

01-06-03b Ecclesiastes

That song that Dan just played, The Love of God, is one of my favorites. I have a recording of that done, obviously, by the Statesman Quartet way back in the late 50s. But the words, if you're not familiar, it says, the love of God is greater far than tongue or pen can ever tell.

It goes beyond the highest star and reaches to the lowest hell. The guilty pair bowed down with care. God gave his son to win.

His erring child he reconciled and pardoned from his sin. Then the chorus says, oh, love of God, how rich and pure, how measureless and strong. It shall forevermore endure the saints' and angels' song.

And then the third verse says, could we with ink the ocean fill and were the skies of parchment made, were every stalk on earth a quill and every man a scribe by trade. To write the love of God above would drain the oceans dry, nor could the scroll contain the whole, though stretched from sky to sky. And then they, of course, sing the chorus again.

But it's a really terrific song. And the particular album that that recording comes from is one that the Statesman did with the Anita Kerr singers. And so you have this choir of sort of ladies' voices singing accompanied behind them.

It's very beautiful. And maybe I'll play it for you one of these days. Let's return to our study now in Ecclesiastes.

I just want to say I really enjoyed Dan's rendition of that. He mentioned it was an arrangement by Fred Bach and that Mr. Bach can really arrange some great music. But let's return now to Ecclesiastes chapter three.

We're grappling with this rather complex set of statements that Solomon makes because he is transitioning from talking about the temporary nature of life to the fact that it is possible to transcend the mundane and the earthly. It's not just the things that you accomplish. This is one of the biggest problems in our culture and in particular in our Christianity today is we tend to fall into this same trap of measuring by accomplishments, measuring by results.

If you have a revival, how many people came? How many got saved? How many walked the aisle? If you start up a ministry, well, how many have benefited? Who sent in and got your materials or ordered your videotape? Or how many watched your program or came to your rally at the stadium? How many doors did you knock on? How many people did you invite? How many people boarded the church bus or whatever else it might be? Missionaries, when they come back to give a report are often under pressure to try to demonstrate some sort of tangible results. Well, we've been out in the bushlands of Africa and we built seven new churches and we got this many books and this many Bibles and we want to quantify. We want to show that a task has been

accomplished.

Something has been performed that you can point to and see. This is a tangible good. And what Solomon is getting at here is it isn't what you do, it's why you do it that counts.

There is a time and there is a purpose. This reminds me of a parallel presentation in our section of Luke. We're in Luke chapter 11 and Jesus is giving the woes to the Pharisees.

He says, woe to you Pharisees, you clean the outside of the bowl and the dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness. He says, you tithe your mint and your rue, which are these spices and vegetable type edibles that were not even in the law classified as being tithed. The grain that was supposed to be tithed were food grains, oats, barley, wheat.

This was above and beyond what the law specified. And they thought, well, if it's good to tithe your oats and your wheat and your barley, how much more so to tithe your mustard seeds and your mint and the rue and these other little tiny things that were just garnishes for your food, spices for the food. And they wanted to be very meticulous.

And Jesus said, you have missed, you've passed by the love of God and mercy. You've missed these things. And he said, you should have done the latter without missing the former.

Don't fail to do your tithing and don't fail to be obedient to the law, but you've missed the motivation, which is the love of God and the desire for mercy and loving kindness. You've passed those by and you've done these outward things, but you missed the inner motivation. Jesus said, you need the works.

He doesn't say stop tithing your mint and your rue, even though it wasn't necessary to tithe those. But he says, it's okay if you want to keep doing that. You should have done those without missing the point, which is agape, the love of God.

And we have the same idea here where you have these tasks and Solomon says, there is a time to do these tasks. We don't just fold our hands and try to think deep thoughts to please God. We have a time to reap and a time to sow.

We have the time to give birth and a time to die and to kill and heal and all the other things that are mentioned in the first eight verses. But he says to just look at those things and do them and even to find your own satisfaction in them is not enough. You're going to end up grasping the wind.

You're going to end up with vapor. He says, there's nothing good because whether, this is verse 12, whether rejoicing or doing good in his life, also every man who eats and drinks and sees good in all his labor. That's nothing good.

There's nothing good in that from the divine perspective. It may be good from the man's point of

view, but man's point of view doesn't prevail at the judgment seat. God is not going to appoint a jury of your peers to evaluate your life at the judgment seat.

That's, I remember a song by Paul Simon 20 or 25 years ago, where it was still crazy after all these years. And at the end of the song, he says, I sit around and I watch the cars go by. I fear I'll do some damage some fine day, but I'll never be convicted by a jury of my peers.

Still crazy after all these years. And what he's saying is, I'm finding that if you listen to the whole song, he's waking up at four in the morning and longing his life away. And one thing and another, but he's saying, I'm having trouble finding the meaning and the substance in my life.

And one of these days I may end up doing some damage, but everybody else is in the same boat. I wouldn't be convicted by a jury of my peers. Well, judgment seat of Christ, the judgment seat for Old Testament saints, it's not a jury of your peers, it's God himself.

So the only thing that really matters, if you wanna get at the meaning of life and find a way to transcend what happens between your birth and your death is to figure out what God is looking for. Well, Solomon tells us right here, God will intensively seek out what is pursued. What are you pursuing? What is your motivation? What are you trying to accomplish when you do something? Are you trying to impress people? Are you trying to work off guilt? Are you using a false standard and then satisfying that standard and declaring yourself to be righteous and good? None of that is going to count at the judgment seat.

None of that is going to go forward out of this life. And so he says in verse 14, I know that everything God himself does is eternal. It literally says it will be, olam, forever.

Everything that God does himself, and the pronoun is there and it's intensive. What God himself does, this is in contradistinction. What man does under the sun, the things that God does, it lasts, it's eternal.

The things that man accomplishes is not eternal. It doesn't go past the setting of the sun, but we ourselves are going to go past. So if you want to avoid the thing that says you can't take it with you, you want to find out a way to get your stuff through customs.

I know that everything God does himself will be to eternity. There is nothing to add upon it. The verb there for add in verse 14 is the same word that gives us the name for Jacob's 11th son.

You remember the sons of Jacob? You get all the way down through Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah. You work all the way down. Who was Jacob's 11th, his second to the last son? Yosef.

Yosef and Yassaf is a verb that means to add. And you remember when he was born, it was the first child. Jacob had had all these other children.

Leah had children. The two handmaids had children. Rachel, the beloved wife had never had a

child.

And she finally got pregnant and had this son. And she was so tickled. She said, God is going to add to me another son.

And so she named him Yosef, which means he will add. And that's the same verb that's used here. When you talk about what God has done, the things that God does, you can't improve it.

You can't gild what is already perfect and complete. What God has done, there's nothing to add. And it says literally upon it.

And you get the idea that there's a stack. And the preposition here is all, which is upon. You can't stack something on top of what God has done and make it higher or better.

By the same token, there is nothing to diminish from it. When I first looked at this, I was expecting the verb that means to take away. You can't remove something from it.

But the verb here is kind of a rare one. It says you cannot diminish it. You can't shrink it.

You can't reduce it in any way. It is a complete and integral, perfect whole. Nothing to add upon it.

There's nothing to diminish from it. Now, why is this stated? Because it is a common effort on the part of man to say, okay, I see what God wants. God wants these things done.

So let's do those. And you know what? I can even do it better. God wants all men to come to the knowledge of the truth.

And he puts the knowledge of himself in the heart of every man. He sends the Holy Spirit to convict of sin, righteousness, and judgment. But you know what? I can help with that.

I can convict man of sin. I can go out and make him feel guilty. I can preach a hellfire and brimstone sermon and have a revival or give them a tract or a flyer that tells them how wicked and guilty and evil they are.

I can put peer pressure on them. I can browbeat them and make them feel bad about their lifestyle and their sins and their choices and their priorities. And I'll help God make people feel guilty so that they'll want to come and be saved.

And a lot of Christians try to elbow the Holy Spirit out of the way and say, I'll help you out with this convicting of sin and righteousness business. I'll come in and frown my frown and squint my eyes and furrow my brow at people and tell them how wicked and evil they are. And I'll help out here.

Or by the same token on the positive side, God has grace and God has comfort and God has resources to meet every need. And we think, you know, I can help with that. I can bring in some secular psychology and put with the truth of the word of God and write a nice pamphlet or get a

video series or a book or something going.

And I'll take what God has given in his word, but I'll add some of this other stuff in and it'll be even better. Well, Solomon says, look, God has got a lock on righteousness and justice. God knows what is eternal and what will last.

The things that he does himself, that's what lasts. It's not what he does with our help. It's not what we stack on top of what he does.

And we can't take his stuff and diminish it and take anything away from it and say, well, I'll give the gospel, but I'm going to leave out the part about sin. And I'm just going to say God is a wonderful, beneficent father and come to him and you can cry on his shoulder. He'll comfort you.

He'll carry your sorrows. He's your friend. He's your companion.

He's just a wonderful, friendly, beneficent, kindly, and start subtracting out of the gospel. And instead of giving the gospel when it needs to be given and saying, you are hopeless, helpless, and useless. You have a sin problem for which you are guilty and for which you have no solution.

And you have to claim the righteousness of Christ because you have no righteousness. You can obtain no righteousness. There's nothing you can do.

There's nothing you can think. There's nothing you can say. You have to claim the righteousness of Christ by faith or you are lost and hell bound.

And to subtract that out of the gospel and say, well, we don't want to talk about sin. That'll drive people away. That's a negative message.

We want to give a positive message of love and comfort. You're trying to diminish and take away from the work of God. God says, this is the gospel.

You're a sinner. You don't have a solution for your sin. And unless and until you are willing to acknowledge that you are helpless in and of yourself and that you need the righteousness of Christ and you claim it by faith and say, when you reach the judgment before God and God says, why should I not condemn you to the lake of fire? You say, because I have claimed the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ.

He is my sacrifice. He is my substitute. He has paid my penalty.

He has washed me clean. And because of him and because of his work, I am qualified to enter into the eternal future with you. And God says, you know what? That is exactly the right answer.

Come thou in. Well, you can't reduce. You can't take away from the work of God.

You can't leave. People try to warm over Christianity and have a Christless Christianity or a

crossless Christianity where it becomes sort of a system of good works and fellowship and hail fellow well met. Let's all come down to the church house and have social life and have squeaky clean activities and leave Christ out.

We often leave the Christian life out. What God says the Christian life is, which is being transformed by the renewing of our minds. People wanna redefine and change what Christianity is and say, well, let's say it's sort of the good fellows club.

It's the rotary. It's the lion's club or the moose lodge or something where we're all gonna get together and then we're gonna go out in community and be helpful and have a positive impact. That is taking away from God's purpose and God's plan.

That's not what God says in his word. I defy anyone to go to the epistles, which are the letters that the apostles wrote to the churches. You can go to John's epistles.

You can go to Peter's epistles. You can go to Paul's epistles. And you find in there one place where Paul or Peter or John tells a church, go out into the community and do good works.

Have a positive impact. He never says it. I've translated all of them out of the Greek and I promise you there's not place one where he says anything about go out and do good works in the community.

What is there replete on every page and in almost every paragraph is be ye holy, be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Offer yourself as a sacrifice. This is the will of God concerning you.

Be transformed, become something that you are not before. Have the thoughts and intents of your heart pleasing in God's sight. That is the sacrifice that God's looking for.

Lori and I on the break, we're looking at that list of what God requires, several passages out of the Bible. And God says, I desire mercy and not sacrifice. What's he saying? It's not what you do in bringing the bull to the altar.

God says to do that in the Bible, but two different people can bring the bull to the altar in the Old Testament days and slaughter it. One of them is doing a good work that partakes of the eternal, like Solomon is talking about here. And the other, it's an empty act.

And both of them say, but look, the Bible says bring the bull to the altar. God says, I desire mercy and not sacrifice. Mercy is an attitude on the inside.

Sacrifice is a doing on the outside. And that's what Solomon is talking about here. There is a time for all of these different activities, he says in verses one through eight.

And there's a season for every purpose, every worthwhile goal. There are tasks and there are goals. And in each of these tasks, giving birth, passing away, casting away stones, gathering

stones, embracing, losing, keeping, all of these different things, there's the task and then there is the purpose or the goal behind the task.

What Solomon is coming forward to say is, God is not going to evaluate the task. He's going to evaluate your goal. And that's what it says in verse 15.

These tasks, he says, have already been, they are and they will be. It's like chapter one. The streams are going to continue to flow.

The sun's going to rise and set. The wind is going to blow. All of these different things, they have been, they are now and they will be.

Lots of people have done. Anything you can think up to do, other people have already done. And the doing of it is not what impresses God.

God is looking at what you are pursuing. What is your goal? What are you after as you do these? And most of the time, if we look deep inside our souls and if we're not in tune with God's plan, we're doing what we do because it either pleases us or it pleases other people. We don't want to be ill thought of and so we do things that left to ourselves we wouldn't do.

Or we want something. We want satisfaction. We want, that's that covetousness.

That's the idolatry the New Testament talks about. It's not making a little Buddha and worshiping it. It's deciding this is a goal I'm going to pursue.

I'm going to please myself. And that's what we do. And we disguise it and dress it up and call it all kinds of different things.

But God is going to cut right down to the quick and figure out why we do what we do. If we do it because we're trying to please God, because we have His commandments and keep them and it's our heart's inmost desire to be pleasing in His sight, we recognize His priority and His place, we have just converted a space of time into eternity. If we do things for any other reason, it doesn't matter how good it is.

You can save someone's life. You can feed and clothe the hungry and homeless. It doesn't matter.

God is not looking. Al Capone fed and clothed the homeless. Al Capone supported orphanages in Chicago.

It doesn't matter. Al Capone's not going to get no credit because what was his motivation? Why did he do what he did? Well, it wasn't to please God, and so no credit. This is what Solomon is saying.

What is, it has already been. That which will be, it already is. But God will intensively seek out.

Again, that is a pail. It means to seek in order to find. He's going to search it out and figure out what it is that man is pursuing in his heart.

It's the motivation that God cares about. The girls just studied Saul right before he was going to battle with the Philistines. And the rule was in Israel, you don't go into battle until you offer sacrifice to God.

You acknowledge God and make sure that you're right with him before you go and face the enemy. Well, Saul was already having morale problems in the army. The opposing army was larger and better equipped.

They were a small ragtag crew and the army wasn't too happy about going into battle. And Samuel didn't show up to offer the sacrifice. He was the prophet at the time and he was the one that officiated at the sacrifice.

And Saul kept waiting and waiting and Samuel didn't show and didn't show. And the army started deserting. The more they thought about this impending battle, the more they figured, you know, we're not going to survive this thing.

It's a bad omen that the prophet's not here. Let's get while the getting's good. And they were dwindling and dwindling.

And Saul was looking around saying, if I wait much longer, I'm not going to have an army to fight this battle. So Saul said, look, stack up the stones, bring me the wood and the fire, bring me the animal. We're going to do this sacrifice and get into battle while we've still got somebody to fight.

And so he did it and he did it himself. Well, he wasn't a priest. He wasn't a prophet.

He was the king, but he usurped a power to himself that didn't belong to him. He offered the sacrifice. Well, no sooner was the smoke ascending off the altar, here comes Samuel boiling up over the hill.

And Samuel comes in and says, you have done a terrible thing. Don't you know that God desires mercy more than sacrifice and obedience more than the fat of rams? It doesn't matter what turns out in this battle, even if you walk in and get slaughtered, which they wouldn't, but there was no faith. There was no acknowledging of God's place as first.

And however long it takes Samuel to show up, that's how long they will wait because that's the right thing. That's what honors God. Saul was looking at the task at hand, looking at expediency and practicality and saying, I've got to do this now because it has to be done or it's going to fail.

Well, he lost the kingdom on that day. Samuel came no more to see Saul. He told him the kingdom, because as he was leaving, he pronounced this and told Saul he had done wrong.

And Saul says, wait, wait, you come back and offer a sacrifice. We'll try to do it right. And he grabs Samuel's cloak and it tears.

And Samuel whirls around and he says, you see the way this cloak has torn? That's what God is doing with you and the kingdom. God is tearing the kingdom from your grasp because it's what you think that counts. And this was just another evidence that Saul was trying to do it all on his own.

He was trying to be king, do what he thought was right in his own eyes and disregard the word of God. And you think, boy, that's a pretty high penalty for just, this is what Solomon is talking about. Your life is a waste of time if you don't live it to please God.

Nothing you do is going to go forward. Nothing you do is going to get any credit. And it doesn't matter if it's all kinds of good deeds.

It doesn't count if it doesn't please God. God is looking at your goal. So let's go forward now.

That's verse 15. And in verse 16, Solomon says here in the English, he says, moreover, I saw under the sun in the place of judgment, wickedness was there. And in the place of righteousness, iniquity was there.

I said in my heart, God shall judge the righteous and the wicked for there is a time there for every purpose and for every work. And this is translated reasonably well for our understanding. He says in verse 16, and yet I have seen under the sun the place of justice, guilty of crime is what it literally says.

They only used one word to translate this in English, but there are two words here. One is shama, which means guilty. And then there's the word for wickedness.

But this word for wickedness actually has the idea of wickedness in the sense of transgressing a law. And that's why I use the translation crime because we say a crime, we know that that's breaking the law. So literally here, it says shama ha resha.

And resha, resha is the verb that means to break the law, to be wicked because you have transgressed the standard. And so what is Solomon saying here? He says, God is gonna search out what is pursued. Man ought to know this.

God has put knowledge of eternity in the heart of every man. What God does last, what man does doesn't last. All of these points Solomon has made.

Then in verse 16, he says, and yet in spite of all of this, we know better. And you would think that this would encourage us to do things to please God, to make our decisions and render our judgments in the light of what God requires and what God expects. But Solomon says, you know what? Even with this knowledge, we don't do it.

He says, and yet, in verse 16. Moreover, it's not as good a translation. This is literally in Hebrew, v'od.

And od means yet, and v' means and. So and yet, in spite of all of this, I have seen under the sun, this is in life, the place of justice, guilty of crime. Here you're supposed to be rendering justice.

This is like going to the courtroom and seeing a corrupt judge taking bribes and perverting justice. And I have seen the place of righteousness, guilty of crime. Uses the very same phrase in both places.

Shema HaRashah. Now what does this mean? Is he upset with the court system in Israel? What is the place of judgment? And what is the place of righteousness under the sun? It's the human soul, isn't it? We are responsible to determine what is right and what is just. And in the place where justice and righteousness are supposed to exist and function, he says instead, there's the guilt, there's criminal guilt there.

There is the wickedness of transgression. Supposed to know God's standard and keep it, it's being transgressed. In the very place where it ought to be manifest, the place of judgment, the place of righteousness.

So what conclusion does he draw? Well, in verse 17, he says, I myself said in my heart, the righteous and the criminal, God will judge. And I use the translation criminal here rather than wicked because this is not just wicked in the sense of general wickedness. This is a transgressor of the standard.

It's also from Rashah, same verb that was used up in 16. I myself said in my heart, the righteous and the criminal, God will judge for or because there is an et, there is a time to every purpose. This is the very same phrase that we saw up in chapter three, verse one.

There is a time for every purpose and for every work. And the word for work there is a participle from Asah, which is the word that means to make or to do. And that goes back to what we saw in the verse nine, where it said, what profit does the worker have from that in which he labors? The worker there is a noun form from Asah, the one doing things.

You could almost translate that the doer because it's not the word for work, which is Amal. It is from Asah, which means to make or to do, to accomplish something. So what profit does the doer have from that in which he labors? Well, now Solomon is saying down in verse 17, there is a time for every purpose and for every deed.

If you want to tie doer and deed together and relate that to Asah. There is a time for every purpose and for every deed. So there's two parts to everything we do.

There's the purpose and there's the act itself. And God is going to look at them both. The act by itself is not going to be justified.

God will judge the righteous and the wicked because there is a time for every purpose and for every deed. And the interesting thing here is that the preposition that's used for every deed is al, A-L, which is the one I mentioned earlier. It means upon.

And so if you just take this word for word out of Hebrew, it says, he will judge, ha Elohim. In other words, ha Elohim, God will judge because there is a time to every purpose and upon every deed there. And you get the idea that the purpose is upon the deed.

There is a deed that God's going to look at and he's going to look at the purpose that was upon it. What made that deed happen? Why did you do what you did? That's what God is going to judge. This, again, try to think of an Old Testament passage that talks about a judgment by God after death for the righteous and the wicked.

There's no concept of the lake of fire anywhere in the Old Testament, is there? Do you have any mention? You know, it talks about Sheol and Hades and all that, but it's not a lake of fire. It's not eternal damnation. It's a shadowy place.

There's no remembrance. The gates of Sheol and everything, it's the place of darkness and shrouded in mystery. There's no lake of fire in the Old Testament.

In fact, there's no lake of fire in the New Testament except for Revelation. And if you didn't have the book of Revelation, we wouldn't even know about the lake of fire. There's no other passage of scripture that directly describes the lake of fire.

And yet here, Solomon is saying, God is going to judge the deeds and the motives that were upon them. What made you do what you do? Well, what's the point for us? We tend to think, and it's easy to fall into the idea that, well, I've got my life and then I have my religion or my spirituality. I'm living my life and I'm doing my things.

I'm pretty much doing the same things everybody else does. I'm eating and I'm sustaining myself. I'm making sure my logistics are in place.

I've got transportation. I've got clothing. My stuff is straightened up.

I pick up after myself. And then I go out and I do my job. I have my relationships.

I talk to people. I get my bills paid. I just do these same things that everybody else does.

And we don't look at those activities in a spiritual light. We say, well, there's no moral component. I mean, obviously I need to pay my bills or I'm going to get in trouble, but we don't look at it as an opportunity to partake of the eternal.

But this passage says it is an opportunity. All of these mundane things that are mentioned in the first eight or nine verses, there's a time for this and a time for that. You run the spectrum.

It is the purpose. It's the reason that we do these mundane things that God is going to judge. And it counts.

It makes a difference why you choose to pay your bills. Do you just pay your bills because you don't want to get bad credit? Or do you pay your bills because you look at it as a responsibility before the Lord to be in the position of owing no man anything? And if you come up short and you're trying to figure out how to pay bills, do you look at it? I used to occasionally, especially early on, when I got out of the service, I suddenly found myself trying to deal with a non-steady income. From the time I was 17 years old, there was money hitting the bank at regular intervals.

I knew exactly how much it was going to be. I could plan and budget, get out of the service, and suddenly, if I didn't do something, there wouldn't be any money there. And I didn't know from week to week, month to month, if there would be enough or not.

And occasionally, I would come up short and I'd have to figure out, well, who am I not going to pay? Or who am I going to send a token payment or a minimum payment? Well, when you make that decision, why do you do what you do? Do you look at it and say, well, the one that's least likely to sick the dogs on me is the one I won't pay? Or do you say, I need to contact all of these people and explain my situation and offer to make whatever parcel payment I have because the Bible says, owe no man anything. And I have a responsibility before God, not only to make good on these debts, but to find out why I'm coming up short and take steps to remediate it. And it's a difference in perspective.

Any decision that we make, the most mundane decisions, why do we shop for cheap bargains at the store? Why do we call or not call certain people? Why do we do or not do certain things in terms of maintenance for our house or our car, whatever? All of these little things, we tend to just not think that it has any spiritual dimension. Solomon says, look, everything, every deed has a purpose. And it is that purpose behind the deed that determines whether or not it's going to be grasping the wind or partaking of the divine.

So the question becomes, how do we convert each of our tasks, all of the endeavors in which we engage, how do we grasp the eternal in those? Well, it's very simple. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength. What does that mean? You don't have a part of your heart set on some ambition or some accomplishment or impressing some person or category of people.

You don't have part of your heart set on acquisition of something because you find it enjoyable. All of your heart, all of your soul, all of your strength, you do what you do. You get up in the morning and roll out of bed because God is in His heaven and it's another opportunity to live life

in a way that pleases Him.

We recognize what He has done for us, His loving kindness. Remember Psalm 103, Bless the Lord, O my soul. He is the reason for the season.

You know, they say that at Christmas time. It's true every day. God is the reason for getting up and doing anything.

And it is a little known fact, even in Christianity today, that you can please God and there can be rejoicing in heaven just as much as you're folding the clothes or as you're driving your car or writing another check to pay your bills as converting someone to Christ, giving them the gospel because of why you do what you do. God will judge the righteous and the wicked. God will judge the purpose and the deed.

And if we remember that and if what this ought to do is even in the small tasks of life, it ought to remind us of who we are and why we're here. This is what God is up to. God is not here to evangelize.

He could evangelize the world. He could open up a window in heaven, show His presence on His throne and the people who are going to believe in Him and trust Him would just bow down. God could evangelize in a second.

God could send the Holy Spirit to do the whole thing. That's not why we're here. We're not here for Amway and to replicate ourselves.

We are here to produce righteousness by faith. And it is trusting God, acknowledging God in everything that we do that creates righteousness. And God looks at it and says, here is my good and faithful servant.

Here's someone that is doing what they do because they want to please me. And that is eternal. It lasts past the grave.

It's beyond the setting of the sun. So it's a great challenge for us because we are so easily immersed in life. We're so easily distracted.

We're so easily think there's only a certain category of things that constitute righteousness rather than everything in our life. But you look again at that list, verses one through eight, in every one of those there is a purpose and there's a way to please God in the doing of it. Let's close here in a word of prayer.

Father, we thank you that you have given our lives meaning and purpose and definition. It is why we do what we do that you look at in our souls. And we pray that God, the Holy Spirit, will constantly remind us of that and that when we are failing to acknowledge your presence, when we are failing to have your word and keep it in our converse with the world, we pray that we will

be convicted, that we'll be reminded that these passages will come to our mind and transform us so that we begin to live more and more fully as Christ lived his life to know and to do your will.

We pray that as a result, our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, will be glorified. We pray that we will begin to know the grasping of eternal things that comes with doing your will. We ask it in Jesus' name, amen.