

He Must Be First Place in Your Life

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 28 September 2014

Preacher: Jim Masters

[0:00] She's running the show today. Oh, there you are. I was doing it last week too, when you guys were gone.

If you would take your Bibles and go to the Gospel of Luke, chapter 18. Gospel of Luke, chapter 18. If you're visiting with us, you can pull out that black Bible in the chair in front of you.

Go towards the back. And go to page 62. Page 62. You'll find Luke 18.

We're going to start reading verse 18, 18 through 30. 18 through 30. Luke 18, 18 through 30.

Is that air conditioning or heat? Stand? Oh, okay. It's kind of warm. Thanks, Michael. Oh, yeah.

[1:16] That's good. I saw that. Cool. Cool. Okay, good. I think we're all ready. I stop to make sure there's no ruffling more of pages, you know.

Okay. And a certain ruler questioned him, saying, Good teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? And Jesus said to him, Why do you call me good?

No one is good except God alone. You know the commandments. Do not commit adultery. Do not murder. Do not steal. Do not bear false witness. Honor your father and mother. And he said, All these I have kept from youth.

And when Jesus heard this, he said to him, One thing you still lack. Sell all that you possess and distribute it to the poor. And you shall treasure in heaven.

And come, follow me. But when he heard these things, he became very sad, for he was extremely rich. And Jesus looked at him and said, How hard it is for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God.

[2:26] For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. And they who heard it said, Then who can be saved? But he said, The things impossible with men are possible with God.

And Peter said, Behold, we've left our own things and followed you. And he said to them, Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God who shall not receive many times as much at this time and in the age of come eternal life.

John D. Rockefeller Sr. often regarded as the richest person in history. Aside from Solomon, of course.

Maybe you've heard about this. Someone asked him how to get rich, how to become wealthy. We have three rules. Three rules for anyone who wants to become rich.

Number one, go to work early. Number two, stay at work late. Number three, find oil. Can't seem to be the third one.

[3:51] Wealth. Riches. It helps. Oftentimes, it hinders. Take John G. Wendell, for example.

He and his sisters, they received a huge inheritance from their parents, but they spent very little of it and did all they could to keep their wealth for themselves. They hoarded it for themselves.

How bad did they do that? John influenced five of his six sisters never to marry. And they lived in the same house in New York City for 50 years.

The last sister, she died in 1931. her estate was valued at more than a hundred million dollars in 1931. Her only dress was the one she had made herself and she worn it for 25 years.

Boy, they really wanted to keep that for themselves. Stuff. Stuff hinders us. And what it hinders the most is our relationship with God.

[5:03] We end up focusing on stuff, on our money, our possessions, our belongings, our things. And as we come to our text here in the Gospel of Luke, where our theme is for us to follow Jesus, you'll find forgiveness of your sins.

And here in our passage you will see you'll find forgiveness of your sins, but He must be first place in your life. Jesus must be first place in your life.

Follow Him. You'll find forgiveness. But He must be your priority. He must be first place. Jesus, having just declared the justification of the tax collector and the need to have simple faith, we looked at that last week, the historical events now give us a negative example.

We had two positives last week. Now we get a negative. no humility, no trusting dependence. He was one who failed to have both.

Instead, He loved His stuff. He loved His money. He loved His possessions. He loved Himself. The rich ruler, confidence, self-righteous, and prideful.

[6:36] the complete opposite to the tax collector. Childs. It's opposite to that. And later, the complete opposite to the blind man.

We'll see that next week. He actually was just like the negative example that Jesus brought up last week, the Pharisee. justified by crying out for mercy, having simple faith.

No. Not this man. Not this man. A true disciple leaves everything to follow Jesus. And we did that very thing, Peter will say.

The disciples, they gave what the rich ruler was asked to give. And this kind of giving is demanded of Jesus' followers because that's what He did Himself. He gave Himself on behalf of sinners.

We're going to see that next week as well in verses 31 and 34. Jesus will once again predict His death. Jesus, though, He calls people to obey Him by following Him.

[7:47] When they do, they'll receive blessing. Though not exactly as they desire. And what is your obedience? Jesus is first and foremost in your life.

He's your top priority. More than girls' money are gold, says one song. More than fame, achievements, anything.

More than the booze. More than the weed. More than anything. You give Him your all. More than anything. So what is eternal life?

Eternal life, Jesus' first place in everything. To know and follow Jesus is eternal life, which is entering the kingdom of God, which is making Jesus first place in your life.

They all go together. You're doing circular reasoning. No, Jesus is. Eternal life is entering the kingdom, which is following Jesus, which is making Him first, which is eternal life, which keeps going in the circle.

[8:56] Once again, once again, Jesus will bring up what is in our wallets. Oh, man. Not that. Good thing I'm sitting on it.

And if our commitment to Him shows itself in how we spend our money, do we give, give, investing in God's kingdom, or do we keep, keep? That's what He does.

Jesus talks about two things the most. I've said this before. I'll say it again. The first one is hell. The second is money.

The two things Jesus talks about the most in the Gospels. The first is hell. The second is money.

Now, that's not what you hear. People say, Hey, man, Jesus talks about love. He does.

But the thing He talks about the most, the first is hell. The second is money. What we do with it. It will be interesting because we will see that the passage, it emphasizes both our responsibility and yet our inability.

[10:07] We're responsible to make Jesus first and foremost in our lives as a top priority and yet we're unable to come to the Savior unless God works in our heart and changes us from the inside out.

It's amazing how you see both in our passage. Our responsibility and yet also our inability. So, Jesus must be first.

How? How specifically can you make Jesus first in your life? I'll give you three different ways from our text. These are not what the rich man does.

These are things he should have done but he doesn't do these. He does the very opposite. So, I'll give you positives, so to speak, as opposed to the negatives. How do you do this? How do you make Jesus first and foremost in your life?

Number one, admit your imperfections. or imperfection. Admit it. 18 through 19. A certain ruler questioned him saying, good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?

[11:15] He was a ruler of some sort, an influential, wealthy man who was a civic leader of some sort. Maybe he was known in the community for his piety, definitely was well.

Respected, a leading man in that society, had great significance. If you go through the other Gospels, Matthew and to Mark, you'll see other things about the man, but, you know, if I said this before, for going through the Gospel of Luke, I like to just stay in Luke for the most part.

So, this was this ruler, this is who he was. And he says, good teacher. Interesting. None of the rabbis, none of the rabbis would have their pupils call them good teacher.

None would do that. They knew that only God himself was good. So, it seems that he was calling Jesus good maybe as flattery.

He wasn't thinking about what he was saying. What must I do to inherit eternal life? In other words, how can I be sure I'll be saved in the final resurrection? A basic question on salvation.

[12:24] How can I get eternal life? What can I do? Based upon my actions, my works, my merits.

Notice how he focused on himself. Not on grace. This rich ruler assumed that eternal life could be earned and that there was some work he was not presently doing that was required in order for him to be assured of eternal life.

Maybe if there was a generous action, maybe if I did something that would just be a huge sacrifice, a great sacrifice of deed of some kind, that would secure him, that would secure him, I know I can earn it.

And he assumed as well, he assumed he had the power to do what was required of him. He assumed he had the power in himself to do what was required.

What must I do to inherit it? What can I do to earn this? All I need to know is what it was. People may ask you, how can I be saved?

[13:48] But do they really mean it? Do they really mean it? Notice how Jesus responds. Jesus said to him, why do you call me good?

No one is good except God alone. Why does Jesus do it? Why does Jesus reject him calling him good? Why does he do this? Is it because Jesus is saying, hey, I'm not good, I mean, I'm not God. Is he saying that because of that? No. Jesus wanted him to reflect on what he really was saying and what he really wanted.

And if this rich ruler truly pondered what he said, he would see that he was unfit for the blessing he sought. You must admit that you don't have it in yourself.

Admit your imperfection. Yet he thought he could earn it. You should cry for mercy. Plus, Jesus wanted him to focus on God and God's will.

[14:59] God alone is righteous. God alone is good. Don't try to flatter me, boy. You want to follow the good one?

Then follow God by listening to and obeying me, Jesus was saying. Friends, salvation cannot be earned.

You must admit you're totally imperfect. The standard is not goodness. The standard is perfection. The standard is perfection. You cannot earn favor with God unless you are absolutely perfect in any and every way.

The law demands perfection, not just mere good outweighing the bad. grand. It's not a scale. Or it's not, you know, graded on a curve.

Remember that? And some of you went to school and you know, everybody gets, you know, like in the C range, right? So the teacher says, okay, I'm going to grade on a curve.

[16:10] So a person gets like a 75% and that's the A, right? So you're like, oh, and you want to beat up the kid who got like a 95, right? That's what you want to do. Remember that? Yeah.

Because we would go beat him up.

I was, that's right. You want to beat up that kid because he just dropped the curve. We want everybody to get a 75, right? God isn't great on a curve. The standard is perfection.

But what's the one thing that we say? Nobody is perfect. Exactly. But wait, one was. Jesus was perfect.

perfect. Admit your imperfection. You must look to the perfection of Jesus Christ alone, not your goodness. There's no scale.

There's no earning. You want to make Jesus first and foremost? You must first, first, admit your imperfection. Number two, which goes together, reject your self-righteousness.

[17:14] reject your self-righteousness. Verse 20 and 21. You know the commandments. Don't commit adultery, not murder, do not steal, don't bear false witness, honor your father and mother.

Come to Jesus and find forgiveness of your sins, but you must reject your self-righteousness. Oh, by the way, speaking of good, let's look at some goodness righteousness and some righteousness, shall we?

God's commands, do not do this, do not do this, do not do this, do not do this. Look, if you're going to earn eternal life, then acts of righteousness are demanded. You know these.

You must obey these perfectly. He quotes commandment number seven, number six, number eight, number nine, number five. These were the measurable ones, measurable in the sense that they could be tested by one's outward behavior, more or less.

But where do the outward sins, where do they first begin? Right here. People say, well, I don't committed adultery, I haven't stolen anything, I don't lie, I don't cheat, I do good to people.

[18:37] But Jesus says, if you look at a woman who lusts after her, you've already committed adultery with her in your heart. Oh, that's not, that's what Jesus says.

Jesus says, if you're angry with someone and call them fool, you're guilty of hell. Oh, but that's not. Well, wait, what standard are we following now?

Yours or God's? Yours or Jesus says. Oh, I did all those, man.

Look at the next verse. All these things I've kept from my youth, I'm awesome. His self-confidence truly came out.

Just like the Pharisee. He had total confidence on how he rated on that scale. Oh, for my early teen years, I've kept all of God's law. If this is, oh, man, I'm sad.

[19:37] I am in. Awesome. Awesome. How great. He had the audacity to put all his hope in his self-righteousness.

And so we look at this and we say, well, wait a second. Jesus just said last week in the verses that justified made, it's a declaration by God, forensic act by which he declares somebody righteous based upon the righteousness of Jesus.

But now he's telling the guy to be a good person. I don't understand. Why is he doing this? Friends, Jesus was not switching or contradicting what he just said a few verses ago.

he wanted to make clear that God's righteous demands means we must ask for mercy. You are a sinner.

But his arrogance came out. His self-confidence came out. His self-righteousness came out. And that's why if you want to make Jesus first and foremost in your life, you want Jesus to be a priority, then you must reject your self-righteousness.

[20:58] That you're a good person. Unfortunately, the rabbis didn't help him.

The rabbis, they believed the law could be kept in its entirety. Way to go. Thanks, guys. But they, and this ruler, did not think deeply about the law.

It's not just deeds. It's words. It's here. It's here. Friends, the law does not commend you.

It kills you and condemns you. It condemns you. Paul says this in Romans chapter 7.

What shall we say? Is the law sin? No way. On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin except through the law.

[22:09] For I would have not known about coveting if the law had not said, you shall not covet. But sin, taking opportunity through the commandments, producing the coveting of every kind.

For apart from the law, sin is dead. And I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin became alive and I died. The law does not help us.

The law does not commend you. The law is a standard by which you must place your life before. The law demands perfection and you cannot meet it. Your righteousness is nothing because you must be perfect.

It kills you and condemns you and thus it shows you you need to be justified. You need to be declared righteous, you know, righteousness outside of you.

Or it's called an alien righteousness. It's outside of you. You need to be credited to you. It doesn't come from you.

[23:17] It comes from Jesus. If you want Jesus to be first and foremost, you must admit your imperfection. Second, you must throw away your self righteousness.

Just get rid of it. Reject it. Third, forsake your possessions, your stuff.

death. Jesus probes more. He says when Jesus heard this, he said to him, there's one thing you still lack.

Sell all that you possess and distribute to the poor. You shall have treasure in heaven and come follow me. There it is. Come follow me. There is the key verse. Make me first. Make me foremost. Right there. Come follow me. But first you must admit your imperfection. Reject your self righteousness. And third, forsake your possessions. You're still lacking.

[24:20] He says, how much does this man love others? How much does he truly love God? How much is he willing to give up for the sake of others? How much trust does he have in God to really obey?

See, first he tells him, sell all you have and give the proceeds to the poor. So in other words, divest yourself of all your most valuable assets, benefiting others not like you.

If he really didn't love his stuff, this would be no problem. Because he knew he would have great treasure in heaven. It was the promise. You have a fuller life.

That's your best life now. No. No. No. No. No. No. No. No. No. No. No. No. No. And then come follow me. Leave it all.

And enter into discipleship with me. Come and sit under my teaching and live your life the way I will show you. Make me first and foremost in your life.

[25:30] Friends, this is not the first time Luke has given this to us in his gospel. 1433. So therefore, Jesus says, no one of you can be my disciple who does not give up all his own possessions.

But why sell his stuff? It would force the ruler to trust God and rely upon God for his needs.

Have absolute allegiance to God by cutting off your allegiance to your stuff. You rely on God.

through his Messiah, Jesus. In other words, God was saying, make me your primary commitment.

Not yourself, not your family, not your possessions, not your things, me.

See, he was calling the man to faith. He was calling the man to faith in himself wholeheartedly. He must have faith in me wholeheartedly, Jesus was telling him. But to do this, he had to be willing to part with his stuff, his money, his things.

[26:50] The law, he so self-righteously exclaimed that he kept, was not being kept. Else he would see that he could not keep it and needed mercy.

God must have first place in your life in anything and everything. Again, Jesus earlier on, 16, 13, no servant can serve two masters.

Either he will hate the one and love the other. He will hold to the one and despise the other. You can't serve God in money. You can't do it. So commit to God and the path he calls you to walk.

This ruler replaced his security and his wealth. Maybe he was thinking his wealth and his status indicated God's blessing upon him. Maybe that's what he was thinking. We know the disciples were. Maybe he thought that too. But not necessarily so. not necessarily so. But does Jesus call everyone to sell all they have and give to the poor?

[28:13] So we're going to take an offering after the service here. We're going to all give our stuff right here and put it on right here. That's what we're going to do. Let's bow in prayer. No. It's not a universal requirement.

But the principle remains the same. there's a particular design for this man to see if he truly loved God and others. That's what it was particularly geared towards for him.

See, Jesus saw right through his self-righteousness, right through his pride, right through his self-confidence, and he went after him. But as I started to say, the principle remains the same.

You just stuff to God. He wants us to love and worship him alone in his eternal son. That's the principle. That remains the same. And again, notice, Jesus answered the man's question.

What must I do to inherit eternal life? What can I do? Follow me. So, notice how, and you'll see, Jesus is connecting his ministry, following him with the kingdom of God, entering the kingdom of God, which is eternal life, which is following Jesus, which is eternal life, which is entering the kingdom of God.

[29:37] They all come together, they're all one and the same. But he wasn't ready, was he?

Actually, really, he wasn't willing to come to God on God's terms. 23, but when he heard these things, he became very sad, for he was extremely rich.

Good teacher! Good teacher, what must they do to be saved? Oh, apparently, he called Jesus a good teacher, but apparently he wasn't good enough to change his allegiance to Jesus, huh?

He wasn't that good. He didn't love his neighbor. Remember, that's the essence of the law, Leviticus, the essence of the law is love your neighbor to yourself.

He didn't love his neighbor because he and his riches were central, not God. Not God. Jesus challenged this rich man to trust God, help him to live and rely upon him, in other words, to follow Jesus, but it was too much of a demand.

[30 : 53] He couldn't handle it. How sad. He heard what he had to do, but it was deaf to hear what he had to do.

He understood Jesus' request, but he rejected it. Either he chooses to worship God or his money looks like the latter. Because notice, it says he walked away very grieved.

Are you kidding me? Oh, man. He wanted to serve his money, not Jesus.

Not the first time. Chapter 12, verse 32. You're going to be afraid, little flock, for your father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom.

Sell your possessions and give to charity. Make yourselves purses which do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven where no thief comes near, nor a moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

[32 : 09] Open your checkbook, look at what you spend your money on, that's what's most important to you. Make a record of the things that you spend your money on.

Now you can, you know, at the bank online stuff, you see all the things you spend your money on, right? You can't like fiddle around with it like, well, I really gave to this person, right? You know, write that down.

The bank just says, you can just pay for that, right? You know, there's no grace with the bank, they should say what it is. Look, this guy, he loved his stuff more than he loved God, plain and simple.

His affections lied with his possessions, not in God, not in others. He kept the law hourly, but inwardly, his heart was far away from God.

Do all the right things. Do all the right things. So what about us? where are our hearts when it comes to our stuff?

[33 : 23] Jesus must be first and foremost in your life. How? Admit your imperfection, reject your self-righteousness, and forsake your possessions, realizing that God makes this possible in you.

God. You must make Jesus first and foremost, and that's how you do it. I gave you three ways, but realize this. Realize that God is the one who makes this possible in you.

24-27, Jesus looked at him and said, how hard it is for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God. What's Jesus' response? He's looking at him. Maybe at this point the guy's walking away, Jesus is looking at him, he's like, how hard it is for someone like this to enter God's kingdom.

Which, remember, is equivalent to following Jesus, right? How hard it is, because they have it all. But they need to see that they are in need.

But they're unable to see that and to humble themselves because their money can bring self-focus and it brings greed and it brings this and it brings that. The pursuit of stuff distracts us from faithfulness to the gospel because the focus comes upon things that are seen instead of trusting in God, those who have stuff trust in their financial stability.

[34 : 55] And what's worse? 25. For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of the needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. It's easier for a big huge camel that spit to go through the eye of the needle.

And by the way, this is not a door in Jerusalem. You ever heard of that story? There was a little door in Jerusalem during the first century. The camel had to squeeze through. Now, that's not true. Some dude came up with that because he had too much cough medicine or something.

It's not really what happened. It was a needle thread. In Palestine, the largest animal that they had was a camel. And the smallest thing they had was a pfft, pfft, pfft, trying to get the little thing through the hole, right?

So, Jesus is making it funny. It could be like, that's kind of funny, you know, the camel threw life, that's really good Jesus, that's a good one. It's easier for a camel to go through that than a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.

A silly illustration, yes, but it made its point. It's impossible for rich people to enter God's kingdom on their own strength. stuff can turn the door of the kingdom into tiny little people.

[36 : 19] One writer says this, quote, the self-focused security of the wealthy is a padlock against the kingdom entry. The rich or well-off are not privileged.

They are underprivileged. They have a handicap. The handicap is their stuff. They love their money, their stuff. What really comes with wealth?

What can really come with wealth? Greed, pride, insensitivity, harshness, snobbery, indifference, self-satisfaction, worldliness, evil desires, lust, immorality, people getting wasted and causing fights, strife, and other ungodly things.

That's good. And what's worse, the blindness to their admission of helpless dependence. Verse 26. And they heard it. They said, then who can be saved? What? The disciples are shocked. The disciples are shocked.

[37:34] Why? Because all rich people are blessed by God. Jesus, are you crazy? If they're not blessed by God and they can't be saved, who can be saved?

Do you understand what they're saying at this point? They're saying, Jesus, these people are blessed by God, so if you're saying that these people were blessed by God, they can't be saved, then that means nobody else can be saved.

There's no hope for any of us. They got it. They got exactly what Jesus was saying. Is there any hope for anyone to be saved to come into the kingdom?

If this rich man who was totally blessed and accepted by God, or so they thought, could not enter God's kingdom, what does that say for the rest of humanity?

There is no hope. hope. And friends, with that part, they were absolutely right.

[38:40] Nobody's able to enter the kingdom of God. All of us are totally unable to enter. With that, they were right. Which is why Jesus says, verse 27, but he said, the things impossible with men are possible with God.

people, things are impossible. But where it is impossible for humans, is made possible by and with God. It's not hopeless, because of God's great power to save.

Salvation is in the hands of the powerful God who's able to bring the need of change. God is able to change the human heart so that that person will run into the arms of Jesus, wanting to give up anything and everything to follow him.

All people need heart changes to be saved. All of us. People cannot come to God because they're dead.

Last time I checked, dead people don't usually talk back to you. Now, I could be wrong. I'll let me patch. I'm laying the sarcasm on real thick here, people.

[40:01] People cannot come to God because dead people cannot respond. But what's worse, they will not come to God because they love their stuff. They love themselves. They love their possessions.

They love their idols. They love their sin. They love their booze. They love their weed. They love their things. They love their cars. They love their retirement. They love the good life. They love whatever.

That's what they love. That's why John says light is coming to the darkness. The light is coming to the world.

But men love the darkness rather than come to the light. They love the darkness. They love it. They want to relish in it and gave in it and take a bath in it. They don't want the light to come.

They don't want it. This is why we believe in irresistible grace. Grace irresistible changed me, knew me.

[41:04] We just sang that. And opened my eyes to see you are the way. You are the truth.

You are the life Jesus. That's why we believe in this. Ultimately, God wins. Ultimately, God changes.

Ultimately, God transforms the heart so that a blind person who doesn't want anything to do with the gospel and you prayed and you prayed and you prayed and you prayed and you prayed and you prayed and you prayed for years and there seems to be no hope.

Grace irresistible. they heard the gospel and for some reason the spirit of God changes their hearts and the gospel comes alive and they go, I can see.

I need Christ. What is this? And it might be something stupid that you say too. You say some lame thing. I didn't give that person the gospel. And all of a sudden they come to Christ.

[42:12] Why? Because God was working in their heart for so long, for so long and then grace, irresistible, He changed and transformed them and then they ran through them into the arms of Jesus. We believe in irresistible grace.

God makes this possible in you. God makes this possible in us. Realize that. And the second thing, realize that God makes this possible in you.

And second, realize that God promises to reward you. When you make Jesus first and foremost, He will reward you. And notice Peter.

Can you get your shoe and put it in the mouth? Get my shoe off and put it in my mouth. Hey, man, we've left everything to follow you, Jesus. And notice it says our own and in homes is in italics because it's not homes in the Greek.

It's just we've left our own things. We've left our stuff, Jesus, and followed you. And He said to them, what's our status, Jesus?

[43 : 23] And He said to them, should they say to you there's no one who's left house or wife or brothers or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God who shall not receive many times as much at this time in the age to come eternal life.

Jesus promised them reward now and later. Now and later.

Well, wait, man, I just thought eternal life is just later. No, it's now. I thought that life and Jesus, you know, it's just, no, there's reward now.

What does that mean? if you love those personal important items, those personal important people in your life, God's aware of it.

God knows the sacrifice that was made and you will be greatly rewarded. Notice how he listed family relationships, wife, brothers, parents, children, flip that husband, wife.

[44 : 31] it's not the first time Jesus has said this either. 1426, if anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.

God's reward, though, will counterbalance the sacrifices you've made. He sees it. Now, he doesn't mean wife you divorced her, right?

Or husband you divorced, no, he's not talking about it. He's like Jesus is most important.

Abandoning the house means the security of your vocation if you have to. Abandon the secure financial position.

Possibly you're excluded from your family. Some of you know what I'm talking about. Your family don't talk to you anymore. They talk to you about this much and it's about that deep, right?

You know what that's like. But you say I follow Jesus whatever it takes. What God will give back to the disciple who sacrifices, Jesus says, many times as much.

[45 : 44] At this time, this time, who sacrifices many times greater what she or he has given up. God sees your sacrifice and he will give back more in terms of relationships like what?

Fellowship with God's people is much more rewarding and has a greater blessing. The spiritual family is much more of a reward than one's physical family.

Physical family doesn't even compare to the new significant spiritual family and their connection to the truth that you have with these people. A new mother, a spiritual father, a spiritual brother or sister.

it's not just a physical relationship. There's a connection with them that you have. That's a blessing, is it not?

That's a reward, is it not? But then the second phrase is even better. In the age to come, eternal life.

[46 : 49] You are accepted forever into God's eternal presence. having personal relationship with him through Jesus. It's what you made to do. And interesting how the passage ends the same way it began.

How you have eternal life? It's wrapped up in Jesus. Eternal life is wrapped up in who Jesus is and what he has done for sinners.

It's not what we do, but what Jesus has done in our repenting of a life of sin and placing our trust in him alone. Eternal life is the reward for following Jesus.

Being in God's presence for eternity is far more valuable than anything in this world on earth.

Eternal life. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men and he shall dwell among them and they shall be his people and God himself shall be among them.

That's what we look forward to. That's what we have now with God's people and that's what you're going to have to its fullest extent in the future. That's a reward, isn't it?

[48 : 14] When we truly sacrifice, God supplies our needs now. So if God keeps his promise now, how much more will he keep it in the future for you, Christian?

Whatever you give up in this life for Jesus is worth the sacrifice because true, lasting satisfaction is found in him alone. He is our creator.

Weep in me to worship him. To worship him alone. You see, one must take commitment to Jesus seriously, not flippantly.

Don't think you can earn God's acceptance based upon your own good works. You can't. You need a new heart. A changed heart. A transformed heart.

If you're not a follower of Jesus today, run to his arms. You'll find grace and mercy. When you should be judged, all that judgment is placed upon Jesus.

[49:27] You must admit your imperfection though, reject your self-righteousness and forsake all for his sake. Even with the promise of heavenly lasting reward, the rich ruler rejected Jesus and his teaching.

It's too bad. people who are lost have a hard time entering God's kingdom because leaving wealth security is hard to do. One must put their complete trust in God depending upon him.

Remember, wealth does not necessarily mean God is blessing you. If so, who's able to be saved? No one can be saved apart from God changing the mind, the will, the nature of the person.

He acts first. So what is true discipleship? In Jesus' first place in your life.

That's what salvation means. Having God first place brings his divine blessing. One must have humble childlike trust in God, relying totally upon him. You cannot trust your wealth, you cannot trust your good works, all that must be rejected.

[50:40] there's two kinds of people in the world today. Those who rely on themselves and those who rely upon Jesus. Upon whom do you rely upon?

Upon whom do you rely? Yourself? Your possessions? Or do you trust God? What do we do with our wealth, our possessions, our stuff?

Are we willing to give it away? Do we get more to give more? Or do we get more to spend more on our pleasures? Where our treasure is, that's where our heart is.

What is most important to you? I'll end with a verse to a hymn.

It goes like this. Lo, the incarnate God ascended, pleased the merit of His blood. Venture on Him. Venture wholly.

[51:46] Let no other trust intrude. None but Jesus. None but Jesus can do helpless sinners good.

Good. Take a few moments and ponder what we've seen in God's Word this morning. Think and rehash the truths that you've heard from His Word.

Take a few moments to do that and then we'll do our time of giving and sing our last two songs in our closing prayer. Think and pray. listen n■mvoir.

Come on. Come on. Come on. Come on. Hang on. Go on. Go on. Come on. Go on. Go on. Go on. Go on. Go on. Go on. Go on. Go on. Go on. Go on.