybody else. They're going to catch it at the hands of Christ and the saints. What about mercy? Today is the day for mercy.

Today, that's the day of vengeance of our God. Alright, now let's look at 2 Corinthians in the first chapter. Starting with verse 6. 2 Corinthians 1.6. This is a beauty.

This passage completely dismantles the rapture. 2 Corinthians 1.6. Now, of course, it's commonly taught that this is talking about another coming, which is absolute nonsense. It's talking about the same thing to these good Greeks up in Thessalonica.

Alright, now. Now, these people were suffering persecution. Suffering persecution in Thessalonica.

It must be 2 Thessalonians. Did I say 2 Corinthians? 2 Thessalonians. No, 2 Thessalonians 1.6. 2 Corinthians 1.6. I don't know what it's talking about.

But, I do know this one. It's one of my stamping grounds. Alright, now he's talking about the persecution.

He says, all this is evidence that God's judgment is right. What's evidence that God's judgment is right? The fact that they were suffering. The fact that the church was suffering.

He says, this is so you'll be worthy of the kingdom. You have to be worthy of the kingdom. And you get that way by enduring problems.

You can't coast in on flowery beds at ease. I got that expression from Tom Sawyer. That's in Tom Sawyer.

He's quoting an old hymn. Though some may sail through bloody seas. Alright, now.

God is just. Alright, now here's people on earth that are suffering. And this passage gives the answer to that suffering.

It's talking about God's response to their suffering. Okay? How is God going to respond to the sufferings of people? Of Christians? Okay? He responds by paying back trouble. To those who trouble you.

That's how he responds. Alright, not by taking us off the earth. And give relief.

Now this is the relief that Paul is offering to the persecuted saints. This is the relief that Paul is offering. The relief will happen.

As he says to us as well. So he was figuring him and Silas and Barnabas and the rest of them. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven.

And blazing fire with his powerful angels. That's the relief. It is not taking the church out.

It is coming to judge the wicked. Does that? Yes? In verse 8 where he says he will punish those who do not know God. And do not obey the gospel.

Now is that the world or is it the church people or the saints? It's everyone. All sinners. Do you remember what we read in Isaiah 33? I think the sinners in Zion.

See the sinners in Zion. Woe unto the sinners in Zion. See, remember what the Lord said.

Those who did not know his will. And did things worthy of lashes shall be beaten with few lashes. But those who did know his will and still did things worthy of lashes.

Shall be beaten with many lashes. So it will come the hardest on the hypocrites in the churches. And by hypocrites I don't mean people who aren't necessarily saved.

I mean people who are kind of living a double life. In other words they come, they listen to the message, everything is fine. But they are not living it.

The whole thing is a farce. It's like a double kind of a game. I mean we've got to be so transparent.

We've got to be living like we're talking. You know, we can't be living a different life. We have to be, you know, what you see is what you get.

What you see is what you get. You can't be doing two different kind of lives. Oh yeah, Brother Thompson, that was wonderful preaching.

I'll have to get my vestments. I'll get my vestments. My scarf.

Whatever else I need. Go stand by the door and shake people's hands as they leave after Sunday morning. Oh, Brother Thompson, that was a wonderful message.

And then they go home. And before they even get home, they're in all kinds of carnality. No spirit of God.

The kids are screaming. They're all screaming at each other. And they go home and they're living just like anybody in the world.

Hey, it could work. That's how it was called in Christ. Democracy.

Isn't that wonderful? Aren't you glad I said that? So I don't stand at the door and shake hands and have people tell me a wonderful sermon. I don't want to hear about any wonderful sermons. If it's a wonderful sermon, they're going to go home and do it.

Right? And save the praise for God. Alright, now. This will happen.

The relief will come to the people by the revelation of Christ from heaven. Not by taking them out. But by coming.

Do you see how this completely dismantles the teaching of the rapture? Completely dismantles it. Alright. He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

They will be punished with everlasting destruction. And that's an interesting expression. That everlasting destruction.

Because it means there's no rehabilitation. Everlasting destruction. And shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power.

Now you don't want to be on the business end of that thing. And I don't want to be on the business end of that thing. That's a true vision of the coming of Christ.

See, you say, well I died and I went to heaven before then. Yes, but you're coming back. In your body.

And you will be facing the Lord Jesus. You can't hide in heaven. And you can't hide in the grave.

You can't curl up on the white satin in your cherry wood casket and hide. You're going to come out. I said that because several years ago, Audrey and I went down and picked out our caskets.

I had to picture in my mind all those beautiful caskets. Wonderful. But you can't stay there.

You're after 50. Make some plans for your death. Get a plot and get your stuff so it won't all hit you at once.

Well, that's all free. Alright, now. On the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people.

See, the saints will be involved in this. He'll be with them and in them. The light will be coming out from them.

And they will be approachable to the peoples of the earth that God saves. He won't be approachable, but his people will be approachable. He will be in them.

And to be marveled at among all those who have believed, this includes you because you believed our testimony. Alright, now. Is that passage, is that clear to you? Alright, now here we are.

Let's say that, yes. Do you think that there's two groups of people there? Those that are the holy people and those that are marveling who have believed? Or is that the same group? I would, you could think of them as two different, but I think you'd be kind of stretching it. If you just take the flow of language.

It seems, you have to be careful when you're dealing with prepositions. Because sometimes they're calls, judgment calls. Other times they're not.

Like in and into. Remember it says, be baptized in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Well you'll find in, I think the NIV says, be baptized into the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

So, you've got to be careful and not rest too heavily on prepositions. Like at and in. I would say, I don't see a real, glorified in His people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed.

Well, you get then into an elite group, I don't know. I would say do with this as you will. For myself, I wouldn't push that.

Alright, now let's say that we come into hard times in America. Let's say that we have a real financial crash and the Christians are blamed. There had to be a scapegoat.

And so they'll probably blame the Jews and the Christians. And we really have great persecution. Or let's say the day comes, for example.

Now we see that Holland has legalized full marriage for homosexuals. Alright, now we see in the public schools that I see in some schools now that they will not pass out Boy Scout brochures. And the Boy Scouts can't use the school anymore for their meetings because they discriminate against gays.

Now, how far are we from the time where a church cannot discriminate against gays? How far are we from that? Well, not quite. Because, see, there's constitutional issues raised there. Because a minister can go into the court.

See, there's a difference between a statute and the constitution. Now, the judge might say, we might say, well, we will not allow a homosexual to be on a council, for example. And the judge says, well, according to the state statutes, you have to do that.

And then I say, but this is my conviction based on everything I believe. And it makes a difference. Constitutionally, it makes a difference.

Then they have to judge it from a constitutional standpoint. And right now, the way the wind blows, we could get away with that and say, well, that's against the Bible. It's against everything we stand for.

Homosexuality is condemned in the Old Testament and the New very vigorously. And to waive that point, we're not preaching the Bible anymore, which is the essence of what we're doing. It gets down to points of law that are very fundamental to freedom and to the constitution.

So we're not there yet, but it's conceivable that in the future, every governmental institution will have to give all access to homosexual people. I'm not doubting homosexual people. To me, it's just a sin like any other sin.

You can be delivered. But I'm talking about legalizing that or legalizing man-boy relationships or legalizing incest, which are on the drawing board, by the way. And after that, it can get worse.

It can get worse. It can get into animus and some other things. Alright, well, see, in theory, they're no different from homosexuality.

It's just what the traffic will bear at this time. But it could very well be within ten years that you have to show that you have a certain profile, a certain ratio of homosexuals to heterosexuals on your church council. Yes? Pastor, we're as close to that as just a reinterpretation of the constitution and setting up those two clauses and saying one is going to have precedence over the other.

Wow. Now, okay, so what happens? This pastor goes to jail. Or maybe the worst would happen.

We would lose our tax relief. And your donations would not be deductible and the church would have to pay taxes. Maybe that's the worst.

But if it got down to a criminal case against the pastor, well, this one's ready to go to jail. Well, I don't want to go to jail. I know things go on in there that I can think of other things I'd rather do.

But you can't waive your convictions. If you waive your convictions, you're nowhere. You're just a man with an appetite.

There's nothing in there. And so then these words of Paul begin to mean something. Then it makes a difference whether we're looking forward to a rapture or whether we're looking for the Lord to come and

put an end to this thing.

And also it's involved in us. Am I prepared when the Lord comes? Or am I going to be on the business end of this thing? So really a true vision of the coming of the Lord ought to make a difference in how we live. But we may not be that far from persecution.

By no means. I can see it like a train on the edge of town. Any questions? All right, shall we stand then? You've all been very good, so you get A in deportment.

And A plus in cognitive studies. Oh, hallelujah. Let's praise the Lord.

Father, we come unto you in Jesus' name. Oh, hallelujah. Hallelujah.

We give you thanks, Father, in Jesus' name. We give you thanks, Father, in Jesus' name. Praise your name, Lord.

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