

# JESUS ON HIS RETURN

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[ 0 : 0 0 ]     Father, this is your word. It's your word to us. It's not our word about you, but it's your word to us. And we confess before you, Father, that we have our own criteria, and if we're not careful, we judge your word.

But we ask, Father, that you humble us before your word and help us to hear your word so that your word will judge the desires of our hearts and our thoughts and our plans that we might hear your views and your perspective and your good and gracious word to us in the midst of our preoccupations.

Father, speak to us by your word. Pour out your Holy Spirit with gentle but deep power upon our mind, upon our wills, upon our hearts, upon our souls, to the center of who we are. Pour out your Holy Spirit upon us and that we might hear your word and bring you glory.

And this we ask in the name of Jesus, your Son, and our Savior. Amen. Please be seated. So today we're going to talk about why Christians should be the principal relativists in Canada.

And we're also going to talk about the meaning of life. But before we do that, I want to talk to you about something which is sort of relevant and you sort of need to have your Bibles. It's something that happened to me on Friday. And when I was in the Starbucks where I was working on my sermon.

[ 1 : 2 8 ]     So if you get your Bibles and turn to Luke chapter 17, it's sort of, there's something really cool about this particular text in the Bible. So on, on, on, there's a fellow in this one Starbucks that I go to most mornings now.

My schedule has changed a little bit. And he was in one of my, he was in the very first church that I served in. And he still goes to a liberal church.

And, and so he sees me many times in the week working on my sermon. So on Friday, he came up to me and said, have you finished your sermon yet, George? And I said, no, I haven't finished my sermon yet.

And then he said to me, George, you know, I don't know how you do it. Having to say something every week, I'd, I'd, I'd find it really hard. And, and I said to him, well, uh, yeah, it's actually a bit easier if you have to do it every week because you get into a bit of a rhythm.

But, you know, the main thing is that if I, and here I was sort of making a little tiny bit of a dig at, at, at, uh, at his church. I, I said that, uh, if I had to, if, if, if what I did on Sunday was just get up and share my wisdom with the congregation, uh, after three weeks, I would be in trouble.

[ 2 : 3 5 ]     And so would the congregation because I would have exhausted my wisdom after three weeks. But if what I try to do is just, we read a passage in the Bible and then I, in a sense, hold the Bible like this to the congregation and just try to help them understand what the Bible says.

Well, then every week there's a different Bible passage. So there's always, I mean, it can still be hard to understand and all, but there's just a different passage that I can point people to and help them to understand it. Now I know that he's read, uh, a couple of, um, of the critical types of books about the Bible.

And I could tell from his expression that when I said that what I would try to do would be to try to sort of just open the Bible to the congregation and just try to help them understand. I, I knew I could tell by the look in his eyes that he sort of thought, well, you know, who knows what the Bible really is and, and, and, you know, and who knows if it's even accurate.

So I said to him, uh, I almost said his name to him, which wouldn't have been good. I said, you know, listen, you just come over here for a second. I want to show you something really cool, which I'm going to show you something really cool about the Bible. So I, we got the Bible.

And if you look to the end of chapter 17, look, you'll see that there's verse 34. And then you look and see there's verse 35. And then after that is verse 37.

[ 3 : 47 ] If you have a modern Bible, if you have an old King James version of the Bible, it might not do that. But if you have a modern Bible, that's probably what it does. I said, verse 34, there's verse 35, verse 35, and then verse 37.

And I said, you know, I almost said his name again. We'll call him Fred. That's not his name. So I said, Fred, you know, here's the thing about the text. I said, virtually every modern version of the text, I said, there are thousands and thousands and thousands of, literally thousands and thousands of manuscripts of, of the New Testament that go back to very close to the time that it was actually written.

And I said, there's actually a scientific discipline whereby scholars will compare the different manuscripts. And when there's differences in the manuscripts, they have a different, a way, a scientific way of trying to go back and actually figure out what the original text probably was.

And I said, as archaeology discovers more text, as archaeologists discover more text, it gets easier and easier to try to be more confident that we're actually reading the older text.

And I said, so, like when the King James Version and the medieval age when they were developing the verse system, there was a verse here which we now would say that wasn't there.

[ 5 : 03 ] And he said, really? I said, yeah. And he looked and he saw, yeah. And I said, you know, you go back and you get a good modern translation. They'll all mention that. And at the bottom, there'll be a little note that'll tell you what the, you know, the verse was that was left out.

And I said, there's another thing. I said, you just have to sort of take my word on it. But he, every, this particular day, I still had the book open. I was reading volume two of a commentary on Luke that was, volume two is this fat and volume one is that fat.

So he sees me going through this commentary. And I said, do you know that when there's two places in this text where there's a little bit of a difference in the manuscripts, and do you know that what scholars do, I said, it's completely opposite to what you hear on PBS and TVO and reading Globe and Mail and The Citizen, they'll all tell you this thing and it's completely, they're actually all wrong.

I said, when there's a difference between two manuscripts and they're not sure what to take, I can tell you that in every modern translation that's worth its salt, which is most of them, they choose the difficult and awkward version that makes complications in the text not the easy version.

Because the translators know that human nature is such that if a copyist is going to make a mistake, they're more likely to try to smooth over a difficulty rather than to create a difficulty.

[ 6 : 30 ] And so that's what they do. And I said, you see, that's why we can be very confident, whether you believe it or not, whether you think it's God's word or not, you can be very confident that what you're reading here is very close to what Luke actually wrote.

So here's the first point for the morning. And it actually is relevant to the rest of the things that we're going to talk about, although it might seem a bit odd. But here's the first point. So if the true and living God really speaks to humans, it is only wise to want to hear him clearly.

Isn't it? If the true and living God really speaks or has really spoken to humans, it is only wise to want to hear him clearly.

And that's why, you know, there's always been a branch of Christianity. There's always been some Christians who are very fearful of the truth and don't want to really ask these hard questions. But, you know, really, at the end of the day, we as Christians believe these aren't our words, but this is God speaking to us, that God was the one who caused these words to be written, that he is speaking to us.

And so it's only wise to want to hear him clearly and not get other people adding their own opinions. We spend all day listening to people's opinions.

[ 7 : 44 ] And if we're not listening to people's opinions, we're listening to our own opinion in our head. But surely, if God really speaks, you want to hear him clearly. And it's very, very interesting. It'll become obvious as we go through the text.

One of the profound differences between the Christian faith and Islam is that in Islam, there is no critical examination as to what the original Koran was.

Because they're terrified of it. And part of it has to do with the nature of God. You see, it's a very, in a sense, an autocratic God who's portrayed in Islam.

And you can still fall in love with autocrats, and I'm not saying that there aren't many Muslims who don't sort of fall in love with God, but it's a type of autocratic God, and a distant God, right?

Because even in the Koran, God speaks to Gabriel, and Gabriel speaks to Muhammad, and Muhammad speaks to his followers, and his followers write it down. But in Christian faith, like the one who is speaking here now is one who dies for us.

[ 8 : 45 ] There's a different understanding of the nature of God, that God is love. And so we have this interesting concept that as we have a clearer sense that God is love, it frees us up to look and try to hear more clearly what it is that God actually says.

And that's reflected then in Christian scholars who work with non-Christian scholars, non-Christian archaeologists, is to try to actually have the text be as accurate and clear as we possibly can get it.

So that's the first thing, is that if the true and living God really speaks to humans, it is only wise to want to hear him clearly. Now, I said to you, some of you might remember, I said that this text is a perfect example of why it is that Christians should be the principal relativists.

We should be far more relativistic than any other person, than any other group in our culture. Christians are often thought of as being sort of narrow-minded, as being absolutists, but we should really be the principal relativists.

And so let's look at the text and we'll start to see why that is the case. So you hopefully still have your Bibles. It's Luke chapter 17. We'll begin at verse 20. And here's how it goes. Being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus answered them, the kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed, nor will they say, look, here it is, or there.

[ 10 : 10 ] For behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you. Now, some of you, and this often happens to me when I talk to people at Starbucks, is that they'll tell me that the Bible is filled with contradictions.

And some of you might be thinking, if you know a little bit about what goes on actually in Luke's gospel, because in a couple of chapters, Jesus is going to talk about signs of his second coming.

In Luke's gospel, three times he talks about the second coming. And this is the second time. And in, I think, it's two chapters from now, he's going to talk about the second coming again. And he's going to say these are some of the signs. And some of you might be familiar with John's gospel.

And John's gospel is organized around significant signs. And so, is Jesus contradicting himself? Is the Bible contradicting itself when it says here, the kingdom of God, when Jesus says, the kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed, nor will they say, look, here it is, or there, for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you.

Well, sort of two things. In the New Testament, there's two different words in Greek that are translated as sign. And in this particular case, it's one word, and later on in chapter 19 and in John's gospel, it's a different word.

[ 11 : 25 ] And the two different words, they're both signs, but they have a specifically different connotation. So, here's the difference. Here's this first one. The first one could really be translated as looking for symptoms.

That's what Jesus is really saying. And here's the significance of it. A couple of years ago, my doctor retired. It was sort of traumatic for me. I'd had him for a long time.

I had to find a new doctor. And then I found a new doctor about two years ago. And this doctor believes that people my age, men my age, should have a yearly checkup. So, this past Friday, I went for my yearly checkup.

And it's an odd situation. We go into this tiny little room and I sit down. He says, don't sit down for very long. I'm a doctor. Take your clothes off. That feels very funny, taking your clothes off.

He's dressed. Actually, it would be weirder if he wasn't. Then I wouldn't. But it just feels pretty funny, right?

[ 12 : 23 ] And I take my clothes off and he said, you know, I'm asking you to do this not just to make, not to make, not because I want to make you uncomfortable, but he said, you know, he asked me to turn around and he's looking to see if I have funny looking moles.

And he's looking to see if I have, I don't know, rashes or bruises or cuts or scars or something else. He's examining me. He stands, in a sense, in judgment in a good sense.

I trust him. He seems like a really good doctor and he's standing to observe symptoms or signs that according to his criteria allow him to make judgments about my health.

And that's the image here. So the Pharisees, Jesus knows that the Pharisees want to be like a doctor judging God's kingdom.

kingdom. And they're saying, Jesus is saying, you folks have your criteria, your criteria to judge whether something is God's or not and of the kingdom or not.

[ 13 : 28 ] And you are asking me, according to your criteria, what are the different signs that are going to come? And I'm telling you what Jesus is saying is, God's ignoring your criteria.

God doesn't give a hoot about your criteria. You can keep your criteria if you want, but if you keep your criteria, you're going to miss the kingdom of God.

You're going to miss it completely and utterly. You see, God is relativizing your criteria to judge.

Because you know what? And it's a common problem here. What is it about us when we try to judge the kingdom of God? Well, in our culture, if it really is going to be God's kingdom, well, it has to have this particular view of human sexuality.

Or it has to have this particular view about how markets, financial markets work and the power of the state. Or it has to have this particular connection to the teaching of evolution.

[ 14 : 26 ] Or it has to have this particular criteria in terms of science. Or it has to have this particular criteria in terms of how emotional it is. Or it has to have this particular criteria in terms of how mystical it is.

And in our culture, we have a whole range of criteria that we hold to very, very firmly that we use to judge whether something might be God's kingdom.

And just like the Pharisees, they're different criteria than the Pharisees, but it's the exact same human drive. And Jesus says, God's going to ignore all of them.

I mean, that's actually a bit striking. But Jesus says, God's going to ignore your criteria. Those aren't his criteria. And in fact, because you hold on to your criteria and aren't actually, if God actually speaks, isn't it wise to hear him clearly and listen for his criteria rather than yours?

And isn't that the wise thing to do? And in fact, he says, and here's the next point.

[ 15 : 37 ] And the first point, in the original language, if you translate it, it actually has Jesus sounding a little bit like he's Yoda. Okay? Because what actually it says, when Jesus says, like if they were to translate it literally, therefore, there, sorry, it says, for the kingdom of God is in the midst of you, it actually is saying, Jesus is actually saying, the kingdom of God among you is.

Sounds like Yoda, right? The kingdom of God among you is. And it's sort of ungrammatical. It's sort of funny. I mean, this translation was done after Yoda. They could probably get away with it, you know, as a Yoda-ish type of thing that Jesus says.

But, you know, what Jesus is saying is here you're, if you go back and read just what happened before, Jesus has performed a remarkable miracle. And the implication of the miracle is that part of the reason that the men knew that they had been healed of leprosy, the implication is, is that, you know, lepers, because they lose their sense of, they lose any sense of pain, and so they eventually lose things like their eyes get gouged out, they don't realize they have something in there ruining their eye, they have, they can have their, you know, things can fall on their finger, they can cut their finger, they can burn their finger, they don't know that that's happening, so they end up losing fingers.

And the implication is that in the miracle that part of the reason that they knew that they were healed is that things like fingers probably grew back. All because of a miracle by Jesus.

And, and you see, what we're going to see in, in, in Luke 19 or 20, whatever it is where he talks about, what we see in, in the Gospel of John is that Jesus says, God is giving you all sorts of signs that the Messiah has come.

[ 17 : 21 ] Like, surely to a reasonable person, a finger coming back is a sign. But it's not to them, it's not their criteria, right? And so Jesus is saying, here he is, he's surrounded by Pharisees, he says, the kingdom of God among you is, and the original language, the is, is emphatic, which is why I've sort of, in this case, I've made it higher, I mean, I capitalized it, to try to, is, and Jesus is saying, I, when I came, I have started to bring the kingdom, the kingdom of God is inaugurated in your midst, by my ministry, by who I am, and by my disciples who put their trust in me.

That's, that's what's going on here. And now Jesus is going to then go on and talk about the fact that, um, that God, in his sovereign wisdom, has decided to, to bring all things right in a, in a way which doesn't fit with the way that we would want to do it, but it's the way that God wants to do it, out of his sovereign love.

That it's going to involve, first, the Son of Man, Jesus, uh, coming and dying upon the cross to redeem and to save and to call to himself a community of people, a community of people that's, uh, relativizes geography, relativizes human institutions, relativizes the nation, state, relativizes people, groups, that he's going to call to himself out of every people group, out of every language group, out of every religious and spiritual group, he's going to call people out of these groups that we think are important, but the kingdom of God is going to relativize, and he is going to call people out of all of these groups into a community centered around his Son, a community, uh, of blessing and of enablement that blesses and enables.

that's, that's what the gospels are talking about. Now, some of you might say, George, I remember you reading this, you just read this text a few moments ago, and, you know, okay, George, I know you've just said that God doesn't sort of use our criteria, but it sounds, I mean, where the corpses are, the vultures will gather, I mean, George, that sounds like a really, I don't know if I can even possibly accept any type of view of God or any type of view of the future that's going to involve such death and, and chaos and, and mayhem.

Well, let's look and see what it, see what the text says. Verse, you see, so now Jesus has talked about the fact that he's here, and the, the disciples are sort of a bit confused about it, and so Jesus is going to talk to them, really start talking about his second coming and what happens in between, and, and he's, and, and in the course of that, he's going to talk about some, he's going to give some gruesome images.

[ 20 : 07 ] So let's look, verse 22. And Jesus said to the disciples, right, now he's not talking, he's talking to the disciples, not the Pharisees, the days are coming when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it, and will say to you, and they will say to you, look there, or look here, do not go out or follow them, for as the lightning flashes and lights up the sky from one side to the other, so will the Son of Man be in his day.

But first, he must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation. And just sort of pause there. You know, it's really an interesting thing here.

Look at, again, at verse 22. The days are coming when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man. And the Son of Man, it's an image, in this particular case, it goes back to the book of Daniel.

It would have been recognized by the Jewish people as something that talks about the end, the end of the end of the end. And he's saying that you're going to, the days are going to come when you would desire to see this future thing, to desire to know and to see and have the future arrive.

And you know, it's a very, very common human desire to see the future and to know the future. It's a very, very common human desire.

[ 21 : 26 ] like in, when we talk about people being progressives in our society, there's this sense of, there's a future that things are progressing towards.

And it's a very, very deeply ingrained thing within our culture. And it's not just those who are considered to be progressives. We all fundamentally desire and have a hope that the future is, there's going to be something good for us in the future.

And unless we're complete and utter narcissists, we not only want there to be something good for ourselves, but to be good for others as well. That we want, we want to have a sense that things are going to get better in our economy, that things are going to get better politically, that things are going to get better in Canada, and things are going to get better in other places.

And it's going to get generally better and it's also going to be better for us, for me as a particular individual or for my family and my friends. And it's a very, very powerful, powerful desire.

If you watch movies, in many movies, I just, I just read, because I have Netflix, I just re-watched Armageddon, a Bruce Willis flick from the 90s. And there's a huge asteroid the size of Texas hurtling towards the Earth.

[ 22 : 41 ] And when it hits the Earth, it's going to be something that will completely and utterly destroy the Earth. And when they say, when they have the behind-the-scenes thing about the White House and them not wanting to tell people that it's coming, why?

Because it will cause panic. Right? And nobody, it's not when they say that in the movie, and there's lots of other movies, similar types of themes, right? Is that you don't, we, because they understand that partly what holds, the glue that holds whatever type of order there is in society, a big part of it is with the idea that there's a future.

some type of a future, not only for myself as an individual, but for the culture as a whole. There's a very interesting series of detective novels that are called The Last Detective.

And in it, it, I think it's by Ben Winters or something like that. And in it, there's an asteroid coming that's going to destroy the entire Earth and scientists know the exact second it's going to come.

But in this case, people know of it several years in advance. And the books talk about how does society hold together when we all know that everything is going to end in two years or whatever it is or a year and a half.

[ 23 : 53 ] In fact, the preface, the interesting dilemma of all of the three books is worked out in each case, he's, like police forces, you know, nobody shows up to work, things all start breaking down, people are committing suicide, and in the midst of it, a cop wants to solve a murder.

And the thing which helps to drive the novel is why would you bother trying to solve a murder when everything's going to end in a year?

And his co-workers think he's nuts. And the novels discuss this very interesting possibility of everything is going to end. Like, how do you live together?

And what is it you do? And so we all have this instinctive sense that the future matters, that we desire to know something about the future, and that we desire to have this sense that the future is going to be something worthwhile, good for myself and good for more than me.

And that's a fundamental desire. And in fact, within that, like the same, you know, if you were one wondering about why is it that this text is going to talk about these gruesome details, the funny thing is that within our own views of the future, and it's going to be different if you're on the left and different if you're on the right, but whether you're on the left or the right, depending on our view of the future, we have this sense of judgment that will come if we don't heed our view of the future and act appropriately.

[ 25 : 28 ] And so it is, if we don't heed, I'm not making political points here, I really am not, and I hope I don't lose you all as to wondering whether George is a global warming skeptic or not, okay, but just bear me out.

You know, it's a very, very common type of view that, you know, the earth is warming because of human activity and if we don't deal with it, there's going to be floods, there's going to be hurricanes, there's going to be tornadoes, there's going to be earthquakes, there's going to be mass death, there's going to be mass starvation.

What are we saying? If we don't follow our understanding of how to live, which is connected to a good future, lots of people will die. And on the right, you know, if we intervene with markets in the wrong way, if we tax too much, if we do this, if we do that, then there's going to be deforestation, there's going to be poverty, there's going to be unemployment, there's going to be wars connected to it, and there's going to be all sorts of people dying.

And it's very, very funny that on one hand, it's a very, very common idea, apart from the Bible, that if you don't sort of do certain types of things, all sorts of people will die, but when it comes to the Bible and we see that the future could involve a judgment that involves death, we say, I have a hard time with that.

I have a hard time with it. But you see, here's the profound difference between whether it's this global warming view or a more right-wing type of view, is that in both of those cases, it's completely and utterly impersonal.

[ 27 : 02 ] And there really isn't a sense no hope unless you toe the line. But in the Bible, as we're going to see, it's a personal God who judges, but who doesn't just judge, he does something vastly more remarkable than the ideologies and the common viewpoints of our day.

If you could put the point up, Andrew, this is what Jesus is teaching us. The judgment of the living God must fall and will fall on every person.

The question before me is, will it fall on me as I deserve or, by God's grace, will it fall on Jesus in my place? The judgment of the living God must fall and will fall on every person.

The question before me is, will it fall on me as I deserve or, by God's grace, will it fall on Jesus in my place? I mean, everything that we are to hear about, see, and that comes out in verse 25, it's the fifth of the six times in the gospel of Luke where Jesus talks about the fact that he's going to Jerusalem to die.

Right? Come here just about every week, every part we're reading right now from chapter 9 on, every part is to be understood as Jesus is going to Jerusalem to die. He's going to Jerusalem to die upon the cross.

[ 28 : 27 ] That looms over everything in his teaching. And we Christians understand that unlike the left wing or right wing or historical other views which tend to be impersonal and tend to all involve us in some way keeping the party line of those who are predicting some type of future calamity, Jesus is going to Jerusalem to die.

God will bring all things to an end but before that in mercy, the judgment that you and I deserve will fall on Jesus. That's the gospel. And it has no parallel with our other types of cultural understandings of doom of the future.

Rather than having to toe the line, Jesus walks in our stead and dies in our stead.

and if we put our faith and trust in him, then the judgment that I deserve by grace will fall on Jesus. See, that's the gospel.

That's why, see, one of the things that the Pharisees were thinking is that they do all of these particular good works and then God's kingdom will come and they just sort of enter in and Jesus understands that no amount of good works done in advance will be something that then means that now Jesus accepts you and whatever he's done on the cross will be, it can't be that.

[ 29 : 51 ] The whole judgment on my life falls on Jesus and I cannot lessen that in any way by my actions. I need to accept that the judgment that I deserve falls on Jesus in my stead.



and when I turn to God and accept the power of God for salvation that he offers, then I am his. Then I am his.

So as we're reading all of these other things, we read them in light of verse 25 of Jesus bearing our judgment upon ourselves. So you see, that's why on one hand, see, again, is that grace is profoundly relativizing.

It relativizes all human religion and all human spirituality because all human religion and all spirituality is an attempt, different sets of advice about how to live your life and how to, in a sense, merit God's favor or bring in God's rule or bring God down or into our sphere or whatever it is, but it's always advice.

And the gospel is not advice, it's news. It's news of a power of God for salvation that comes in and relativizes all natural human religion and all natural human spirituality, all attempts to toe the line.

[ 31 : 18 ] It relativizes all of this with the news, the announcement, that the power of God for salvation has arrived if we are willing to set aside our criteria and to accept what God has done.

So let's look a little bit more at this relativizing because it's going to get sort of deeper into the text in a very clear way.

Look at verse 26. Just as it was in the days of Noah, so will it be in the days of the Son of Man. They were eating and drinking and marrying and being given in marriage until the day when Noah entered the ark and the flood came and destroyed them all.

Likewise, just as it was in the days of Lot, they were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building, but on the day when Lot went out from Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all.

So will it be on the day when the Son of Man is revealed. It's going to be a day of judgment. Jesus dies on the cross to save, but, you know, in that point, the judgment of the living God must fall and will fall on every person.

[ 32 : 28 ] The question before me is will it fall on me as I deserve or by God's grace will it fall on Jesus in my place? Continue reading in verse 31. On that day let the one who was on the housetop with his goods in the house not come down to take them away and likewise let the one who was in the field not turn back.

In other words, don't turn towards the world. Don't think you can sort of hide. Don't think that it's going to all be about you being able to, you know, live in your bunker. Here's the right wing version of judgment.

You're going to be able to live in your bunker and outlast the apocalypse and then emerge on the other side after the radiation's gone away to have a triumphant white earth future or whatever it's going to be.

Don't bother thinking any of those types of terms. Remember Lot's wife. Whoever seeks to preserve his life will lose it but whoever loses his life will keep it.

Jesus means loses his life when he gives his life to me. I tell you in that night there will be two in one bed. One will be taken in the other left. There will be two women grinding together. One will be taken in the other left.

[ 33 : 33 ] And they said to him where Lord? He said to them where the corpse is there the vultures will gather. But notice those last few verses 34 and 35 and that night the judgment will come.

Like we tend to how do we tend to judge the world? We tend to judge people by whether they're you know you know Caucasian or African Canadian or Asian.

We tend to judge people by economics by social class. We tend to judge people by education. We tend to think things like the family or marriage are really really family is really important or the tribe is really important or the clan is really important or economic arrangements are really important.

And Jesus says that you're going to have two people lying together whether it's you know a mother with her kids or a husband and a wife or you know a gay relationship or whatever one will be taken and one will be left.

Those things that we think are most important and most absolute are relativized by the judgment of God. That the image of the two women grinding together it's an image of the family of the clan of the tribe of the economic unit of the social class things that we think are so important when we judge each other and when we evaluate each other and one will be taken in the other left that once again the things in this world by which we rate people that we rate ourselves which we think are so important is he slim?

[ 34 : 58 ] Is he fat? Is he smart? Is he good looking? Is he ugly? Is he successful? All of these things that we think are so important that we use to judge ourselves the Bible here says the judgment of God will completely and utterly relativize.

They don't matter. We live in a world where all sorts of things are treated as the basis of judgment and from the perspective of Jesus and of his word they do not matter and they are not the basis of judgment.

It won't be that heaven is filled with rich successful people and all the poor people not. There will be poor there will be rich there will be well educated there will be people who are not well educated there will be people with high IQs there will be people with very very low IQs.

The Bible relativizes all of that. See here's the here's the thing Canadian moral relativism robs life of true meaning.

biblical relativism clarifies and reveals true meaning in life. If you could put that point up. Canadian moral relativism robs life of true meaning.

[ 36 : 25 ] Biblical relativism clarifies and reveals true meaning in life. See Canadian moral relativism is usually around matters of sexuality and certain other types of religious and spiritual practices and it leaches into basically just a relativism around morals what's right and what's wrong and it really ends up just creating that it's sort of up to me to make all of those types of decisions and I'm the one who sets the criteria about the type of end and about the type of what's right and wrong and it's right and wrong for me and it's really in a sense like I don't know if you've ever done this with little kids and you say can you hit the bullseye in this pond and you know it's a very very still pond or something and they might look at you quizzical and you take a rock and you throw the rock and it lands in the still pond and then there's the ripples that go out and it looks like a bullseye and wherever the stone lands you've hit the bullseye.

Pretty cool eh? And you know so a little kid might throw that you know and it goes into the still pond and there's a bullseye they hit the bullseye every time but that's really what Canadian moral relativism says and you know what that's sort of fine when you're a kid but ultimately it's sort of boring and it only works while we're being very successful and while we're young and part of the desire and drive part of it not all of it but part of the drive for state assistance for doctors to be able to have the right to kill people when we ask or when our loved ones ask which is a whole dark corridor of that whole projection is because we are in control of our meaning project and we are fine with it when we're you know sexually desirable and economically viable and able to entertain and amuse ourselves and once that goes there's no meaning to life.

Biblical relativism by relativizing all of those things one of the things it does is it says that the meaning of life is not found in space and time that if you follow the different longings and yearnings of our life and you follow that trajectory you realize that the meaning of life has to be outside of space and time but have relevance to space and time and that's what Jesus says he says that the kingdom of God in the midst of you is that God is calling to himself by all who put their faith and trust in Jesus it doesn't matter if you've been a street person or if you're a high tech executive if you're a soccer mom if you're a gay activist if you're an iman in a mosque it doesn't matter if any of those things if you heed the call of Jesus to come to him he will in no wise you know come to me all who labor and who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest take my yoke upon you and my yoke is easy and my burden is light I will bring you peace and Jesus will take anybody and when they come to him in repentance and faith he calls us into a community of meaning a community centered around the living God a community to bless to enable for us to do good works of love for people with eternal meaning and for us to do things that actually bring God glory

I mean one of the interesting things is when you you look at the other Pauline epistles Paul gives advice to slaves about even though they're economically and politically and legally completely and utterly bound the epistles are dynamite to the slave empires of the world because Paul says you can belong to Jesus and there are ways that you can act as a follower of Jesus even as a slave that bring God glory the world says you belong to me you are under my foot and Jesus says come to me all who are burdened and heavy laden and I will give you rest take my yoke upon you and learn from me for I am gentle and lowly of heart and you will find rest for your soul for my yoke is easy and my burden is light and even though you are a slave in the eyes of the world

I will accept you as mine you are part of my community and there is a way for you to live where you are bound as you are that will bring me glory your life has worth and value and meaning just to bring this all home now with the 40 minutes here's the if you could put up the next point Andrew and then I'm going to just give you three prayers to pray to help make it sort of bring it home here's the first thing here's what we are to understand when we become a child of God we can say I am the adopted and reconciled child of the crucified king who walks with me now and who will come again so good things with eternal meaning can be done today and tomorrow and every day until the end we can say that I am the adopted and reconciled child of the crucified king who walks with me now walks with me today and who will come again so good things with eternal meaning can be done today and tomorrow and every day until the end and this doesn't just mean spiritual things it means good things it means good things it means good things where you work it means good things in your neighborhood it means good things with your family it means good things that will help to spread the gospel and relieve suffering and it means good things in terms of music or poetry or art or scholarship and it just means that there's this whole world of good things that it's possible for us to do that it's possible every day as I'm going to show you in a moment to wake up and say to God what good things would you have me do today for the good of people and for your glory and as a follower of Jesus this is not an absurd question it's a real question and you might say well I don't know

[ 42 : 43 ] I'm going to spend my day in a cubicle looking at a screen but the question still is not to have the cubicle and the screen define you but to say to God what good things can I do today to love people and to bring you glory and you can pray that to God I'm not going to tell you what it is but you can pray that to God that your life has meaning and direction that there's one that you can talk to and bring to and a community that you can bring those things to and you can address them in your small groups or other places in terms of what are the good things that I can do where I am that will love people and bring God glory that's the heart of this text is that when we come to Jesus because he has taken upon himself the judgment that we deserve you see no amount of good works or success makes us more attractive to Jesus it's not as if we can say okay Jesus you only have to die for 97% of my sins because I've sort of covered it these 3% with my actions but once we become a follower of Jesus the automatic question is by grace what good things can I do to love people and bring you glory so that's why our mission statement is making disciples of Jesus gripped by the gospel living for his glory so here's three prayers the first one

Andrew there's no point talking about all of this if you haven't given your life to Jesus and I just want to urge you if you haven't given your life to Jesus there's no better time than to do it right now you don't have to say George if you know how much pornography I've just looked at before I came here if you know how bad I'm doing in school if you know how bad my finances were George if you knew that you'd know I have to I have to get these things under control before I can come to Jesus and that's not the case at all it's not the case at all there's no better time than now if you've never made that transaction to use a prayer like this and say Jesus of Nazareth Son of the living God Messiah have mercy upon me and be my only Savior and my only Lord today and to eternity and if you pray that prayer with your heart Jesus will come in and be your Savior and your Lord and for those of us who've prayed that prayer if you could put up the second prayer Andrew these things will all be on the web page if you want to write them down later every day we could wake up and say something like this

Jesus what good things will you have me do today for the good of people and for your glory the kingdom of God in the midst of you is I will return and the returning doesn't mean that we no longer have economic that we don't have jobs or we don't have families but it means that when we're in our jobs and in our families and in our cities and in our communities every day what's there's a book that I'm reading right now which is really good what's best next Jesus what's best next that you would have me do Jesus as I'm going into this day as I'm going to work what good things will you have me do today for the good of people and for your glory for the good of the job for the good of my boss for the good of the employees for the good of this city for the good of my family for the good of my neighbors for the good of my church for the good of the kingdom and here's the third prayer put up Jesus help me to do small thankless acts of love in light of your presence in your return

I mean isn't that a great prayer to pray there's all sorts of thankless things that have to be done I don't know how often we thank the people who are hosts in the morning we didn't have a host at the door handing the line to people and we wouldn't be able to rent the Ottawa little theater I don't know how often we thank the people who care for children or how often we thank the people who do the coffee there's all sorts of tasks that Amy does just sort of in the office in terms of our books so we get our income tax receipts there's small thankless acts of love of Barbara and others there's small thankless acts of love and maybe we don't thank each other enough but you know what the doctrine of the second coming of Jesus that he will return will mean that there's no small act of love that we do that right now is not thankless but that will one day receive the thanks of the one who really matters when God says I'm so thankful I'm so glad that you did this that you did these small thankless acts of love for the good of people and for my glory let's stand father father if there's any here who have not yet given their lives to Jesus to trust him as their savior and follow him as lord

I ask father that you'd help them to pray that prayer which was up there a few moments ago that they would call out to Jesus to be their savior and their lord and father for us who are your people we know that you have not redeemed us because we have the most pure lives the most holy lives the most successful lives the richest lives the smartest lives the most fit lives or any other type of criteria which is important in Canada but you do not weigh our merits you pardon our offenses when your son died upon the cross to redeem us that he bore the judgment we deserve in our place and father we thank you for the power of God for salvation that you offer we receive it humbly and so father as the child of Jesus make us a disciple gripped by the gospel living for your glory father help us to wake each morning to ask throughout the day what good thing would you have me do now that loves people and brings you glory and father some of us really need to be encouraged to take great big steps of faith but for all of us a more pressing problem father is our willingness just to do small thankless acts of love and so father we ask that you help us to look around and to notice and to do these small thankless acts of love mindful that Jesus is with us and that he will return all these things we ask in the name of Jesus your son and our savior amen has been we ask in the epitome about Mr.

[ 49 : 20 ] and you can know what it depends on the truth and you can know how about how