

# Ecclesiastes 3:1-15 "You are Vapour With Eternity in Your Heart"

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[ 0 : 00 ] Hi, my name is George Sinclair. I'm the lead pastor of Church of the Messiah.

! It is wonderful that you would like to check out some of the sermons done by Church of the Messiah, either by myself or some of the others. Listen, just a couple of things. First of all, would you pray for us that we will open God's Word well to His glory and for the good of people like yourself?

The second thing is, if you aren't connected to a church and if you are a Christian, we really, I would really like to encourage you to find a good local church where they believe the Bible, they preach the gospel, and if you have some trouble finding that, send us an email. We will do what we can to help connect you with a good local church wherever you are. And if you're a non-Christian, checking us out, we're really, really, really glad you're doing that. Don't hesitate to send us questions. It helps me actually to know, as I'm preaching, how to deal with the types of things that you're really struggling with. So God bless. Father, we ask that your Holy Spirit would continue to fall with gentle power upon us, leading and guiding us into all truth. Father, may your Word form us deeply. And we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Please be seated.

So this week, I actually had two conversations with different people at some length about my sermon, in advance, actually. It doesn't often happen I have two conversations about them. I'm going to share parts of both conversations with you. And the first one is this. And by the way, I told the guy, it was yesterday, he asked me what I was going to be preaching on today. And I tried to explain it to him. And he actually, not actually, it sounds actually as if that's a weird thing to say. I say actually as a verbal tick. I don't mean it, actually. I did it again. You can tell I'm paid to speak from up front, amongst other things. But he, so if you're watching this, I'm going to call you Bob. But you really helped me. And he's always really helpful. Every time I talk to you, you stretch me. And I was trying to explain something to him. And he sort of, he got it. And in fact, not only did he get it, but when he was trying to explain to me, trying to tell me what he thought I was saying, he improved it, my analogy way better. And so this is what I was trying to talk to him. I was trying to talk to him about the mystery of beauty. Because that's going to be one of the big things in the text. And the mystery of beauty. And the mystery is this. And here's how he re-told me what I said. He said, you know, my wife and I, and I'm going to just make a bit of a tweak with what he said, but my wife and I, and maybe two other people, were out on a trail, and it's coming towards the end of the day, and we're out in a provincial park or a national park. And, and we pause just towards the end.

And, you know, we know that we're not going to worry about getting too dark. And as we step, and we have a clear view, high up in a clear view, and we can see the mountains and the forest. And there's an absolutely spectacular sunset that just makes you stop and takes your breath away.

[ 3 : 20 ] And so you stop, and it just takes your breath away. And, and he said, what you're saying, George, is if there's a raccoon nearby, the raccoon doesn't notice the sunset. And if you have a dog with you, the dog doesn't notice the sunset.

And my question to him was, why is it that we humans notice sunsets and beauty, and animals don't? The governing story of our culture, which is naturalistic evolution, would try to explain everything from evolutionary advantage. There's no evolutionary advantage in marveling at a sunset.

In fact, the example I gave to him is cockroaches don't notice sunsets, and they're spectacularly well designed to survive terrible things that happen to human beings. And he thought about it. He said, I've never thought about that in my entire life.

And then he tried to explain it a little bit about, you know, the value of that. No, no, I said, there's something else about it. Because here's the thing. I think he just said, the couple, I said, if the two of you were there, and there was another, a couple with you walking, and the man glanced at the sunset, but spent the entire time on his phone, and if you tap and say, don't you notice the sunset? He said, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, you know, been there, done that.

He's looking at his phone. You'd think there was something wrong with him to not marvel at the sunset, that he ought to marvel at the sunset. And I said, that's the question for you, Bob.

[ 4 : 50 ] Where does the ought come from? Why is there an ought to marveling at a sunset? And why is it that humans do, and animals don't, or bugs? And he said, well, that was something to really think about.

So if you're watching, you really helped me to make it a little bit clearer. So we're going to do, this text that we're looking at today talks about why there is an oughtness to human life about things like beauty. And in fact, you know, there's a, we're going to come to the verse in a moment. It might, it's easy to skip over. It skipped over me many times throughout the years as I've read the text. And one of my worries is I just can't, I mean, it just took my breath away when I paused and looked at the text. And I don't think I have the rhetorical skills to bring that home to you, but maybe God will do that work that I can't do with my own lips. But we have to get through there first with something else. So if you take your Bibles, we're looking at Ecclesiastes chapter 3, and we're going to be looking at verses 1 to 15. And that's where it's going to talk about why is it that there's an oughtness to that type of beauty? Why does beauty exist? And why do we sense that there should be, that should be noticed? And it's, you're a lesser person, you're missing something if you don't. And it begins sort of in an unpossessing, you know, in sort of an unassuming way by chapter 3, verse 1. It says, for everything there is a season and a time for every matter under heaven. And then we have these next seven verses, 14 times the word time is said, but just listen to it. There's something strangely beautiful about these seven verses. I mean, listen to it again. So there's a time for every season under heaven, a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to pluck up what is planted, a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to break down and a time to build up, a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance, a time to cast away stones and a time to gather stones together, a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing, a time to seek and a time to lose, a time to keep and a time to cast away, a time to tear and a time to sow, a time to keep silence and a time to speak, a time to love and a time to hate. The word hate there means to reject as bad. Okay? A time to love and a time to reject as bad, a time for war and a time for peace.

There's something strangely beautiful about that, isn't there? And you have a sense that there's something very wise with it. So what's happening here now? I think I described a couple of weeks ago, because this is our third week in the series, that every time, every sermon is going to deal with the word vanity, and I misspoke. The word vanity or vapor doesn't appear in this whole text. We're going to look at the one to 15 verses, but it's hanging over it. The book begins with vanity of vanities, says the preacher, vanity of vanities, all is vanity. And I've tried to explain every week that the word translated as vanity is literally vapor. And many times when you come across it, that's what you have to understand, that it's referring to vapor. It's like seeing your breath on a very cold day. And it really, it brings home the fact that things are transient. They don't last very long. They're easily dispersed. It's so easy to have a life taken away. And then when a life is taken away, it's surprisingly, I mean, some of you might be living with grief, and there might have been grief that's going on for a long time, but it's hard to believe that, I mean, one of the hard things about when somebody dies that you love and you're grieving is that everybody around you is going on in their day and nobody else is grieving. It's just you. It's just you. Nobody else. And why is that, right? And there's this aspect of vapor. And so one of the things that this text is doing is it's easy to misunderstand that and to think that describing reality as being very transient and not being able to be held together by itself. And it means that it's almost as if reality is unreal, but reality isn't unreal. And it's almost as if it's something that you can sort of see through or as if it doesn't matter or as if it's sort of plastic, just as you could if maybe taking the vapor thing, a little bit of smoke, you know, people who smoke cigarettes can make smoke rings and, you know, and it's just, you can do whatever you want with it. That's what it means. And it's not drab. What we see here in trying to understand what the world is really like is that the world has a type of texture to it.

It has a texture. It's not all the same. One day after another is not all the same. There are different days with different tasks and different contexts. And these are things which come from God, not from us, not imposed by us, but they come to us by God himself. He shapes these things, hence all of these times and that we go through. And the times aren't trying to communicate to us that life is some type of great circle of life or, you know, many of the religions of the East will talk about the circle and everything like that. You don't understand that. If you understand that way, you're not hearing the text because the whole point of the text is that our life has a direction and a story. But as we go through life, it's not just one dang thing after another, and then you die.

There's times to love and a time to embrace and a time to be silent and a time to speak. And there's a context. There's hills and valleys and plains in terms of our life. There's a context to it. There's a givenness to it. And so this text is talking about that. And this isn't just something for Christians or something for those outside the Christian faith. This is describing the human condition. This is describing that the real world that we live in. The real world we live in is on one hand so brief, so fleeting, especially human life, so fleeting. But it has shape and context to it and change. And so the person writing it then brings us back to sort of the way that we might hear it, and sort of is giving us another insight about... I mean, this text is very, very... It's very profound. I just wish I could communicate to you how profound it is. I'm going to try to with a story in a moment. But it asks us the question, why is it that we can't just accept and receive the beauty of things and the givenness of things, but that we sort of demand more of it? That it's as if every human being has a bit of an eternity project in their mind or a transcendence project, some way that they can hold themselves together, some way that they can be remembered forever, that they can make their mark, that they can become type of great. And why is it that that happens? Why is it that that's part of human life? That it's not just enough to try to notice the beauty and receive the beauty of a sunset, that we want to make more of it. I mean, it's a very easy... It's a very telling thing for our time, because we take pictures of it to put on Facebook, or to put on Instagram or TikTok as a way to sort of communicate to other people that we're special and we're remembered and people will like us.

[ 12 : 43 ] And we're excited if lots of people like us and redo whatever they do with it and repost it and all that type, and disappointed if they don't, because there's something within us that wants more than just receiving the gift of beauty. And that's captured in the next few verses very beautifully.

Verse 9, what gain? And that's what this is trying to get. The word gain is... It says, what gain has the worker from his toil? I have seen the business that God has given to the children of man to be busy with. And then I'll talk about that in a moment. But that's this question. What's the gain? And why is it that on one hand, there's an oughtness to beauty, which I'm not going to explain, but where vapor... Well, here's how it goes. I'll tell you what this... Before I tell you, this will maybe help you with verse 11. So I can't remember what day it was. I think it... What day it was?

So one of the days this week, it was towards the end of the working day for me. And I was just going to work in the Bible house. And I had this strange compulsion that I had to leave the Bible house and finish my working day at one of the coffee shops that I go to. And so I go to the coffee shop, and it was one of those real God moments. Some of you... Somebody was praying at that point in time. Because I get into a brief conversation with the barista, and the other baristas are all listening. And for eight minutes, seven or eight minutes, nobody came into the store.

So we had a seven or eight minute conversation about this. And he made some comment about what a human being is. And I said, you know, it's really interesting. I'm looking at a thing this week that says that human beings are vapor with eternity in its heart. And he literally went...

That's really profound. Human beings are vapor with eternity in their heart. And we had this conversation about eternity. And he had a hard time. He was just...

[ 14 : 38 ] We had a... Trying to communicate that. And he just like... His eyes were big. I mean, he... Something he'd never really, really thought about. And if you're watching, you're a great guy. I've talked to him about sermons many, many, many times. He's another guy who just makes me better by having a conversation with him because he stretches me. And maybe, I don't know if he's watching or if he does down the road, but it's just been a great help. But listen to verse 11.

He, that's God. I'll read the whole verse and then we'll go back and pause because it's such a profoundly beautiful verse. And if all you get out of this sermon is a desire to memorize verse 11, I have done all... I have done a good job. He has made everything beautiful in its time.

And he has put... Also, he has put eternity into man's heart, into each man and each woman. He has put eternity into your heart, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning and to the end. And I'll talk about what each of those mean and why they're so profound. So why is it that we feel that somebody should notice that sunset? Where does the oughtness come from? The oughtness comes from that we don't just live under the sun or under the heaven. That's how the whole text began.

And that's describing to try to understand the world and live in the world day by day as if the triune God doesn't exist, as if the creator of all things, he doesn't exist. And so we try to figure out everything on our own. And in Canadian culture, the way that we try to figure out everything on our own is that life is one dang thing after another and then you die. And what we looked at last week and this week and in coming weeks is that that's not in fact an accurate way to understand things. That there's in fact these messages in a sense are clues that come from God. And part of the clues that come from God are beauty. And on the other side of whatever is under the sun is there is a God that does exist that he made human beings in such a way that we are vapor. We cannot hold ourselves together. He is the one who has to hold us together. There is no other. And life is a gift. The fact that we are created is a gift.

We're going to talk about that in a moment. It's all gift from beginning to end. It's a gift. And one of the things which he gifted to human beings is he made things beautiful. Beauty exists because if beauty exists, God is greater than that. God is the most beautiful being. He is the most beautiful being. He is beauty. And he has made things beautiful. And to not notice beauty, there is an oughtness to it because God put it there. In fact, you know, one of the things about this line, he has made everything beautiful in its time. It is such a profoundly Christian phrase. It couldn't be made by Hinduism or Buddhism or Islam. And it can't be made by naturalistic evolutionary theory and secularism.

[ 17 : 46 ] It is a profoundly Christian statement. It couldn't be made by paganism of any type, ancient or modern paganism. It is something profoundly Christian. And it's one of the things where, and this is one of the things I said to Bob. Everybody who's outside the Christian faith, they all have reasons why they think Christianity isn't true. And we have to talk about that. But there's a deeper thing that's going on with human beings, is that we don't want Christianity to be true. We don't want there to be a triune God.

And I said to him, this thing about beauty and this line right here, this, you should want Christianity to be true. Because of the profoundness of this text. You should want it to be true. Don't become a Christian just because you want it to be true. I didn't become a Christian because I wanted it to be true. There's good reasons to be a Christian. There's many clues that point to the existence of God. Just an aside, I don't know how many of you know the famous atheist, I don't know if he's still an atheist or if he's now become an agnostic, Alex O'Connor. And one of the things that he said in a conversation with John Lennox is that the most stunning thing about arguments for the existence of God, the Christian God, is how many there are. There's just so many. And he said that's actually for him the thing which makes him most wonder sometimes whether it's true. Because there shouldn't be so many arguments. And they're all good that he thinks they of course can all be defeated, but it's stunning that there's so many. But this is a text that should make you want to believe that

Christianity is true. That there is beauty and it's there because God created beauty in the world and it's there to be noticed and rejoiced in and grow into. And then we have this next bit. He has put eternity into the human heart. Once again, that's such a profoundly biblical and Christian thing to say.

You can't... Buddhism would never say something like that. Hinduism wouldn't say something like that. Islam and paganism wouldn't say something like that. Naturalistic evolution can't say something like that. And the heart here means the very center of who you are. And the very center of who you are, that's where your will emerges from, your mind, your imagination, your creativity. All of those things come from this in a sense the center of who you are. And so even though on one hand human beings are vapor, we don't hold ourselves together, we disperse easily, we don't last very long. But God put into every human heart a longing and a desire to connect with the eternal, with the transcendent, with Him. He has put eternity in our heart.

I mean, what a profound way to think about human beings as vapor. And it'd be easy to think, well, if we're vapor, we're garbage. And if we're vapor, how could we ever long for anything or know anything of any value? But no, no, no, no. There's this combination of transience with a longing for the eternal and the transcendent and what is transcendent. And here's the human dilemma.

[ 21 : 07 ] Just at the beginning, just before the summer began, I bumped into somebody that I hadn't seen in about 10 years. And I mean, he's quite a bit younger than me. And I used to know, in fact, he was one of the people who worked at a coffee shop that I frequented 10 years ago. And I just asked him where some of the people happened and what had happened to different people. And I asked about a particular young woman.

I mean, I asked about quite a few people. And I will call her Sue. And he said, oh, Sue, she's not doing very well. Here's what he said. She's been spent her whole adult life looking for love in all the wrong places. We've all heard that phrase. She seems to have a knack to pick the worst guy.

She's been looking for love in all the wrong places. And what this text is saying, that God has put eternity in our hearts. What is one of the major messages of the book of Ecclesiastes? Human beings are looking for eternity in all the wrong places. And that includes Christians who should know better.

We get caught up looking for the eternal in all sorts of the wrong places, in politics or what we can do, what we can accomplish, who we can do. We look for eternity in all the wrong places. That's one of the reasons we need times to come together as Christians and to repent of our, to hear the word of God and repent of the sins and be reminded about Jesus and confess creeds and and do the Lord's Supper and be reminded about what Jesus did for us on the cross. We need to be reminded and brought back and say, okay, once again, George, I have to die to my eternity projects, my transcendence projects, all those ways that I'm looking for eternity in all the wrong places.

It's me, it's me, it's me, it's me, oh Lord, standing in need of prayer. And to remind myself there is only one eternal transcendent, all beautiful, all powerful God, who is the God of love, the gift giving God, and life is one gift after another from him.

[ 23 : 09 ] And even my vaporous self is held together by him. And my only hope for eternity is that the love of God in Christ Jesus, which I receive by faith, will hold me together for all eternity in the love, loving embrace of almighty, triune God.

We are looking for eternity in all the wrong places, and that is the human tragedy. And we see here this aspect of the third line, the third part of the line, right? So the first part is, verse 11, he has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put eternity into man's heart, woman's heart, every human being's heart. And then it says, yeah, it's a bit of a clunky literal translation. It's saying that at the same time, human beings can't find out what God has done from the beginning to the end. God has blocked us from knowing everything, from knowing the beginning of our life to the end. He's blocked us. He stopped it. But we don't want to... That's what... You know, what the Genesis 3 describes the fall as human beings in their pride wanting to be like God, and that desire is so strong in we human beings. And so we have our eternity projects. And our eternity projects mean that even seeing we can't just receive a sunset as a sunset, we can't just receive the beauty of a smile. I've been waiting to... I'm just going to... I'll take one extra minute to tell you something that stops me on my track regularly. There's one of the coffee shops I go to at the end of the day, over the last couple of months or four months or whatever, there's a handicapped, quite a severely handicapped woman who comes in towards the end of the day. I'm guessing she's finished some that some type of work, you know, day program and before she goes back to wherever she's standing and she can't walk without a mechanical device to help her and she can't speak properly and and everything. But she comes in at the end of the day and, you know, she's a bit physically disfigured as well and awkward and she comes in and she gets an oatmeal and she gets, I don't know what it is, but some type of iced drink, iced tea or coffee or something like that. And she buys, she gets a big glass filled with ice and she buys like a Perrier water that's flavored. And then she can't carry it, she goes to her table and the staff have to come and bring it to her. And I'm gonna get emotional.

It takes my breath away. You have never seen anybody enjoy a glass of Perrier water like her. The biggest smile, I mean, this is in the gay village, so it's filled with self-important, self-possessed, narcissistic people, you know, and people like me getting caught up in things and I can't enjoy just simple things in life.

And she just lights up the whole place and probably the whole street with her smile as she pours it in to the glass and just rejoices in it.

And then she takes a sip and it's just all smile. I've never seen anybody enjoy oatmeal like her or her drink. It's absolutely beautiful. She'll never be on Vogue. She'll never be in any of those past, but there's nobody, like she's spectacularly beautiful when she smiles. It's just amazing. Just amazing.

[ 26 : 48 ] And it helps you to understand a little bit this next bit, which we'll close with, which is a little bit about how it all comes on and how Jesus fits into all of this. Listen to what he goes on after. Right? So verse 11 again, he has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put every eternity into man's heart, human being's heart, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end. We want to do that, but we can't. God has just blocked it. We can't know everything. We can't be eternal. We can't be transcendent. He's blocked it. He's stopped it. But it isn't that he's doing it because he's cruel. Listen to verse 12.

Verse 12. I perceive that there is nothing better for them than to be joyful. Oh, to be like that woman with the joy of having some Perrier water with ice and some oatmeal.

Oatmeal. I mean, it's not even steak or something like that, you know? Oatmeal. Verse 12. I perceive that there is nothing better for them than to be joyful and to do good as long as they live, all so that everyone should eat and drink and take pleasure in all his toil. This is God's gift to human beings.

I perceive that whatever God does endures forever. Nothing can be added to it, nor anything taken from it. God has done it so that people fear before him. We'll talk about what that means.

I mean, one of the things I sometimes do with people if I want to start up a conversation is I tell them that from the Bible and from ancient Christian tradition, there's only three reasons why anybody should ever do anything. They look at me and say, there's only three reasons. I say, yeah, there's only three reasons why anybody should do anything. And the first reason is you should do it because it's good. The second thing is you should fulfill a duty. Like I said, perfect example is a promise. You make a promise, you have a duty to keep your word. That's a duty. The third thing is, I think, I said, the third thing is you're going to really surprise you. I don't, you probably don't think this is what Christians would say. I say, well, what is it? I said, the third reason you do it is because it gives you joy. And if it doesn't fulfill one of those three things, you shouldn't do it.

[ 28 : 59 ] And then maybe we've gotten into conversation, like how many people do things so that people will like them. You know, John Maxwell has a great line about money. People spend money they don't have to buy things they don't need to impress people they don't like. Isn't that true? We spend money we don't have to buy things we don't need to impress people we don't like. Well, you shouldn't do that.

Do things that give you joy or because there's a duty or because it's good. It's right there. It's right there in the text. And so it's all held together. They're all gifts of grace from God. In fact, you see, that's part of it. So, you know, joy is a gift from God. Why is it that we sometimes give a moment of joy, but because we're so self-absorbed and self-concerned about some other type of thing or not maybe happy because of season we're in. And time and time again, and maybe we all know, everybody does this sometimes, and we maybe know people who do this too often, that we snatch, you know, we continue to grab onto depression or anger or envy or hatred or greed or gluttony or just some other type of thing. We, you know, we push joy aside because we want to keep holding on to those types of things rather than just receiving joy. And part of this profound message of all of the things is that whenever anybody receives joy, that's coming from beyond whatever is beyond the sun. It's something that comes from God to us as a gift and we're to receive it as a gift. And then goodness is something that comes from God to us that we're to receive as a gift and we're trying to live in. And if we receive joy in a sense, you know, I tried to use an example from C.S. Lewis. It's as if you notice that there's a, you know, there's a crack or a hole in the ceiling or something like that, and there's light coming through it. And if you stand and look, look through the hole, you can see what's on the other side. And it's as if joy comes into human life. And if you stand in it and you look through where it's coming from, you begin to get some sense of who God is. And when you stand where goodness is and you look for where it's coming from because goodness is real, you sense that there's the

God who is good. And eating and drinking every food, I mean, gosh, even oatmeal, even Perrier water on ice. A gift from God. That's why we should say thanks. It comes from us to us as a gift. And then even work. What an odd thing. By the way, this says a whole thing about the dignity of human work. But part of the thing which is so significant about work is that God gives you and me, human beings, the dignity of being able to cause things.

We are vapor that can cause things. We cannot cause eternal things. We cannot cause transcendent things. But we can cause things. God gives it to us as a gift. And we should rejoice and take pleasure in the fact that we can cause things. And it doesn't matter if you're working at a Tim Hortons and you have it from a point of view of Canadian society, very, very lowly, almost a demeaning job because all real people should have, you know, I don't know, very high up, high tech or high government jobs and be able to do things with computers and boss people around. And I'm not putting those things down.

That's a gift too. But even a simple thing, you're causing things. And you can do it for the honor and the glory of God. He's given you this ability for causality. And it's something beautiful and powerful and which is something it's described here as a gift. But what holds them all together is this odd phrase of the fear of God.

[ 32 : 36 ] You see, what this text is trying to communicate to us, this is part of the conversations I had with both people this week, actually, that I had my conversations with. And I, I don't know, pray that I can do a better job of it with you and do a better job with other people. I'm not, I'm not, I don't know if I'm naturally articulate. If I am, it's a gift of God. Really, truly, I'm not saying that.



And I'm not saying that for anybody to say anything. If any type of articulate I have, it's a gift from God. It comes from Him and He should get the glory. And I, that, I really want that to be true of my life and how I think about myself. And you could pray that that's always something for me and for yourself. But here's the thing is the very structure of reality is that we are vapor. Things are transient. Everything is a gift. And yet, on the other hand, we are trying to think of everything as if it's under the sun, as if the triune God doesn't exist. And then we get these gifts. There's gifts that make us point to the fact that it's not just one dang thing after another, and it's not just transience and then you die. That there's something more. That there's joy that comes in. That there's the shape of the seasons. And that there's goodness that comes in. And that's part of the whole way that we should be living our lives. And there's wonderful things like being able to eat, you know. And I don't know, my wife and I, you know, she's a vegetarian. I'm not. But we both can eat and enjoy our meal together beside each other, enjoying each thing in their own way. And then there's the dignity of work and all of those things. And everything is, we're transient. We can't cause eternal things. Everything has to come from He who is eternal down to us as a gift.

So how on earth could we ever think that to actually ever get connected and be reunited with and to be at peace with that God is something we can do. When all we can do is do vapor and we can't do anything eternal and everything is a gift. If there is a way to be made right with God, it has to come from the eternal to us. It has to come as a gift. And it has to be something we receive. And there can be no other way because that's the structure of human reality. And only the Christian gospel is the key in the lock, the piece of the puzzle that holds it together. And there is no other. Everything else is all about our accomplishment and our making things eternal. But that's not what human life is like.

It's gift. And salvation has to be a gift. And if salvation is a gift and everything is a gift, the fear of God. See, why is it that so often texts like this about the fear of God are connected with things like beauty and longing and joy? Because on one hand, the fear of God means that I come to learn, I start to learn that everything is a gift and that there is a giver of the gift and I am a receiver of a gift and that is a structure of it. And so how dare I start to believe that I am the one who is the giver of things, that I am the one who is the eternal. That is something I should be really afraid of that it's just like, you know, when somebody does a play in a sports field and they want to pretend they didn't do anything, they put their hands up. We should be like that with God.

We put our hands up. I don't want to have myself or anybody think that it's coming from me. And then the other side of it is, and because I start to understand it's not coming from me, I just want to be able to receive it and enjoy it. Receive it and enjoy it.

[ 36 : 07 ] Go in the fear of God to understand that the more you understand that God is God and you are not, and that's a good thing on one hand, that's why longings and yearnings connect to it. And it's why there should be a fear that you ever transgress that. And so we have this wonderful, surprising, counterintuitive biblical text. What is the lesson? Brothers and sisters, if you haven't received the greatest of all gifts that shapes and defines and helps you to one, and is the riddle, that the answer to the riddle of why all of life is a gift, that the answer to that riddle is that God sent his Son to be amongst us to save us, to die on the cross and save us and make us right with him, showing the answer to all these other clothes. It's all a gift. So go this week. I don't want you to force yourself, I almost said her name, but I don't want you to force yourself, but gosh, for the rest of the day, enjoy that coffee. It's not going to make you eternal. Enjoy it. Take pleasure in it. Take pleasure in the smiles of people when you talk to them. Enjoy it. If you have things to do tonight or tomorrow,

I mean that you have to cook meals, you have to sweep the floor, you have to maybe work in the lab tomorrow or you go to a cubicle, do it well to the glory of God and just say, wow, God, you're giving me the ability, the season of my life that I can accomplish and do things. Thank you.

Thank you. I invite you to stand. Bow our heads in prayer.

Father, thank you that you are beautiful. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, three persons, one God. God, you are eternal. You are a transcendent. You are almighty. You are the creator. You are the sustainer. You are sovereign over all things. You will bring all things to their proper end.

You have made us to be mere vapor that cannot keep ourselves together. Our life itself is a gift. Holding us together is a gift. Goodness, joy, food, causality, all of these things that you have given us.

[ 38 : 31 ] Father, we ask that you help us to die to our eternity projects and our transcendence projects and to grow within ourselves more and more a great wellspring and habit of gratitude.

And help us, Father, to notice beauty and not snatch despair and depression and anger and stomping our feet because things aren't going the right way and not even noticing the beauty or stomping our feet to get our own way and turning ourselves away from the joy that you offer and the good gifts. Father, we ask that you would do, man, just do these things in our lives. Father, we need your help and your help is a gift. Everything, you are the gift giver and we are the gift receivers.

And help us not to get those wires crossed and to grow in receiving the gifts you give us, all to the glory of God. We ask all these things in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior, and all God's people said, Amen.