

1Tim 24-04-03b

Let's resume our study now. And we are endeavoring to have the word of the Lord speak to us about how we interact with the human race. Pretty much all of our activities, tasks, assignments, responsibilities, involve other people.

And knowing the level of consideration, the obligation, the commands that God gives us relative to various people is extremely helpful to having a healthy set of goals and values and priorities that will reflect the glory of God because they will reflect the image of God in Jesus Christ. One of the mistakes that is made, I think, in the modern day church, the mainstream church, is first of all, believing the image of God is in every man. All human beings are created in the image of God and therefore deserve some sort of special dispensation and a particular kind of mercy or patience, or it just all gets jumbled up and there's no discernment in terms of what should be done.

And secondly, talking about Jesus Christ, he is portrayed almost universally today as Jesus' friend of sinners. That sin's not a big deal. And Jesus partied with prostitutes and hung out with drunks and tax collectors and even Romans and Pharisees.

And Jesus was no respecter of persons, quote unquote. He would spend time with just any old body and it is the devil's own lie. Two problems with this are A, they are only looking at the Lord Jesus in the gospels and selectively even there.

They don't go to the passages where Jesus says, when the son of man comes and sits on the glorious throne in the kingdom, he's going to gather the sheep on one side and the goats on the other. And what happens to the goats? They don't want to talk about that. It's the gentle Jesus with a child on his lap and talking to the woman caught in adultery, neither do I condemn you.

And Zacchaeus, I'm coming to your house and I'm eating with Simon the Pharisee and I'm healing all who come. And it's just indiscriminate. Jesus just loves everybody and doesn't have a mean word to say.

They conveniently forget the woes to the Pharisees and the hypocrites. And if they do talk about it, it's just, well, we just want to be sure that we're not these stuffed shirt Pharisees that are looking down on sinners. We want to be accepting of sinners.

Calling out sin wasn't the Pharisees problem. Failing to see the sin in themselves was the problem. It wasn't that Jesus said you're wasting too much time looking at sin, it's that the Pharisees were looking in the wrong direction.

And I would argue that in the same way that people want to look outward and deal with problems on the outside instead of dealing with the lumber that is in their own eye, looking for the image of God outside instead of cultivating the reflection of the image of

Jesus Christ, who is the image of the invisible God on the inside and to be Christ-like and to recognize that Jesus Christ is not one-dimensional and he is not only the suffering servant. Think about the question that John the Baptist asked when he was in prison. Are you he that should come or do we look for another? I know you are the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

I know you are humble, lowly, riding on a donkey. I know that you are not putting on airs. You are not setting up a kingdom.

You are not domineering and perpetrating judgment. But what did John say at the outset of his ministry, John the Baptist? When you read the early part of the gospels, John the Baptist came, camel's hair coat, locusts and wild honey. And what did he say? The ax is laid at the root of the tree.

He is going to burn the chaff with unquenchable fire. He's gonna gather wheat into his barn. There is a division.

There is a separation. There is a distinction. And Jesus didn't gather the chaff and say, if I just put you in the barn with the wheat, you'll miraculously turn into more wheat.

I'll do a miracle and turn chaff. You turn stones and bread, try turning chaff into wheat. That'd be a great miracle.

Doesn't happen. How about the parable of the wheat and the tares? Let them both grow together until the harvest. Jesus didn't try to separate tares in his first coming.

But what's gonna happen at his second coming? He will send the angels and they will pull the tares out and gather them in bundles and do what? Burn them with fire. The goat's judgment is fire. The tares judgment is fire.

Nobody wants to talk about the fiery judgments that the Lord Jesus himself spoke of. And it is based on discernment. There is a difference in people.

That's why we went to Romans chapter one in the first session. There are those who are responsive, who are people of faith, and there are those who suppress the truth in unrighteousness. And God does not bless them.

He does not enfold them. He does not give them the power to become sons of God. He doesn't enter them into union with Christ and make them body and bride of Christ.

He doesn't pour out his spirit upon them. He doesn't give them a gift and a baptism and an indwelling and a sealing and a filling. He doesn't sanctify.

He doesn't provide the promise of eternal life and eternal salvation to those people. What does he do? He turns them over to what they have chosen. And in Romans chapter two, even believers, even those who have tasted of the heavenly gift and the good word

of God are in Hebrews chapter six, a field that brings thorns and briars is fit for burning and is near to a curse.

It isn't everybody will be happy over there. And when you get to Romans chapter two, and Paul says, those who are hard of heart in verse five, in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart, you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath. And you are saints.

Look at Romans 1:16. I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. It is the power of God for deliverance to everyone who believes, the Jew first and also the Greek.

In it, the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith. The just shall live by faith. He specifies his audience in verse seven of that chapter to all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called saints.

You are saints and you are called. That's he is talking to believers. This is not an evangelistic book.

It's not the Roman road for unbelievers to arrive at salvation. And when he says you, do you think this, oh man, in chapter two, verse three, that you who judge others practicing such things and doing the same, that you will escape the judgment of God. You, oh man, doing these things will not escape the judgment of God.

It's not love and acceptance. It isn't wooing and pleading and trying to love someone into favor and into the kingdom and into faith and into obedience. It is judgment.

Do you despise the riches of his goodness, forbearance and long suffering? This is Jesus in the first advent. Goodness, forbearance and long suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance. Repent for the kingdom is in hand.

John the Baptist and the Lord Jesus, that's what they led with. Change your mind. In accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart, you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God who will render to each one according to his deeds.

Eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality. But to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth but obey unrighteousness, what are they going to receive in the day of wrath? Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish on every soul of man who does evil, whether they are Jew or Greek. And it'll be the Jew first.

Those who the Jews thought they were favored, they enjoyed a special status. No harm would come to them. We are children of Abraham.

It'll come to the Jew first. There will be glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works

what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. There is no partiality with God.

And he goes on to talk about conscience and whether they know the law or not. But in Romans chapter 12, let love be without hypocrisy. Bless those who persecute.

Repay no one evil for evil in verse 17. And you get to the all men section beginning in verse 17, 18, and 19. Beloved, do not avenge yourselves.

And once he's talking about outsiders, this continues into chapter 13. Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. There is no authority except from God and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.

And we saw this in connection with our First Sympathy chapter three study on Sundays, that this continues Paul's exhortation to believers in dealing with those who are outside. Your government is not typically the one and others, generally not your neighbor either. So verse five of chapter 13, therefore you must be subject not only because of wrath, but also for conscience sake.

This is why you pay taxes. They are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing. Render therefore to all their due.

Render to Caesar the things which are Caesar's. Render taxes to whom taxes are due, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor. Notice these are official aspects.

We render fear and honor to those in authority, not because the individual is a really good guy or is moral or particularly praiseworthy in the conduct of their private life. What do they do in their office? And the worst scallywag in the world, say Andrew Jackson getting elected to the presidency, if he's the president, he is deserving of honor. And you call him Mr. Clinton or Mr. Bush or Mr. Obama or Mr. Trump or Mr. Biden, not because those individuals have or lack in a qualities that are admirable, but because they are the president.

And the president, Marines will play hail to the chief and will stand at guard and salute and do their duties. It doesn't matter who the individual is, the respect and honor and fear are due the office. The office is ordained by God.

The government is ordained by God. And if somebody somehow by hook or by crook gets into that office, they are now in the office, so deal with it. Fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor, obedience to whom obedience, tax to whom tax.

And those who jeer and mock and deride and throw things at sitting presidents and so on, if they are believers, they are greatly out of line. Any unbeliever can mock and deride and post unkind cartoons and so on. Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ should never do that.

What we do should look good to those who are outside and not polarized based on something as silly as politics instead of the central issue of God and His righteousness and His kingdom and His son, who has paid the penalty for sin, has overcome evil and has enabled us to overcome evil with good. Not with derision, not with mockery, not with lampooning things, with good. And it isn't good to mock.

Good comes from God. God is not mocked and God does not mock others. God predicts and proclaims judgment on those who are offensive.

Verse eight, chapter 13, owe no one anything except to love one another. Our obligation is to the one another's. He who loves another has fulfilled the law because you've done more than loving your neighbor.

If you love one another, you have fulfilled and exceeded the law. The law says, love your neighbor as yourself. Christ says, love one another as I have loved you.

It's higher. And if you fulfill the one another love, you have fulfilled and exceeded the law. Love does no harm.

Verse 10, to a neighbor does no harm. Don't harm their reputation. Don't backbite, don't gossip.

Don't poison their pets because they're noisy. Don't talk behind their back. Don't reveal confidences that you know because you're near at hand, you can see across the fence or into the window.

Love does no harm to a neighbor. Therefore, love is the fulfillment of the law and love for one another is an even higher standard. Verse 11, pertinent for us now.

Do this knowing the time. Now it is high time to awake out of sleep. Now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.

The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore, let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. Any unbeliever can do the works of darkness.

Only believers can put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly as in the day. What we do can be done in broad daylight and does not engender criticism, is not spoken of as evil.

It's out in the open. It is transparent. Walk with the armor of light in the daytime.

Not in revelry, not in drunkenness. This is any kind of excessive influence. You can be a junkie for entertainment or for hobbies or for almost anything.

Anything that taken to excess begins to define us and becomes our prominent characteristic. Oh, he's a Dallas Cowboys fan. He's got stuff all over his car.

He never misses a game. He's got season tickets. He's this, he's that.

He's the other. Anything that overwhelms our identity as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ is drunkenness. Be not drunk with anything because it's excess.

Anything done to excess, let your moderation be known to all. The Lord is near. The Lord is at hand.

Moderation in all things. Not in revelry or drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust. And this is any sensual pleasures, whether it's too much visual entertainment.

I've got to see every new, I don't know, whatever it might be, 3D movie that comes out, or there are people who are just hooked on entertainment. And this is the lust of the flesh. This is gratification through stimulation of the senses.

Some people just want to vacate. They want to have vacations every which way. I want to see the next waterfall.

I want to see a mountain. I want to fly over this. I want to visit that.

Moderation is great. Creation is wonderful. Rivers and waterfalls and nature especially, even more so than the quote unquote wonders that man has built, to see the beauty that still survives in creation is a wonderful thing.

But in moderation. People who devote all of their resources to getting out and away and getting on a cruise ship and getting on a plane and going somewhere and seeing things, that's excess. That's drunkenness.

That is catering to the desires of the flesh. And we can do it at home. We can, anything that occupies our mind more than a moderate amount of time.

All things are lawful in moderation. Excess in anything can become a sin, anything. Ludeness and lust, not in strife and envy.

If we do something that causes others to be jealous or if we become envious of others because of something they have, something they do, something they have achieved, some aspect of their life and we say, oh, what I couldn't do if I had that. Strife, anything that causes conflict, leave it go, let it out. It's not worth it, especially if it causes division in the one another category, but also division among neighbors.

If our good is spoken of as evil. Put on the Lord Jesus Christ. Notice, do you want the image of God? You wanna make an issue out of the image of God? Put on Jesus Christ.

Put on Christ, have him indwell and cover us on the outside. If he is inside and outside, what is the issue gonna be in people's minds? Jesus Christ, not us. If we are transparent, if the light of our body is our eye and our eye is on Jesus, the author and finisher of our

faith and inside and outside our lives reflect Jesus Christ, whatever we are doing, whatever we are not doing.

I'm really meditating and musing on the idea of the lamp that sits on the lamp stand. I am often tempted to try to get busy doing something so that I feel like I'm serving the Lord when if Jesus Christ is present inside me and if I have put on Christ on the outside in just the daily habituated tasks and responsibilities and opportunities, if Christ infuses me on the inside and on the outside, all I really have to do is sit there on the lamp stand. He is the foundation.

My house is built on the rock. The house doesn't have to move around. The house doesn't have to wave a wing and say, look at me, I'm such a great house.

The house just sits there. When a storm comes, it survives. It's solid, it's immovable, it's founded on the rock.

The lamp sits on the lamp stand and all it has to do is shine. The light comes from an amazing kind of energy that is provided from elsewhere. We're an earthen vessel and yet we have treasure in these earthen vessels.

It's the treasure that does the shining and the reflecting and has the value. We just attempt to hold it, attempt to let its light shine. Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, make no provision for the flesh and its lusts, its desires.

If you put on Christ, make no provision. This means if something trips you up, if you get out of fellowship watching the news, quit watching the news. If you get out of fellowship looking at somebody's Facebook feed, disfavor it.

I looked up two or three articles because I realized there were some things that were kind of incendiary for my soul in reading them. And I thought, well, how can you not read this and yet not telegraph to the person, well, you've been blocked, I hate you, I defriend you, I unassociate or whatever else. Well, read the article.

There are ways that you can not have to read what somebody is posting, but you haven't thrust them into the outer darkness. You're not calling them a heathen and a tax collector, you just don't have to read it. And what? You don't have to read it anyway.

Well, if you wanna see the positive things, there are people who post wonderful things, some of whom are listening to me right now. I love seeing beautiful photographs and verses of scripture that are put with them. They're edifying, it's speaking the truth to one or another in love.

People who say, oh, by the way, here's a birthday, here's an anniversary. I mean, there's good things that come from it, but in the midst of it, here's a punch bowl full of wonderful, refreshing items, and then somebody spoils it and defiles it with their political

screed or their animosity towards something or someone. And I think I would just like to subtract that out.

Eschew what is evil and cling to what is good. There are ways you can do that because we are to put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh. So this brings us now in our closing few minutes to another subject, and this is the likeness of God.

Remember in Genesis, it says Adam was made in God's image and after his likeness. What is the likeness exactly? Because this is also put forward, especially when you get to James chapter three, verse nine. Turn over to James.

This is actually one of the counter arguments, the idea that everyone has the image of God. And if you look at verse nine, it's talking about the untamable tongue. No man can tame the tongue.

It's an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. With it, we bless our God and father, and with it, we curse men who have been made in the similitude of God or the likeness of God. The word similitude in Greek here is *homoiotēs*.

It's got the *homo* idea in the front, something that is the same, like homogenous. It is the *homoiotēs* of God. So you curse men who are made in the similitude of God or in the likeness of God.

And so they say, see, all men are made in the similitude of God, and therefore you shouldn't curse anyone. We resort to the three Cs of Bible interpretation and look at the context. Chapter three, verse one.

My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment. That fills me with foreboding. We all stumble in many things.

If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body. Indeed, we put bits in horses' mouths that they may obey us, and we turn their whole body, look at ships. They are large, driven by fierce winds.

They are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires. Even so, the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire can kindle.

The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is set among our members and is able to defile the whole body, set on fire the course of nature, is set on fire by hell. Every kind of beast and bird, reptile and creature of the sea is tamed and has been tamed by mankind.

No man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. With it, we bless our God and Father.

All of this is a warning to my brethren. Be careful when you talk. The first instance of the

use of speech is teaching and seeking to communicate with others and to be careful.

Let not many of you become teachers knowing that teachers receive a stricter judgment. We all stumble. If anyone does not stumble in word, he's a perfect man able also to bridle the whole body.

This is discipline in communication of the things of God to fellow believers. This is the context. It seems to wander far afield and there are certainly general principles that everyone with an unbridled tongue can create all kinds of destruction.

We talked about some examples of that on the break where people will say something allegedly founded on science or based on research or based on official policies and it can influence huge numbers of people and some of those people can die as a result of listening to a word that might have been well-intentioned but doesn't really reflect fact and because of that or because it's spoken in the interest of what someone thinks is a greater good, it actually causes harm, injury and even death. The principle applies throughout the world. Anyone who can control their tongue, I used to be amazed at politicians being interviewed.

It had nothing to do with their Christianity or anything else but there would be reporters and others who would try to inflame them and get them to say something untoward, to make them angry and get them to speak out of turn and they were very disciplined and they would not let themselves be goaded into saying something that they would later regret and I admired the discipline of the tongue in recognizing that this is a strategy to get them on film and get a soundbite that can be used against them and anyone who disciplines their tongue, you figure they are thinking and acting in a disciplined way in other areas of their life. No man can tame the tongue. Notice it says no man can tame the tongue.

It is an unruly evil full of deadly poison so if James is encouraging my brethren to bridle the tongue, what is the only way the tongue can be bridled? If no man can do it then by implication, by process of elimination, it takes the power of God in our lives to bring the tongue and the rest of the body into subjection. When Paul talks in Romans 13 about moderation and discipline and not indulging the lust of the flesh, we don't have the power to do this in and of ourselves. It is only the power of God that can come into our life and do this and this is why he picks up in verse nine here, with the tongue we bless our God and father.

We, we who, we brethren, everything in between verse one and verse nine is addressed to brethren. There may be examples and harmonies and similarities out in the world but he is talking about in the family, in endeavoring to love one another and love God, you can't bless God and curse someone made in the similitude of God. How can someone be made into the similitude of God? Remember that description that Paul gave in Romans of what people who suppress the truth and unrighteousness look like? That is not a

similitude of God who is being cursed here in James 3.9. Brothers, only believers can begin to recover the similitude of God.

Read the description in Romans one, read the descriptions elsewhere of those who suppress the truth, who reject Christ, who reject God, even believers who don't avail themselves of the power of God that comes into their lives through the spirit and the word. That is not similar to God in any way, shape or form. Unthankful, unholy, degenerate, corrupt, defiled, perpetrating heinous evils on themselves and others day in and day out.

That is not the similitude of God. Who is James talking to in 3.9? Believers who are bad-mouthing one another. And what does it mean to curse someone? Remember when Jesus was talking about he who says to his brother, thou fool, who says to his brother, Raha, which is an insult, his brother, speaking ill against a brother.

And the idea of blessing and cursing here, we can't actually invoke a blessing that is gonna fall upon God and bless him, can we? Nor can we invoke a curse that is gonna fall on a fellow human being, much less a believer, and that curse is going to take place. In rare instances, prophets and others activated by the spirit of God would speak an action of God, go up old bald head, and next thing you know, there are bears. But that's not indicative of anything that we perpetrate.

Out of the same mouth, proceed blessings and cursings. My brethren, my brethren, my brethren, these things should not be so. Your love for God should be expressed in love for one another.

Your love for God, you bless God. You can't be really blessing God if you are cursing one another. Your love for one another is gonna be a reflection of your love for God.

And you have a hypocritical mouth. You have a lying mouth. You have a tongue that is set on fire by the flames of hell.

If you claim that you love God and you're all about the word of God and the spirit of God and you love the Lord Jesus and all the rest of it, but as for my fellow believer in the one another camp, oh no, that's a whole different thing. And there's backbiting and division and dissension. This is in complete harmony.

What James says here is completely harmonious with what the Holy Spirit tells us through the apostle Paul about divisions and dissensions in the body and that it should not be so. Cursing others, demeaning and diminishing others, ignoring others, failing to have sacrificial love for one another, loving them as Christ loved us. Does the spring send forth fresh water and bitter from the same opening? Can a fig tree bear olives or grapes? Grapevine bear figs? Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom.

But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, and demonic. Context, context, context.

Before and after this idea, men made in the similitude of God, this is talking about those near at hand, those in the fellowship. Where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there. The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.

The fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace. I look this up and this is our closing thought. If you go back to the Beatitudes, blessed are the peacemakers, that is Irenaeus.

It's made into one word, into a noun. It's the very same combination here. And all of the hue and cry that is made about, we need to be lobbying for peace and calling out genocide in Gaza and boo on Putin and hurray for Ukraine and getting involved in trying to make peace.

What does the Bible say about believers being peacemakers and being blessed because they are peacemakers? You start with what Jesus says in Matthew chapter five. And what does he say? Blessed are the peacemakers, they shall be called sons of God. Peacemakers, sons, they shall be called sons of God.

If you're in the image and after the likeness, it's because you are a son, right? So in what sense can you make peace and become a son of God, a child of God in so doing? Who did the Lord Jesus Christ make peace between? Did he bring about peace between Romans and Israelites or Romans and anyone else? Did he bring about peace between the Israelites and anybody else? He's the son of God. What kind of peace did he make? It's right here in James. James chapter three, verse 18.

The fruit of righteousness is sown in peace. The karpos, the fruit is sown. Spiro, S-P-E-I-R-O, it is sown.

It is planted. The fruit of righteousness is planted in peace. Not in conflict, not in cursing, not in judging, not in backbiting, not in disharmony among the brethren.

The fruit of righteousness is sown. What does that mean? You may not see the fruit of righteousness immediately when you maintain the peace, when you keep the peace, when you refuse to get into conflict and division, when you refuse to let your tongue become an agent of disharmony and disunion in the body. You endeavor to keep the spirit of unity in the bond of peace.

You work quietly with your hands. You're dependent on no one. You rejoice with those who rejoice.

You weep with those who weep. And you sow the seed in peace. The fruit of righteousness, notice it's not the seed of righteousness.

Righteousness is going to fruit later when you sow in peace by those who make peace. Making peace is sowing the seed that will produce righteousness, God's righteousness. This is why I suggest you put James 3, 18 next to Matthew chapter five and verse, I think it's six, flipped away from it.

It's verse nine, blessed are the peacemakers. They shall be called sons of God. You can put Matthew 5, 9 next to James 3, 14.

You can put James 3, 14, 3, 18 actually, 3, 18. Cross reference each one of those. That is peace.

That is righteousness. And it's not an abstraction. It's not political.

It's not aimed at those who are outside. As much as it is up to us, live peaceably with all men, Paul says. As much as it is up to us.

It's not always up to us, but as far as it is peaceably. Give no occasion for good to be spoken of as evil. Don't be confrontational.

So how practical are these scriptures for establishing our priorities and the goal we have in our social interactions and our contact with others? It is very easy to identify, isn't it? Where these points of application have traction and guide us and enable us to truly reflect the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. And to be a reminder to those who are outside that there is not only the pursuit of righteousness and peace, but there is also the impending judgment of God that will also be brought about by that same Jesus Christ. And to stand for his standards and to represent the basis for that judgment and to disassociate and to separate from the things that are going to bring down the wrath of God.

He that hath not the son shall not see life. The wrath of God abides on him. And those who actively and verbally reject the Lord Jesus and are vocal about it, we are to stand aside, stand away.

That's what Jesus did. That's what we should do. And it makes an issue.

If people think there's no problem, oh, Christianity is just kind of a nice philosophy. I'm like Richard Dawkins. I just think it's kind of a happy set of ethics and moral values and it creates a nice environment.

And all you people love each other and love me, but I'm not gonna enter into any of the faith that brings the power of God into situations and energizes that Christian environment. In fact, I think it's all a bunch of bunk and I'm gonna mock people who

believe it and constantly deride them and so on. How is anyone gonna know that that is not okay if nobody says there is a coming judgment? If nobody says what you are doing is wrong and it is gonna be judged by God and I do not want to be a partaker in your judgment so I am standing back because what you're doing is wrong.

If Jesus doesn't define what's wrong, what's the point of the cross? What's the point of dying for sin if sin's no big deal? And you ought to see the histrionic contortions and gymnastics that postmodern Christianity goes through to explain the cross. Well, that was just God showing us how awful we are to each other and Jesus put himself up on a cross to show us how bad we are so that we would decide we should be nicer, that we don't want to do that. Sin, righteousness, and judgment are the mission of the Holy Spirit to the world and we are filled with the Holy Spirit.

If the Holy Spirit leaves when we leave so that the man of sin can be revealed, then where is the Holy Spirit convicting of sin, righteousness, and judgment if not in and through us? If people don't know anything about sin and righteousness and judgment from us, who are they gonna learn it from? The Holy Spirit only resides in us. He's not floating. He's in us.

He speaks with our tongue. People hear him through our voice and the light that shines from our life. And other than the knowledge of God that is put in man's heart and the testimony that gives two or three witnesses in creation, but if they have to wait for creation to speak, it's never gonna come out that Jesus Christ is the Savior, the Son of God, and the only way to the Father.

Creation can help people understand that there is a God. Well, what does that God want? Is he interested? Is he involved? It takes people who can speak the truth in love and people who can live the truth in a way that shines the light and causes others to see how we live our lives and glorify the Father, glorify him by coming to him and accepting his Son. No other way.

Well, we'll close here in a word of prayer and we'll pick up our study this coming Sunday morning. Father, thank you for the clear guidance that you give us on how we should live. We're not in the dark.

We're not left without a guide. We thank you for your Holy Spirit and his active ministry in our hearts. We pray that as we reflect on what we've seen in the pages of scripture this evening, that the Holy Spirit will help us to see how we can apply it tomorrow and the next day and the next and truly represent the Lord Jesus and through him be true children of yours in this world, fit not only to speak the truth in this age and to reflect your glory now, but also to be qualified to be brought into your presence and be acceptable in your sight presented by your Son, the Lord Jesus on that wonderful day when he comes to take us home.

We pray it in Jesus' name. Amen.