

Whom the Lord Commendeth

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[0 : 00] All right, thank you for that. If you have your Bibles out here, get them out. Find the book of 2 Corinthians, and we're going to be in chapter number 10.

And going to read a portion of the passage here, kind of right in the middle of the chapter. We'll pick it up. Hopefully we can see it as we go. So, kind of not always an easy thing to do, just pick out a verse or pick out a passage in the middle of a book, in the middle of a chapter, and just go.

But I think we'll be able to do it here. 2 Corinthians chapter 10. And before we read, let's pray again together as you find your place. Our Father in heaven, we are thankful for the precious blood of Jesus Christ.

Thank you that it's complete, that this atonement is full. And Lord, we're thankful that you're not requiring our works and our righteousness and our good deeds that we could ever merit anything in any favor of you to pay for our sins and the security of our salvation.

So thank you for his blood. Thank you for your grace. And thank you for your word. And Lord, help us this morning. I pray you'll help me. I pray you'll help each one of us to be hearers of the word.

And Lord, may the truth of the Bible be presented.

[1 : 23] May we receive it. And may it have an effect in our hearts and in our minds. And then ultimately in our lives. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.

Verse number, start in verse number 9. Paul writing to them says that I may not seem as if I would terrify you by letters.

For his letters, say they, are weighty and powerful. But his bodily presence is weak and his speech contemptible. Let such and one think this, that such as we are in word by letters when we are absent, such will we be also in deed when we are present.

So Paul's saying, I'm not just writing checks with my pen here that I don't intend to cash. I'm going to match my walk to my talk. You can count on it when I show up.

Now he says in verse 12, For we dare not make ourselves of the number or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves by themselves and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.

[2 : 29] But we will not boast of things without our measure. But according to the measure of the rule which God hath distributed to us, a measure to reach even unto you. So understand that Paul's writing to a church that's far off in the distance of where he's at locally.

But yet his ministry has reached to them. He has taken missionary journeys. As a matter of fact, he tells them, I've begotten you through the Lord. Like I'm the one that preached the gospel in that city and in other cities.

And his ministry does in fact stretch even as far as Corinth. But we're not going to boast about anything beyond that. Because I haven't done it. I haven't been there.

And so back up to verse, or we'll continue then in verse number 14. For we stretch not ourselves beyond our measure as though we reach not unto you. For we are come as far as to you also in preaching the gospel of Christ.

Not boasting of things without our measure. That is, of other men's labors. But having hope, when your faith is increased, that we shall be enlarged by you according to our rule abundantly to preach the gospel in the regions beyond you.

[3 : 33] And not to boast in another man's line of things made ready to our hand. But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. Now pay attention to verse 18.

For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth. The Bible says in the Proverbs that most men will proclaim everyone his own goodness.

And yet Paul says, not he that commendeth himself is approved, but those four words, whom the Lord commendeth. And Paul refuses to boast beyond what God has called him to do and has enabled him to do.

He rejects the temptation to compare himself to other men, to other ministries, and other workings of God in other places. He says, if it was the Lord's hand by them, praise the Lord. But I'm not going to boast of it and I'm not going to compare myself to that.

And he insists here even that believers steer clear of that same foolish concept or that fruitless activity. It just promotes just a personal self-righteousness.

[4 : 35] I've done something. It draws attention to self. It stinks of pride. And Paul, you know what, worse yet, it robs Jesus Christ of the glory that he deserves.

Because it's his working. In Philippians, it's God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure. And so when a man does something or accomplishes something or the hand of God's on him and he's working for Jesus Christ, Paul's saying, hey, you're not going to glory in this. You're going to glory in the Lord. And you're not going to look at it and say, look what I've done. And you're not going to commend yourself to other people by saying, look at my ministry. Look what I've done. Look what God has done. Or you're going to say, God, God, Jesus Christ, it's all for him. He calls us laborers in the Bible. And he says, it's God that giveth the increased. And so all glorying should be directed to the Lord Jesus Christ, never to men, never in a work, never in a ministry. And it says in that last part of verse 18, but whom the Lord commendeth. How can we know today whom the Lord commendeth? How can we know this? How can we recognize those that God commends or approves of?

[5 : 43] Those individuals, perhaps, that get his attention and that are truly a pleasure to the Lord Jesus Christ. What we'll be tempted to do is say, well, look at the biggest churches out there.

I mean, that has to be evidence, right, that God is commending this work and this man or this ministry. We tend to look at the most successful business. Well, that's the guy.

That's the one. The most top selling this or top viewed that, that we think those are the ones. Everybody's interested. That's the best thing. It's generated the most interest. And it's not the case in the ministry.

And it's not the case in men that God uses either. But whom the Lord commendeth. How can we spot them and how can we know them? They're not necessarily going to be successful in the eyes of men the way we kind of standardize other things in business or things we use in every day.

We want to know whom the Lord commendeth. I'm afraid, sadly, that the ministry today is riddled with men that commend themselves and that compare themselves among themselves and that initially accept worship from men and worship one another and the seemingly great things that they've done and built for the Lord, as they say.

[7 : 04] Some of these men, and I want you to know, this is just true. This is not me speaking like envy or jealousy toward them or any of it. I don't, God knows my heart.

I don't need it. And I'm content with where I am, 100%. And I believe, I want you to believe that and I mean that. But I've been around some and I've seen some. And there's men that have, hold conferences.

They spend half their time praising the preacher. They announce 10-minute announcement about this guy and all of his accolades before he ever gets up and preaches. And before he even preaches, he's going to talk about this, brother.

And good to see you, brother. And I can't wait to have you at our school and conference and what you're going to do. And God's using you. And it's just a, it's disgusting. It is. If you haven't been around it, thank God.

But if you have, it makes you sick. It makes you sick to see these people just, ah. Remember when Jared Pilkington was here one night, he preached a message about the pastor. And some of the things he said there, he's like, believe me, church, this isn't a man of God message.

[8 : 07] This isn't to elevate the pastor of your church. This isn't that. But that's what goes on in these places. These men and their ministries, they're comparing themselves among themselves. And they're commending one another of your fruit and of their ministry and of what you've built.

I know personally a man that was on the phone with me. And I won't tell you his name. I won't tell you the names I could tell you. You wouldn't hurt. But just for the sake of the, I won't.

But he said to me, he goes, I went to a conference, a pastor's conference very recently. And he said, he's like, brother, I can't wait to go back. It was the best thing I've been at. I've been at all these other conferences and I can't stand them. But this one, when they got up, it was just an auditorium full of pastors and preachers and missionaries. And the man that was the pastor, the host pastor got up and said, now listen, I don't care if you have five people in your living room that you pastor or if you've got 5,000 people on some major campus and you've got to build more.

I don't care who you are or how many you run. Nobody here is interested in that. What we're interested in is being a blessing. We're all on the same level here.

[9 : 19] And he said, I just, what we're hosting this conference for is to be a help to you, to try to encourage you, to try to get you connected with some other men that are doing the same thing you're doing and we don't want to elevate anybody.

And that guy went to that meeting and he's like, that is so different than the previous four meetings that he's been to. And some of them down in this area where the whole time, like I mentioned earlier, they start by just patting each other on the back and thank you, brother.

And it's disgusting. Certain men are gifted men and I've seen them and maybe you have too. They could grow anything they touch.

I mean, they could show up here and grow this church, triple it in size with their charismatic personalities. You might not, by now, you know, I don't have one. So we're going to be this. But they can do it. Anything they touch turns to gold. And I've seen him. I know a man that he was an assistant pastor for a while and he was, oh my goodness, he was good looking.

[10 : 19] He could sing. He was athletic, could play basketball better than anybody in the church. He built a youth group from 10 kids to 50 kids. It was like everything was going right.

People loved him. They loved him. And when he left the church and went to another church and took over and pastored a church, there were people that were so devastated.

They wanted to move. They wanted to move two hours away to stay with him. And they would travel over the weekend, some of them every other weekend. Then it was once a month. Certain families would go. Why?

Because they were so in love with that man. And I don't have anything against him. He was just gifted. He was a talented man and blessed by God to serve and to work for the Lord, to labor. But people fell in love with him and they worshiped him. And he, well, the pastor told me one time, he said, you got to watch out for him. He's an Absalom.

[11 : 13] He'll steal the hearts of the people. And he wasn't wrong. There was some reasons why he had to leave. But anyway, that's a side note. But getting back to this, if we ask the common Christian, if we ask them who the Lord commands, I suppose they'd look around to those who seem to be the most successful, to the biggest churches, to those that are writing the books and being interviewed on TV or speaking, engaged with speaking, are all around the world.

And they're likable. And you'd say, surely God is commending them. Or is he? Or is he? Because it says, not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.

Let's look back at another passage here close by. Go to 1 Corinthians chapter 1. One more passage to look at, then we'll get into whom the Lord commendeth.

1 Corinthians chapter 1. When we're trying to understand this, let's set some parameters here from the scripture. First, we'll start in verse number 26 to the end of the chapter.

1 Corinthians 1 verse 26. For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called.

[12 : 31] 1 Corinthians 1 verse 27.

Righteousness and sanctification and redemption. That according as it is written, he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. Now isn't that the same passage that he quoted later in 2 Corinthians 10? That passage from Jeremiah. He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. So God's going to choose some base things, some things that are despised, some weak things and use them so that he gets the glory.

But what happens when a man gets used of God? He begins to see himself as somebody. He gets some pride. It's always in there. Even if you're base and weak, there's still some shred of pride that just starts to grow.

And starts to get lifted up and say, look what I'm doing. Look what I've done. So God calls those that are lowly to make sure that he gets the glory and that no flesh should glory in his presence. [13:59] So then, who does the Lord commend is the question. Let's take a look at the ministry of Christ. And just notice a few things and people that stand out. And I'll give you just three categories of probably many, but three that I think will help us to understand whom the Lord commends.

I'd like you to take your Bibles and go back to the Gospel of Mark and find chapter number 12. Mark chapter number 12. And find someone here that the Lord commends that nobody else on earth even noticed.

And this individual certainly did not commend themselves. But the Lord took notice. And now we know about it and need to know about it. In Mark chapter 12, come to verse number 41.

Mark 12, 41. And Jesus sat over against the treasury and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain poor widow and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing.

And he called unto him his disciples and sayeth unto them, Verily I say unto you that this poor widow hath cast more in than all they which cast into the treasury.

[15:15] For all they did cast in of their abundance, but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living. This woman here is just called a certain poor widow.

Don't know her name, don't know a thing about her life except she's poor and she's given all of her living to the treasury, giving it in essence to God.

This is a strange thing to consider. And we would just, we would be like the rest of them, just despise her. We'd be looking for the rich donors. The ones that are actually going to make a difference.

I mean, let's be honest. If somebody has, just say, two dollar bills and puts it in the offering, how far is that going to go? And don't misinterpret.

If that's all you can do, it doesn't matter. God doesn't need your money. This church doesn't need your money so that we can, God's, as far as I'm concerned, you be obedient, he'll take care of it, and I'm trusting in him.

[16:18] And he knows that. And we'll preach a little bit about giving here this morning, but it's not my topic. Not very often. But somebody that gets God's attention, that God approves of, and that God commends are the givers.

Are the givers. This poor woman gave in two mites, which make a farthing. And that's nothing. But to her, it was all her living. It was all that she had.

What a thought there for somebody to show up to church and to, out of obedience and love to Jesus Christ, give all that they have. Holding nothing back from God.

Again, I'm not after your purse or your pocketbook or your wallet. Me personally, I'm not after you at all. But God is. I'm telling you, he is. He's interested in your giving.

He pays attention to your giving. He acknowledges your giving. Whether it's you're rich and you give much, cast in much, or you just give what you can and all that you can.

[17:19] He notices that. And he commends the givers. He commends somebody that gives to him with an obedient heart. Somebody that's not interested in applause or praises of men.

This woman, she wasn't getting any of that, was she? She could have stayed home because if that's what she was looking for, she wasn't going to get it with her two mites. She's just a humble, lowly woman, despised and overlooked.

But get it, she's commended of the Lord. And it's written in this book of the gift that she gave. Now, God commends the givers. Look a few pages back to Matthew 26.

And here's another woman that's a giver. We studied her on Christmas Day. Matthew 26. A certain woman that has an alabaster box full of very precious ointment.

Matthew 26. And we'll start reading in verse 10. I trust you know the passage here enough to carry on. Verse 10 through 13. When Jesus understood it, she puts this ointment on and poured it on his head and sat at me.

[18:30] His disciples get upset. Yet when Jesus understood it, he said unto them, Why trouble ye this woman? For she hath wrought a good work upon me. For ye have the poor always with you, but me ye have not always. For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial.

Verily I say unto you, Whosoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her. So a different giver here, a different woman.

But this one gave something precious. Very precious. Costly. Not two mites. But this woman gave something costly. And she wrought a good work on Jesus Christ, one that lives on to this day in the reading of this text.

This gift was fulfilling a purpose that the disciples didn't understand. And maybe she didn't either. He said, she did it for my burial. Now, the first woman was a humble and lowly person.

The second woman here, still humble, bowing, but probably of more means to own and possess such a very precious substance. An alabaster box of very precious ointment.

[19 : 35] So much so that the disciple says it could have been sold for much. It could have been sold for much. Very high in value. Very high in value. Now, this gift fulfilled the purpose for his burial, an act of worship, and an act of love.

She didn't show up thinking, well, I got this and I don't have anything better to do with it. Or, I wonder what I'll get out of this if I give him this thing. I wonder what I'll get out of it. No, she just loved him and worshipped him and gave to him.

Now, the giver, these are two givers. The giver is commended, not based on the gift, but based on the heart that gave. Their giving declares to Jesus Christ, I love you.

Love you more than this. And I want you to have it. This is all I have, and it's yours. The giver has a submissive heart of obedience and love.

Thinking that Jesus Christ is worthy of the costliest thing that you own. That's the one that's commended. The very last thing that you possess.

[20 : 42] And saying, I'll give it to you and hold nothing back. The Lord commends the giver. And that recognition, I think, from God is more valuable than any praise and any value that you can get from any applause that men can offer you.

He notices what you give. He notices when you give. And he commends the giver that holds nothing back. That's not attached to things. But ready to give them up to God with an obedient heart.

The givers. They get commended of God. Now come to Luke chapter 10. Let's look at somebody else. Luke chapter 10. I wonder this morning, are you a giver?

Do you give? Do you give to Jesus Christ? There is a true reward and blessing in giving.

And it's one where you can, it's liberating to your own spirit to give. To know that this money doesn't have a hold of me. It has not got my heart.

[21 : 49] It does not control me. God controls me. And when he tells me to give, I'll give. And it's a blessing to have that liberty. And it's a curse not to have it. To let money and things control you and consume you.

And be always afraid that you'll lose it. Sometimes it would be the best thing for you if you'd lose it. So that you can get back to relying on God. And walking with him. And pleading out to him.

To cover these expenses. To cover these things that come up in your life. God commends the giver. Now come to Luke 10. We're going to look at the end of this passage. And here's Martha and Mary.

In verse 38 to the end of the chapter. And secondly, I want to say that God commends the hearers. Specifically the hearers of his word. Look at verse 38. Now it came to pass as they went.

That he entered into a certain village. And a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary. Which also sat at Jesus' feet. And heard his word.

[22 : 49] But Martha was cumbered about with much serving. And came to him and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? Bid her therefore that she help me.

And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things. But one thing is needful. And Mary hath chosen that good part.

Which shall not be taken away from her. To sit and to hear his word is called that good part. That good part. She hath chosen that good part.

The Lord commends Mary for her decision. Her choice. To sit and hear the word of God. The hearing of his word was a choice. That was made by one sister.

And not made by the other. And the one that gets commended is the one that's a hearer. Now the other had important stuff to do. She had much serving. She was a busy, busy girl.

[23 : 49] And she needed help. Or maybe she needed to hear the word of God as well. Christ says in Luke chapter 11, Blessed are they that hear the word of God.

And this lady Mary here is blessed. And she's commended by the Lord for her hearing. God has a special commendation for anyone who chooses to come apart from all of the busy chores and all the things calling for your attention.

to come apart and to sit and to hear the word of God. He has a special commendation for the hearers. Because those hearers make a personal choice.

To set aside the chores. To set aside all of the things on the checklist that have to get done. To set aside the schedule and the meetings. And set aside the hobbies and even the relaxation and rest. And to set it all aside so that they can hear the word of God. The hearers adjust their schedules. To make sure that they're able to get to church when the doors are open.

[24 : 53] They don't let their schedules determine whether they can make it to church or not. Not the hearers of the word of God. They choose the good part. They choose to hear the word.

Jesus commends the hearers. When the doors are open, the hearers are sitting. And they're hearing. And because of that, they're commended of the Lord. Understand, they have just as much stuff going on in their lives as most everybody else on the planet.

But they make a choice. And they set a priority. That when the doors of church are open and the word of God is being preached, I am there. I belong there. And I'm going to be commended of the Lord because of it.

I want you to realize that. Consider that God commends the one that chooses to hear his word.

Sunday is not a day just for relaxation, the weekends here.

It's not a day of vacation or recreation. It's a day of worship. It's a day of hearing the words of God. Wednesday, the hearers of the words of God cut their week short or cut their day short or find a way.

[26 : 00] As if it's possible, they find a way. Some of them come rushing in. Some of them come in their work clothes. Some of them say, I won't make dinner. I'll get it afterwards. But I'm not going to miss church.

And the hearers of the word of God, they rush if they have to. They refuse to schedule something on Wednesday night. To them, it's that good part of the week.

I remember that feeling. Now I'm just kind of programmed into it. I have to be here. But there was a day when I didn't have to be here. On Sundays and Wednesdays. And it was a choice of mine as a young man living by myself.

It was a choice that I wanted to be right with God. But I looked forward to Wednesday night church. I remember after Sunday was over and thinking, oh, I've got to go out in this filthy world, in this atmosphere all day Monday, all day Tuesday.

And then Wednesday. But Wednesday night. Wednesday night. I'm going to be in church. I'm going to be with my brothers and sisters. We're going to sing. We're going to have the scriptures open. I mean, I longed for it.

[27 : 05] I needed it in the middle of the week of the atmosphere I worked in. And it was delicious. It was an uplifting time. It was a blessing. It was a help to me. And I got to sit and hear the word of God.

And the Lord commends the hearers. The Lord commends somebody else. Let's come back to Matthew chapter 15. Look at Matthew 15. The Lord commends the givers.

And He commends the hearers of the word of God. He also commends the believers. That is, those who exercise faith. Look at Matthew 15.

And we'll start in verse number 21. Then Jesus went thence and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. And behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coast and cried unto Him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David.

My daughter is grievously vexed with the devil. Now, she's not a Jew. Christ didn't come but for the lost sheep of the house of Israel. So, she gets no, she gets nothing. He's not here for her.

[28 : 23] Understand, this is before the cross. This is, you need to understand your Bible. Rightly divided. And He said, verse 23, He answered her not a word. And His disciples came and besought Him, saying, Send her away, for she crieth after us.

But He answered and said, I'm not sent, but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Then came she and worshipped Him, saying, Lord, help me. But He answered and said, It's not meet to take

the children's bread and to cast it to dogs.

That's all she was to Him, a Gentile, a dog, an outcast. And she said, Truth, Lord, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith.

Be it unto thee, even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour. Now compare this with just a few verses later into chapter 16. And Christ is talking to His disciples.

I'll just read the verse, verse 8. Which when Jesus perceived, He said unto them, O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread?

[29 : 31] This woman, this Gentile, gets ignored by Jesus Christ. The disciples want her lost. Get rid of her. And He's not even interested in helping her. He's not baiting her to test her faith.

This is straight up what it seems. He doesn't have any interest. He's not here for you. Get lost. But she won't and refuses. And she displays to Him something that He identifies as great faith.

Great is thy faith. A little bit later, He tells His disciples they're of little faith. Now look back at Matthew chapter 8. Matthew chapter 8. Matthew chapter 8. And here's another Gentile that approaches Jesus Christ.

In verse number 5. When Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto Him a centurion, beseeching Him, saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home, sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. And Jesus saith unto him, I'll come and heal him. And the centurion answered and said, Lord, I'm not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof. But speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me.

[30 : 42] And I say to this man, go and he goeth, and to another come and he cometh. And to my servant, do this, and he doeth it. When Jesus heard it, He marveled and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith.

No, not in Israel. And I say unto you that many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness.

There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Now this man gets his wish fulfilled because what Jesus Christ says is great faith. Now just for comparison again, look at verse 25 of the chapter.

And 26, His disciples came to him and awoke him saying, Lord, save us, we perish. And he said unto them, Why are you so fearful, O ye of little faith? I find it no coincidence that each time here that a Gentile is commended for their great faith, just a few verses later, those hand-picked, those personally trained, those disciples, grown men that have been given power, a temporary power at the time to heal all manner of disease and cast out devils and raise the dead.

And these men are rebuked for having little faith, the very disciples of Jesus Christ. And seeing these things, it reminds me that God is no respecter of persons, that great men, as we would perceive them to be, are not always great in faith as we might assume them to be.

[32 : 14] And don't be deceived by appearances or think that a man, or as the scripture says, think of a man above that which is written. In verse 11 of chapter 8, we read that Christ said, Many shall come from...

He's talking about Gentiles are going to get into this kingdom that God promised to the Jew because the children of the kingdom, in their lack of faith, are going to get cast out.

And that reminds me, like, God has no respecter of persons. Many unsuspecting nobodies have more faith and are more commended of God, that walk by faith, that believe the Bible, that trust God today and act in faith today.

And they're people you wouldn't suspect. They're people that men don't commend. They don't even understand, but God commends them. God commends the believers. He commends those that walk in faith today.

It might not be a big shot at the front of the line when Jesus Christ is handing out rewards. You might be shocked who is. When he said, The first shall be last and the last shall be first, there may be some real application to that thought.

[33 : 26] The Lord commends the believers, those who walk by faith, those who live by faith. The Bible says, By faith we stand. And those who exercise faith in the word of God, you'll be surprised one day when we see all things get handed out and recompensed.

I guarantee you'll be shocked. In Hebrews chapter 11, that great chapter is called the Hall of Faith. We call that the Hall of Faith. It's a great chapter highlighting the faith of all these characters back in

the Old Testament times, the men and women that believed what God said and what he commanded, and they acted in faith.

And some of them, to start with, is Abel, that he offered a more perfect sacrifice than his brother Cain. Abel, what did he do? He offered a lamb. I mean, when they're going to, come on, they're going to come present themselves before the Lord.

Don't you think they were a little bit nervous and fearful and scared about this? And what did Cain decide? I'm going to show him. I'm going to show him. I'm going to do everything I can.

I'm going to pour myself into the, bring him the best of the best of the best and put it there and say, this is for you. This is what I can do. I can't do any better than this. And Abel, seeing his brother working and toiling and all of the labor and all of the presentation, just perfect.

[34 : 50] Abel's acting in faith. He's taking a lamb and carrying this lamb and looking at that big spread, thinking, I don't, I hope this is okay because I didn't do anything for this one.

I didn't pour my heart into this thing. I didn't sweat at all. I didn't toil. It didn't take me weeks and months to prepare and present this for the Lord. I'm offering an animal.

I'm offering him a sacrifice of blood. And the Lord says that he did that in faith. You got to see that picture. He was probably a little nervous looking at his brother's offering, but had faith to know that this is what God wants.

And I bet it got a little sketchy there in a moment of time. But he's commended for his faith. In Hebrews 11, there's others. Not only did they offer the right offerings, but others believed God and know his case concerning things to come.

Things that they've never seen, can't even imagine what's going to come. It's too much for them to conceive. But God said it. And so I'm going to start working and do exactly as he says.

[36 : 00] And by faith, men and women did things. Abraham is called to leave his country and leave his land to go to a land that will afterwards show thee of. And so what did he do? He left. He left.

God called him to a different land and he left. And he did it by faith. Still today, God calls men and women to leave. To leave their lands, leave their homes to another land.

to go and minister and they do it by faith. Others performed heroic deeds and others endured absolutely horrific and terrible trials.

And they're all commended in that chapter for their faith because God commends the believers. This morning we read that God commends the givers, he commends the hearers, and he commends the believers.

Now, at the beginning I said some things and it's not my goal to just shoot down some big names in Christianity and men that have built large works, but rather my goal is to get you to focus on this in a different light into exactly, just what exactly or who exactly it is that the Lord commends.

[37 : 12] Are you a giver? If you are, the Lord will commend you. I wonder if Jesus Christ has possession of what's yours. If he asked you to increase your giving, would it hurt your heart or would it thrill your soul?

Would he find a cheerful giver? Are you a giver? Sometimes that's the toughest one in the book is to let go of your money, to let go and just to give it to God.

But he commends the giver. He also commends the hearer of the word of God, the one that pushes things aside and makes sure, makes a choice to attend, to sit and to hear.

Is that you? Is that you just when it's convenient? Is that you when there's nothing better to do or when you don't have an excuse? I've been around church a long time.

I'm only 44, but 44 years of it, I've been in church and I've seen him come and go. Nothing surprises me. Nothing. I read about a guy, a pastor just this week.

[38 : 16] I don't even want to tell you about it. It's terrible. A guy I knew. Terrible. But thinking on this, nothing surprises me. Nothing surprises me to see somebody get in love with God and to show up and just to get in all, just dive in with both feet.

And I've seen it, people show up a little, show up a little, show up a little and then start warming up and then start showing up a lot and then before you know it, boom, they're in and then down the road, they're serving God somewhere.

I've seen it from, I've seen him come and go and all of it. But what are you? Because God's going to commend you if you make that a priority that you're going to sit and hear his word, that it is the good part of your week to come and get around God's people and to get around the word of God.

Unless you've lost your hunger for the word of God or unless you're like Martha and you're careful about other things, many things because those things will never go away. They'll always be screaming for your attention and your time and if you give your heart to them and take it away from the word of God, you're going to lose your commendation of the Lord and maybe no one else will know it but the Lord knows, you'll know.

God then commends the believers. Faith is a fruit of the spirit and it's evidence that you're walking in the new man today and the new man, mind you, he has zero doubts.

[39 : 40] He has zero fear. He's fully trusting the Lord Jesus Christ. He's not afraid of anything. It's that old man that's full of fear, that's full of doubt, that's not sure if he can trust, that he can take a step but the new man, he is full of faith and God commends they that walk in the spirit and in faith.

The commendations of man are meaningless. What matters is whom the Lord commends and doing things, I might add, to be seen of men is just as wrong and doing things like those hypocrites back in Matthew chapter 6 to be seen of men, they have their reward.

They get commended of men and that's all they're going to get commended of but it's whom the Lord commends. I want to turn your attention to that this morning and not worry if you don't have something big going on for yourself and don't let it, don't feel pressure that you're supposed to be somebody even in this church or somewhere else.

Don't feel like you have to show yourself because it's whom the Lord commends. That's what matters and if you're faithful in the things he's called you to do then just rest in that.

He notices when you can only give two mites and he notices when you make the decision to come and you put other things aside and say no, I'm going to do what I think is right and I'm going to get to the word of God tonight.

[41 : 03] He also notices when you exercise faith and when you make decisions in your life based on what the word of God declares to be true. Not what man says, not what this world's calling for but what the book says.

Knowing and believing of a surety that you're going to stand before Jesus Christ. You're going to give account of all of this. When you make decisions based on that day, that's decisions made in faith and God sees everyone and he commends everyone.

And there's a temptation, I'm sure it is, in the ministry and I'm sure it is among ministers to be bigger and to be somebody to start getting invited to preach and have their picture on the conference flyer. I'm sure that's a big temptation for some and probably a stumbling block for some. But I'm trying to present this to you to say you can let all of that just crash and burn.

None of that matters in this life. Whom the men commendeth, just put it aside. And if inside of you is this proud person that wants recognition and it wants details to be noticed and you want that, then you're loving the praise of men when you could be loving the praises of God.

[42 : 18] And it's something Christ addressed, we won't go there. So whom does the Lord command? Well here's three groups of people he commends and I trust that you can see yourself in them and maybe work to be that person regardless of whether men notice.

I may never notice it. I may never say, hey, thank you for that or hey brother, I want to recognize you, your work here. That may never happen and it doesn't matter. If the Lord Jesus Christ commends you, be satisfied with that.

Let's bow our heads together. We're about through. But before we dismiss, did the Lord speak to your heart today through a word or two?

Did he speak to you and reveal to you that you're a little more interested in people seeing you than you ought to be? Or that you're more interested in hanging on to things that God might want?

If the Lord's dealing with your heart about your walk of faith, about your faithfulness to your local church, your attendance, or what it takes to keep you away, are you cumbered about?

[43 : 24] Is there much serving going on? Are you careful about many things and not focused on this? Because it's the good part. It's absolutely the good part. It could be the good part of your week too to attend Wednesday night services.

Maybe that's all you need to get out of this tonight is you need to step up and quit letting things get in the way and making excuses. It's not about me. I'm not keeping attendance, but God is.

And he sees every time you choose to come. And he sees every time you refuse to come. And he knows your heart. Is he commending you? Does he commend you?

Is he going to commend you now? Or is he going to commend you before us in the judgment seat of Christ? Thou good and faithful servant. Isn't it worth striving for that?

I think it is. Father, please take these words, take these thoughts, these examples, and apply them to us individually wherever they need to land.

[44 : 33] I pray that we'd have ears to hear. I pray that we'd open our hearts to receive these truths. And God, my only prayer and goal is that you are glorified and that you receive something from somebody here because of it.

That they get closer to you, more committed to you, that maybe they'll see life for what it is and push some things aside and prioritize their walk with you above all others.

Lord, help us. We can't do this alone. We need your spirit to strengthen us and to embolden us and to convict us. We need you to guide us. We need you to speak and direct us.

And so I pray that you'll do that and that you'll have the full attention of each heart here this morning. It's in Christ's name I pray. Amen. We're going to stand together in a moment, sing a hymn.

And as we sing, if you need to commit something to the Lord, do it. Don't be ashamed. If you need to be