



Message Transcript

Responding to the Gospel

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Would you pray with me this morning as we get ready to dive into the word of the Lord. Lord Jesus, just thanks for your word. Lord, thanks for letting us be able to worship your great name. And Lord we pray this morning as we open your word that you would speak directly to us. That Lord, no matter what things are on our mind, that you would quiet them so that we could clearly hear what you have to tell us. And that we would believe what you say about us and put into practice the very things that you show us. For Lord, you are high and lifted up and we give you all the praise, all the glory and all the honor in the mighty and matchless name of our Lord Jesus Christ and all God's people who are ready to hear his word agreed with me by very loudly saying amen. Amen.

Good news always results in a response. It's why following weddings, honeymoons often take place. It's why after someone wins the lottery, they often go on a spending spree. Just recently I saw a video of a young kid whose father had been serving overseas, who had come home and he didn't know his father had come back and it shows the kid in a physical education class where he's doing some sort of boxing blindfolded. And while he's boxing this guy blindfolded, they switch out the guy he was boxing with his dad. And all of a sudden his dad's there kind of taking punches, but he's still blindfolded and he can hear his father starts talking to him and he begins to recognize the voice and rips off the blindfold. And when he sees the good news that it's his father, he immediately dives into his dad and just hugs him.

It's hard to watch it without crying. Right? Because good news results in a response. The gospel of Jesus Christ is good news. Amen. Okay. The gospel of Jesus

Christ is good news. Amen. Okay. Thank you. Thank you. It's good news. And so it results in a response for how we are going to respond to all that God has done on our behalf. And this is what God wants to tell us about this morning. "In light of all that I've done for you," he says, "Here's how I would like you to respond to me." So if you have your Bibles with you, I encourage you to open up to the book of First Peter. We're going to start in verse 13 and get through verse 21 today. So I'll read different sections and unpack them as we go. And what's been going on in this book is God has been telling us about the great salvation that we have and all that he's done on our behalf and why we can celebrate his fact of choosing us before the foundation of the world.

And then he says this, "Therefore prepare your mind for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children do not be conformed to the former lust, which were yours in ignorance, but like the holy one who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior because it is written, you shall be holy for I am holy." And this is how God starts out talking to us this morning by telling us our response. Therefore, because of all that I've done for you, he's going to tell us about three responses that we should have to him. And here's what he says. The first response is this, that we should respond to the gospel with hope and holiness in your conduct. You should respond to the gospel with hope and holiness in your conduct.

Now, notice here in this section, it seems like there's five commands. There's

really two commands and there's three participles bolstering those commands. We see to prepare your minds and keep sober in spirit and be hopeful and be obedient to Christ without conforming and be holy. Having hope, setting your hope and being holy are the commands of those verses. That's what he's telling us. Have hope in this world presently and live holy lives... Now, that's the whole part. Everything else is going to bolster his argument about that. And notice how he starts. He says, "Therefore, prepare your minds for action." It really says in the original gird up the loins of your minds. It means to get ready in your mind. Why does he tell you that? Because I want to tell you where the battleground takes place after you're converted. Right between your ears. This is where the battle takes place.

And unfortunately, most of us don't realize that when we trust Jesus Christ as our personal Lord and savior, that a battle begins. Prior to conversion, Satan will do whatever he can to keep you from confessing that Jesus Christ is Lord. He may have you steeped in such grievous sin that he lies to you and says, "No one who has sinned like you could ever be wanted by God. You've sinned too much, you've gone too far. Look at you. No church would ever take you." And he keeps you sin and keeps lying to you so that you will sin so that you think that Jesus is not for you. Or he will keep you really religious and prideful your whole life. Hey, you go to church, you're a good person, you're better than they are. You don't sin the sins that they sin. Look at you, you've been going to church your whole life, you can quote scripture, you can even quote the apostles creed and several other doctrines. I mean, you're awesome. And you're a really good person and you're good at work.

He'll keep you either way so long as he doesn't get you to realize that you're dead in your transgressions and sins and that you need a savior and you need to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. But let me tell you something. Once you confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, you've been transferred from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's beloved son in whom you have redemption and the forgiveness of sins. And once you're in, you're in. So Satan realizes he's lost you for all eternity. So what's he going to do now? He is going to turn up the heat in your life in such a way to get you to live like you used to live before you became a believer in Jesus. And where does the battle happen? Right in your mind.

Amen.

Now, when I got saved, I didn't realize that a battle was going to take place. For some reason when I got saved, I remember when I got saved I knew I got saved. I wept for two hours because I was the prideful kid who thought I was going to Heaven because I was good and recognized I was dead and in need of a savior and stood up in front of a group of people and I said, "I'm confessing Jesus Christ as my personal Lord and savior." And wept. So I knew I had changed and kind of in my heart, that was right before I went to college. Now I'm just going to live for Jesus, it's going to be smooth sailing. Like I said, I thought I'd gotten on the love boat for a cruise, when I had really boarded a battleship and I was part of the infantry and nobody told me that. Right? And that's what happens. That's why he says, in light of this great salvation, here's your response. Get ready for battle.

It's the same thing he says in Ephesians chapter six and verse 14 when he says

it like this. Stand firm, therefore having girded your loins with truth. Truth. We battle the devil with truth. We battle him with the written word because the written word is all about the living word and the living word can fight our battles for us. Prepare your mind for action. Why? Because the Bible says this in John 10:10, that the enemy comes to do three things to the believer. What does he come to do? To steal, to kill and to destroy. Make no mistake about it. You don't need to pray for Satan. You need to resist Satan. You need to battle by having truth so girded in your mind that you know truth so well so that when the lie comes in and you hear the air, you don't begin to follow after it.

Prepare your mind for battle. Once you become a Christian, the lies of the enemy will get turned up to take you in a way that you never, ever wanted to go. And then he says this, keep sober in spirit, keep sober in spirit... Now we know what sobriety is. It means that we're not drunk. It means that we're not intoxicated. Right? When someone is drunk or intoxicated, it means that they have something else that is controlling the entirety of who they are. If you've ever been around somebody who has been drinking excessively, you'll know very quickly because their breath smells a certain way, but even more so, the way in which they're talking and what's going on, you'll realize it's not them it's this substance that is controlling them. And here's what he's saying. Keep sober, it's not just don't drink alcohol. It's this, don't IIB on the things of the world. That's what it means.

If you get drunk on the things of the world, if you still consume the things of the

world, you won't be in your right mind to be able to fight the enemy when he comes. In other words, once you become a believer, you can't keep living in the world's system the way that you used to. Why? Because you've been set apart by God to live differently. And if you're not living sober lives, meaning you're imbibing in the things of the world and getting drunk on the things of the world and listening to the things of the world and the world is actually controlling you and you're a "worldly" or [inaudible 00:09:29] Christian, you can't be who God wants you to be. Some of the challenge that many of you have as Christians is this, you don't realize that when you crossed over from death to life, that you're a new creation, the old has gone and the new has come. And if truth is the foundation of our Christianity, your identity is what takes you to the next level.

It's when you begin to realize that you're not the same person that you used to be. Most of us come to Christ and we think nothing's really changed, other than the fact that I'm going to Heaven. Let me tell you what's changed. Everything's changed. You are not the same that you used to be. You are new, you are born again. So you're called to be sober in your spirit and not to go after the things of the world. If you keep going after the same things you went after prior to being converted, your mind will be cluttered and the enemy will have opportunity to take you in a way that you don't want to go. So he says, prepare your mind for action and be sober in spirit. And you can recognize Christians. Right? Who are not sober in spirit. It's pretty easy to find Christians. It's just like finding somebody who's drunk. It's easy to see if somebody's drunk.

A few years ago, I was in a car accident, a minor car accident. And as soon as I got an accident, I pulled over, I really didn't want to call the police. I just called my insurance. I kind of thought I was at fault called the insurance company, started filing a claim. The guy pulled in right behind me. And they said what kind of damage has been done to his car. So I got of my car, went back to talk to him to make sure I was reporting correctly and being honest. And when I got to his car, I said, "Hey, could you come out, I want to make sure I'm reporting this correctly?" He gets out of his car, goes down and looks at his front headlight. I'm like, "Do you think that that's all the damage?" And as he bent over, he about fell over. And I'm like, "Wait, he's he's stumbling." And I said, "Hey, hold on a second." And I looked him in the eye and I could see his eyes weren't dilated.

And then as he talked, he had alcohol all over his breath. I told the insurance company, "Let me call you right back." Click, 911 I need some help. And as I was taking a picture of his license plate, as he sped away. Right? It's easy to see when someone's been intoxicated. Right? It's easy to see when a Christian who is genuinely born again is not living out his or her identity, and instead of living for the things of God, they're living for the things of this world and just looking to say, "Hey, someday I'll go to heaven." That's not why God prepared you. That's not why God saved you. God saved you because presently he has a purpose for you. So prepare your mind for action and keep sober in spirit so that you can do this third thing, which is really the heart of his message. Fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Fix your hope completely. How much of your attention should be given to the coming of Jesus Christ in all of his glory? All of your attention. All of your hope. Now, hope, sometimes we have a false definition of hope. Sometimes for hope it's like we think of hope as something that may happen. Like, I hope that my team makes it to the final four. I hope that she'll marry me someday. I hope that we're able to have kids. And when we say that, we're saying, that's what I'd really like, but there's no guarantee that this will happen. Fixing your hope on the coming of Jesus Christ completely is a present certainty of a future reality. That's what hope is. It's a present certainty of a future reality. That brings incredible comfort right now. I can tell you on the authority of God's word and I'm a 100% certain, Jesus Christ is coming back in all of his glory. He is coming back in all of his glory. He's coming back soon in all his glory.

That's where I'm setting my complete hope. And here's the problem. Many Christians live hopeless because they have bought into what the world says and they haven't prepared their mind for action. So when they get sick and the doctor says, "You're not going to get healed," because they're listening to the world and because they're not listening to God, here's what they say. "I'm doomed. I have no hope. I'm going to die." Well, I can assure you that you're going to die, but you probably may or may not die because of that. Right? The world says, when your kids run off and they're not living for God, they'll never come back. That's not what God says. How many of you know God has the final say? And see, when your mind is clear and it's prepared for action and you're focused on the things of God, then by faith, you can have hope in the Lord Jesus, no matter what your circumstance.

As Christians, I'm just here to tell you because of your new identity and because of the gospel of Jesus Christ, you should live as the most hopeful people on the planet. Amen and Amen. It means there should be no other people that are living as hopeful as you. You should never say, "Well, my business will never get there and this is never going to happen. And we'll never have this." You're a child of the king who loves you and says, "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord. Plans to prosper you, plans for hope and a good future. That's our God. Prospering God. So that we have hope in God. When you're discouraged, is because you're listening to the lie of the enemy. It doesn't mean there's not going to be discouraging things that happen to you. Trials will happen to you. Discouraging things will happen to you. It's a guarantee. But in the middle of that, you can still have hope if you're set completely on the grace of God, that will be revealed at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

You've been invited and have already signed your invitation and your RSVP to an eternal party that's greater than anything that you could ever have in this life. It's as good as done. Focus on that. Set your hope on him. No matter what you're thinking about the things you brought into church today and said, there's no way this, there's no way that. I'm because of this. Hey, put that aside for just a second. Let me tell you, if you're a believer in Jesus Christ, you have incredible hope now. Amen. And here's the thing we think about future. We think future... When we think future, here's how we tend to think. It's way out there. Let me tell you what future means. It just hasn't happened yet. Future can be a minute from now. Right? Future can be tomorrow. Right? Here's how the devil lies to you when he talks to you. Yeah, set your hope on

the grace of God. You're 16 years old, that's like 80 years away. I mean, live your life for Heaven sakes. You don't know. It may be this afternoon. You don't know it. It may be tomorrow.

Hey, that child of yours is never going to... It may be tomorrow, it may be the next day. I mean, have your hope presently, because God will do what he says he's going to do. Anchor your hope in him. As believers because you're saved, anchor your hope in the Lord. And then he says this. As obedient children do not be conformed to the former lusts, which were yours in your ignorance, but be like the holy one who called you. Now, when it comes to talking about obedience in church, it's kind of like talking about eating your vegetables. I know it's good, I just don't enjoy it as much as I enjoy junk food. Or like my kids, when I wake them up for school and I say, "Hey, let's get ready. Let's get going. We're going to be late." And what do my kids say to me? Probably something your kids say to you. "Give me five more minutes." As if that's going to help. Right? What are they saying?

I'm just delaying this. I'm not looking forward to this. I like my present circumstance in my warm bed that I'm in and I'm not ready to get there. And when it comes to talking about obedience, that's how many of us are, but let me tell you something about obedience. Obedience is not a have to, obedience comes out of a love relationship where I want to. Right? If I'm obedient and obeying my vows that I made to my wife, it's not because I have to, it's because I want to, because I want to honor her. Right? Obedience always comes from a place of honor. And that's why the Bible talks about faith without works is dead. Because if we're truly saved, then we

want to live in a way that honors the Lord. And here's what obedience looks like. Jesus says in John chapter 14 versus 23 and 24. If you love me, you will obey my word.

If you do not love me, you will not obey my word. In other words, this book that God wrote of 66 books making the one book that we call the Bible, is God's inherent everlasting living word. There's nothing wrong with it and God wants us to align our lives with his word. Meaning this. If God's word says something and my life isn't aligned with it, what do I do? I reorient my life to what the word says as obedient children. And then he says this. Don't conform to the former lusts that you had in your ignorance. What's that mean? Now listen. Church. Listen. It means that every single one of us prior to conversion lived sinful patterns in our life. Some of you don't believe me. I'm telling you on the authority of God's word, every single person here lived in ignorance and lived in sin. Every single one of us.

Some was more public and grievous and some was more hidden and prideful, but all of you lived in patterns that were going against the Lord. That's why you needed a savior. That's what the Bible points out. And why does he tell us don't live that way any longer? Because the enemy is going to lie to us to try to take us back and be who we used to be instead of living out the identity that God says that we are in Christ right now. Right? You ever notice your flesh still rises up? You ever notice that there's a restraining power of the holy spirit? I think that's why I coach flagged football for fourth and fifth graders. Because when I'm on the sideline and I see things, I know how I would've responded 20 years ago. And it would not have been pretty.

Even yesterday at someone the worst things I've ever seen in a fourth and fifth grade game, I found myself because of the restraining power of the Holy Spirit, reminding myself that I was a pastor, reminding myself, I was a Christian, don't say anything, just be kind. And I was. But very unhappy on the inside. Right? That's the restraining power of the spirit. I was texting my dad. I said, "Dad, here's what happened. Here's what I thought." He was like, "Good thing you didn't do that." That's the restraining power of the spirit, because there's always this pull to go back to our flesh in the patterns that we once knew that we knew so well because they worked for us. They got things done for us. They work in the world, they just don't work as well the kingdom. Amen. That's why we're called to live for him. That's why we're called to live like obedient children. And here's the promise. It's not even you doing good stuff for God. I mean, here's what obedience is.

When you became a Christian through the Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ came to dwell in and through you. So here's what obedience looks like. It's Jesus saying, "Will you let me live the fullness of my life in and through you? I'm not asking you to change, I'm just wondering if you'll let me work my life through you. It's me doing the work. It's not you correcting your faults." Jesus is asking for you to be surrendered to him in such a way where he's able to pour himself out where you used to pour yourself out. Do you see the difference? And as obedient children, we don't want to live in the former patterns that we had. I mean, Ephesians two tells us what those patterns look like. Ephesians two, one to three says, and you were dead in your trespasses and sins in which you formerly walked. According to the course of this world that's imbibing on the world.

And according to the prince of the power of the air, which means that you are under the thumb of the devil of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.

He says this, "Among them, we too, all formerly lived in the lust of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. I mean, it's just giving an objective statement. That's what you were, but you're not that anymore because God being rich and mercy saved us that even when we were dead in our sin, he saved us. It's by grace we have been saved. Now, listen to this. He says, because of this... Verse 15. But like the holy one who called you be holy yourselves also. And how much of your behavior what your Bible say? All of your behavior. Right? In everything. Because it is written, you shall be holy for I holy. Jesus in the sermon on the Mount said, be perfect therefore, as your heavenly father is perfect. Be holy because I'm holy. In other words, because Christ is in you, he wants to live his character in and through you. He wants you to have moral excellence and virtue in what you do. So Christ can be glorified in and through your life in such a way.

Now let's talk about holiness for a second, because holiness is often not talked about in church. The Bible already says that you are holy because you're in Christ. But then how do you live out your holiness? It's like this. Holiness and sin do not coexist. They don't work together. In other words, when you have sin in your life, it's why the Bible tells us to confess our sin. Because when we confess our sin, God is faithful and just to forgive our sin and cleanse us from all in righteousness. But some of us from time to time, pastor included, when we're aware of sin, we don't confess sin, we have different ways of dealing with sin that keep us from living out the holiness that God

requires. And as I was preparing this message and as I was preparing for the men on Thursday, I realized, "Man, Jeff, you're quite an expert on how to do this stuff with sin."

But I want to tell you about six different ways that are wrong ways to deal with your sin because they affect each and every one of us, maybe not all of these are going on at the same time, but we you tend to be experts in this. And the first way is this. We hide our sin. We hide our sin. The sin is there, but I hide it in such a way that you don't realize the severity of my sin. In other words, women go out to dinner and you see me have a couple drinks. What you don't see is I go home and get drunk every night. You may see that from time to time I talk about someone who's not my spouse, but what you don't see is deep down that I have a lusty issue in my heart and that's really consuming to me. You may see from time to time, I'm a little bit harsh with my wife and kids, but what you don't, is the severity of how brutal I am to them all the time.

I hide it. I can make myself look good enough for you so that you are aware that I have sinned, you just don't know the severity of my sin. I hide it. I don't want you God or anybody else to see it. Let me tell you something. Can you hide your sin from God? Let me just tell you something. He knows every sin you sinned, and he knows how severe it is and how desperate you are. We hide it. Second is this. We gloss it over. We gloss over sin. And when sin happens, we say, it's not that big of a deal. As a matter of fact, when we come to church on Sunday, we're like, "Pastor, just tell me how to live a good life. Give me a leadership talk, quit talking about sin." It's not that big of a deal. You know what? I'm just glossing it over. Yes, I did that. Probably wasn't

the best. That kind of thing.

That's glossing over our sin. Let me get to this third one. We excuse it. This isn't just like, "Yeah, I sinned and I'm glossing over." This is when we give excuses for it. This is because we are so objectively ruthless with everybody except ourselves when it comes to our sin. If somebody else sinned the way that you were sinning or they sinned that way against you, it would tick you off or hurt you or make you mad. But when it's you that does it. It's not that big of a deal. You don't understand the parents that I had when I grew up. You don't understand the coach that I had when I was in high school. You don't understand my circumstances and what I've had to overcome. I mean, I'm telling you yes, yes I sin, but let me tell you why. Because for me it's okay.

I realized that people that are under the age of 25 should be virgins until they get married, but guess what? I'm 55 years old and so that really doesn't apply to me and we can live together because you know what, God standards can't really apply to somebody my age. No, that's when we make excuses for our sin. Yeah. My wife says that I yell at her lot. I'm not really yelling. I'm just correcting because she needs to hear that. We excuse it. How about this one? We coddle it. There are certain sins some people just enjoy. And then they coddle it and they kind of pet it. And they... I know this is wrong, but it's not really hurting anybody but me, it's not really affecting anybody but me. My wife doesn't even know about it. My friends don't even know about it. I mean, this is a private sin. This is just something, it's kind of always been there. I've even prayed about it and it hasn't gone a way. So it's just more enjoyable just to know that

it's there rather than to really deal with it.

Number 32:23 says, you can be sure of this. Let me tell you something. Your sin will find you out. It will find you out. You can coddle it for a while. It's coming out. The more you try to push it down, the more it's going to come up and the more public it's going to be when it does. How about this? We cover our sin. This is where we intentionally try to hide it so that no one else sees it. This goes beyond hiding it. This means I'm going to live in such a phony and fake way that you will actually think there is no sin in my life. Isn't it interesting at the last supper when Jesus says, "One of you will betray me." Nobody looks at Judas at Judas Iscariot and says, "Yeah, it's him." How come they didn't know? Because he covered it up so well, he didn't even have a relationship with Christ.

Jesus said, "One of you is a devil." Here they were with the devil for three years and they didn't even know it. Why? Because you could get really good at being religious. Listen here, church. Some of you aren't even saved that come to Brave Church, but because you're so religious, you hide everything and you think just by singing songs, repeating scripture and doing things, that that's enough. No, you've covered up all your sin. And for some of you, you do a good job, even though you are saved at covering up your sin, which is this, "Oh Jesus is so important to me. Oh, the church is so important to me." But deep down in your heart, you know that's about 10th, 11th or 13th place in your life. But you can make everybody else think that church is really important for you. We cover it. The final one we do is this.

We bury it. We bury it. That's what Achan did in Joshua chapter seven, when

God told him not to take the spoils of war, what did Achan do? He went and buried the treasure he wasn't supposed to take in his tent thinking, "If I bury it, nobody will ever know." Here's the deal. You can't bury your sin. You can be sure that your sin will find you out. Here's the truth from God's word. Let me tell you, let tell you. If you confess your sins, God's faithful and just to forgive your sins and cleanse you from all in righteousness. God will forgive you no matter what. You can come to the cross as a non-believer, he'll forgive all your sins. You can come to the cross as a believer, he will forgive all your sins. Here's the truth. If you don't, God loves you enough as a Christian he'll expose it. I've watched people try to hide it, coddle it, do it. It always comes out.

And some of you are here today saying, "Move on to the next point because I'm so uncomfortable, I hate this part of the message, because there's no way I could say this because God might forgive me, but my spouse won't and God might forgive me, but my pastor won't. And God might..." Here's the truth. If you truly repent, you won't care who forgives you other than Jesus. As long as you have a clean conscience with him, nothing else matters. And it's not just about getting rid of some of the sin. I mean, that would be like going to a doctor and him saying, "Hey, I know you have terminal cancer I was able to get some of it out." That's not good news. I want all of it out. Sin kills. Sin is the very thing that keeps you from being the fullness of who you are.

It's the very way that the enemy lies to the believers saying now I got you because if you're sitting on an ongoing basis, you've given the devil an opportunity or a foothold to keep you from becoming everything that you need to be, you live without hope and you can't live holy. But here's how you live holy. Not by changing efforts, not

by working harder, not by leaving from this place and saying I'm never going to do that from this moment on. You can't change yourself. It's repenting and forsaking your sin. In the Old Testament it says it like this in the book of Proverbs 28:13, it should be a verse that I have memorized, should be one that I do memorize. Says, he who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes then will find compassion, mercy. As I was studying that this week, confess and forsake means this. Confess means you throw it down and forsake means that you run away from it.

See if you don't, sin is like dynamite and there's a fuse on the end of the dynamite. You just don't know how long the fuse is. And when you're sinning, you've lit it. Confession squelches the flame. If you don't confess, the wick continues to burn and you don't know how long the wick is, but I'm promising you this, at some point in time it will blow up. And it will blow up at a time that you don't want and in a way that you don't want. And here's the invitation from the cross of Jesus. "I came to pay for all of that and you don't need to live in any of that anymore. You are redeemed, you are holy. And if you're a non-believer, you can confess me as your personal Lord and savior. And if you are a believer, even if you're in sin that's deep and severe, I'm willing to forgive you all over again. That's who I am." That is the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Amen.

You can be completely forgiven. You can walk out of this place completely holy,

not because of what you've done, but because of what Christ has done for you. Ame.

Amen.

We're called to respond that way. We're called to respond in hope and holiness. We're also called to respond to the gospel in this way. With reverence and responsibility. With reverence and responsibility. He says this. If you address his father, the one who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourself in fear during your time of stay on Earth. He's already talked about the fact that we are aliens or strangers here, that our time on Earth is short. Here's what he's saying. If you call God your father, meaning if you have a relationship with Jesus Christ and God's your father, here's what you should know. He judges everyone's work impartially. It's why Paul says in Romans 2:6, that God will judge each one of you according to your deeds, how you live, what you do. Yes, you can be saved to the full, that's all because of what Jesus did, but we're supposed to live in a stewardship or responsibility before almighty God that he sees everything and that he put us here so that we live for him.

Now, you've heard me rant a little bit before about this. Like when we as Christians, how we have flowery language that we like to talk about things when things aren't going to go well, like when we spend four million dollars for a crusade in the city and hardly anybody's going to show up and it's not traction, we'll say something like this. "If even one person gets saved, it's worth it." Really it's not. I'd rather take the four million dollars and lead somebody to Christ myself. But here's the point. The person who gets saved is their life worth more than four million dollars. Yes it is. It's as if God put a billion dollar investment on that person that he saved to get work done.

Because here's the truth of the gospel. No matter who you are, no matter what you do, God put you on this Earth to make disciples. It doesn't so much matter what your vocation is if you can do your vocation in such a way where you're multiplying disciples, then you're in the right field.

If you say, "Jeff, doing what I do, there's no way I could make disciples." Here's what I would tell you. Then God didn't call you there. If you can't make disciples where you're at, you're in the wrong place. But in most places we can make disciples. That's what we're called to do. And why are we called to do that? Because you're going to give an account for the billion dollars worth of investment that got put in your life that he stewarded in you for his glory. Why did God give you all the talents he gave? You ever wonder that? He gave it to you for this reason, so that you could glorify him by making more disciples. That's why he gave you all your talent. That's why... It doesn't mean quit your job, go to seminary and become a pastor. It's not what it means. It means right where you are, understand this. Everything you have, God is counting on you to be able to pour his life through you so that other people can see what Jesus looks like in you. That's what it means. That's what your life's about.

And if you really believe God's word that that's true, then you should live with reverence and respect for the Lord Jesus Christ, because he's going to present you before the Father and the Father will judge your works. And here's how he's going to judge it. Impartially. And it doesn't matter title. When I get to Heaven, it doesn't matter pastor. No pastors in Heaven. It doesn't matter church leader. No church leaders in Heaven. There's Jesus Christ and him only and how am I living for him. Right? So that's

why he says be good stewards of everything that he's given you. See, this fallacy in North America is this. We say stuff like this. I'm saved, God loves me, therefore, how I live doesn't matter. It's a fallacy. God saved you because he loves you. And because he loves you, it should require a response where you respond to him by making disciples. You have a responsibility to God. In what? Because he says in verse 18, here's how you were redeemed. Now think about how important this was to the Father.

Knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers... Can I just pause there a second? This just hit me. Some of you need to understand this. Some of the sins that you have in your life, whether you realize it or not, you're only sending the same sins that your mom and dad sinned. And you're only sending the same sins that your grandparents sinned. They've been there. Even if you never knew that was the sin of your parents. If you're sending it, chances are your mom, your dad, your grandpa, your grandma, somebody in your line has sinned those sins. They've been handed down to you. Okay? Just so you know, free of charge.

But here's how you were redeemed. With the precious blood as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ. How were you redeemed? God didn't redeem you with silver and gold. He didn't just buy you back with money. He gave his only begotten son to be slaughtered for you. Do you think he cares about that? Do you think he cares about that? I was watching a movie trailer the other day with my family in a movie that we were going to see. It's about a movie coming out. I don't know

anything, I'm not endorsing I'm just telling you. It's based on a true story about a son who falls through the ice and dies. And the mother is praying that her son will live and he's been dead for a period of time and turns out he gets his life back in his lungs and he continues to live. And I'm choked up watching this thing. I look over my wife, she's bawling. Right? Because why? Because we're thinking about son and what would happen if it was our son who just tragically died.

We're not talking about Jesus who tragically died. We're talking about God, the Father who sent him on purpose to die for your sin. Who sent him on purpose knowing that you and I would beat him, spit on him, knowing that you and I would put him on a cross and make him die and shame him. That's who God sent. That's how you were redeemed. You were redeemed with that which was priceless. The God man of the universe. That's what he entrusted to save you. Do you think God cares about that? I know how much I care about my son. And the Bible says, even though you fathers who are evil know how to give good gifts to your kids, how much more your heavenly father? God is a good father. And he loved us so much he gave his most prized possession, his only begotten son. And because he gave us that, do we not have a responsibility? Do we not have reverence for the God who is coming?

Should we not live in fear that hey, one day those little things that you've covered up, exposed, buried, nobody's going to know about that. The second Jesus Christ comes into the world, all that stuff's going to be known to the God that sees it all. It's a call for us in our life to keep short accounts, to repent, to be gracious that the blood of Jesus Christ, it not only covers our sin it expunges our sin and it fills us with his grace.

And we're called to live with that reverence and responsibility in light of the Father's expectation for us. And if we'll live that way, then we can live the third way. That the gospel, the response to the gospel is to be one with amazement and awe of God's intentional work for you. Think about this. For he, Jesus was for known before the foundation of the world. We've talked about that word for known. It means God had a plan before the world. The Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. The Trinity had a plan that God the Father would send his son to be the savior of the world.

He was for known. It wasn't as if Jesus came to Earth and then listened to his dad and said, "Okay, so I'm going to the cross." Right? No. An eternity passed at some point in time, it was decided amongst the Trinity where the Father said, "This is what you're going to do." And Jesus accepted the call. And long before he was ever conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, he came on purpose to die. It was as good as done. That's what God called his son to do. And that's what Jesus fulfilled. He says, "I only do what I see my father doing." Now check this out. But he appeared in these last times for the sake of who? What's your Bible say? End of verse 20.

But he has appeared in these last days, Jesus Christ for the sake of you. You. All of us. Why did Jesus has come? For you. Yeah, he came and redeemed us and he restored glory to his father and he honored his debt, but why did he come? For you because he loved you. Did you ever think about that? An eternity passed long before the creation of the world, he had a love for you. He was going to create you, form you, give you purpose and then come on purpose to save you even while you were dead in

your transgressions and sins? Even when he knew you were going to go the wrong way? He loved you. If you ever get that in the depth of your soul, it'll wreck you. I can't believe God would come from me. I know who I am. I know how steeped in sin I am.

I know how I rebelled. I know how I have a proclivity to still go my own way. I know how sinful I am through and through and yet when I read God's word, it says, "No, but Jeff, I love you. I came for you." He came for each and every one of you. Which means this. If you've never confessed Jesus Christ as your own personal Lord and savior, I got news for you. He wants us to, he wants to be your Lord and savior. He came so that you would choose him. Right? He came so that you would have a relationship with him because he loves you. That's who he is. He did it all for you. Now you think about this. I was thinking back that we had... March is like we have a birthday every other day in March, I think in my family. My grandma just turned 104 this past Thursday. Isn't it cool?

And so we're sending out presents, cards, gifts, everything. And my kids, for them like any kid, like I was, they just expect a party. They just tell us what they want. They don't think about how much it costs. They don't think about how much time it's going to take. They don't think about how we got to get invitations out. And I was thinking back about my mom when we used to have parties and it was long before the days of internet, social media, where we just send out an email blast, you had to buy invitations at the store and write them all out by hand and find everybody's address in the yellow pages and send it all out to them and wait for responses by the phone. And if you weren't there, we didn't have answering machines. Some of you don't even know

what those are. We didn't have anything. I mean, there's a lot of work that went into that. All I cared as an eight year old is give me my party. Right? Some of us all we care about, I'm saved.

But if you start peeling back the dial and you start seeing all that God did on your behalf, it'll overwhelm you. It'll put you in awe, that the God of the universe who could have been thinking about any number of things was thinking about you. That when Jesus Christ was on the cross, he was thinking about you. Isn't that awesome? And it's through him, verse 21 says that we are believers in God who what? Raised him from the dead and gave him glory so that your faith and hope are in God. How's your response to the gospel? Do you respond with amazement and awe when you think about all that God's done for you? Do you respond with a reverence and a responsibility? Do you respond with hope and holiness in your life? Because I know we can hear a sermon like this and we can think, "I'm doing okay on that." Maybe not as good as some, but I'm doing okay.

Most of us think we're okay. Right? Just this week I hadn't played checkers in about two decades. My five year old wanted to play checkers with me the other day. And I don't think she even knows how to play. I mean, I was helping her set the pieces up and I was trying to remember how to play. And as we were playing, I was coaching her to beat me because it was such a slaughter. I mean, she would have one, she could jump over. I'd be, "Hey, just jump over me and take my piece." I'm telling you, I did really, really well against my five year old daughter in checkers. I mean, I was

feeling my confidence built. She wanted to play later in the day, I whopped her again. I mean, it was easy. And so that night Kim was playing my daughter in checkers and she got done with her and I said, "Hey, how about you and I play?" My wife said, "I'll whoop you."

Now, I don't know how many of you know me very well, I'm slightly competitive at times. And I'm like, "Baby there's no way. And I know what it's like, you just don't want to go to bed upset. And I promise you, I won't taunt you. I promise I won't say anything bad. I just want to play." She's like, "Nope." She's like, "I'll beat you too bad." I'm like, "We're playing." So I set up all the pieces and we started playing. The game was over so fast that I didn't even know what hit me. And I'm watching what's going on as she's double jumping pieces. And it got to a point where it was so futile where I had two people left and she had like a whole board and I made one move and she double jumped to win. And she said, "You just did that on purpose so the game would end? Right?" And I thought, "That's a way out. Right, yeah. That's good."

And then she goes on to tell me, she's like, "Well, I was the checker champion of my grade school?" I'm like, "What the heck kind of school did you go to?" Right? So anyway, compared to a five year old, I did really well. Compared to my wife, I may never beat her. Right? Here's the point. God's not asking you to compare your holiness to anybody else. The question is, is he able to live the fullness of his life in and through you? Can you really say the words, holy, holy, holy, and mean it. Is there any sin in your life that you're covering or burying or codling or hiding that you don't need to anymore that you can release to of the Lord that in your own heart you can say, "God,

this is yours I just want you to have it." Sometimes it stops right there, other times as it comes up, God's like, "Now, I want you to go tell this brother." Or, "Now, I want you to go tell this sister." And here's what I would tell you. Don't be afraid. Don't be afraid.

God will go the distance with you when you act in obedience to be holy for him so that he gets his glory through you. And here's the truth. Living a holy life is one that's filled with joy. Amen. The way we're going to end our service today is by singing a very, very familiar song. And I'm going to ask that during this song, this is a time where people start moving around on both campuses and getting your belongings and some people even head for the exits. Please don't do that today. Let's sing this song today to the glory of the Lord. Let's sing. Holy, holy, holy to the Lord. Our prayer team will come up during the song. If you want to pray with somebody, you can do that. Or you can stay right in your seats, but let's give God the reverence and respect he deserves. Let's respond in awe and let's tell him that we want to live the holy lives that he's required of us. So would you stand on both campuses as we pray this morning?

Lord Jesus, when we hear a message by this, Lord it can be challenging, but also encouraging knowing we don't have to fulfill anything that you showed us, it's you that wants to do the work in and through us. And so Lord right now, what we pray is that you would have your way with us. And that Lord, whether we're good singers or not, it makes no difference that we would make a joyful noise to you, because you are holy, you are righteous and you are good and you deserve our reverence and respect. And we praise your name, the name that is above every name, the name of the Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen and amen.

