

Does How I Feel Tell Me Who I Am Or What I Should Do?

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Preacher: Rev. George Sinclair

- [0 : 00] Father, we ask that you would gently but deeply pour out your Holy Spirit upon us at this time. Pour out your Holy Spirit upon us. Father, not so we can have some mystical experience or so all of a sudden we'll have a different emotion.
- Father, we ask that you would pour out your Holy Spirit upon us so that as we read your word and think about your word, that your Holy Spirit would bring your word to the very center of who we are.
- That your Holy Spirit would write your word on the command center of our lives, the hearts of our lives, so that in our daily lives we will bear much fruit with great endurance that brings you great glory.
- And this we ask in Jesus' name, your Son and our Savior. Amen. Please be seated. Amen. So, for some of you, probably not for most of you, but for some of you, what I'm about to say might strike you all as a little bit weird and maybe make it too weird for you to want to listen to anything else that I have to say.
- But I believe the devil is real. I believe there really is a devil. And I believe there really are demons. And I not only believe that there is a devil and that there are demons, but I believe that demons have interactions with human beings and human institutions, that demons affect how we live our lives and how even nations live their lives.
- [1 : 36] I believe that human beings can be possessed by a demon, although I think that's probably fairly rare. But I believe that demons can oppress and they, well, once again, they can influence us.
- In fact, I think every single human being, to some small extent at least, has experienced the demonic demons in their lives.
- Because I think three of the things that demons do in particular is they speak to us, maybe just by thoughts or impressions. And they focus on accusation, on slander, and on blasphemy.
- And I know blasphemy is a very, very old-fashioned word, which is very, very easily and very, very commonly mocked. But accusation really just means that when we have seasons in our lives, and maybe some of you are in this season right now, where it seems as if there's thoughts in your head that are just accusing you of things.
- You're too angry. You're no good. You're too ugly. You're too proud. You're too much of a failure. You're doomed. That's not only accusation.
- [2 : 54] In many cases, it's slander. In some cases, it might not be slander. Maybe you really do have some anger issues that you have to deal with. But the accusatory spirit isn't something that leads you to actually want to try to deal with it or seek repentance.

But it's something that as you go through your day, even though you might be standing nice and straight and be very upright, but inside, as you know, it's this message of you're a failure, you're ugly, you're too old, you're too young, you're too poor, nobody notices you, and as you go through your day, increasingly, even if your body is straight, your spirit, your mind, your heart is increasingly bent over and weakened.

And blasphemy is just really another way of saying false things about it. That's just describing saying false things against God. And for those of us who are followers of Jesus, that not only does the slander and the accusation come within us, but at the same time, there's this sense that God can't do anything about it.

That it might be all right for God to pour out his Holy Spirit or to speak to other people and do mighty things through them, but that's not your fate. Your fate is to be doomed. Your fate is to be bereft.

Your fate is to be completely and utterly unhappy and unsuccessful and unnoticed and diminished. And I think some of you might think, George, you're really overdoing it, but I think there's many people here who say, how did he know that that's what my week's been like?

[4 : 31] And how did he know that that's what it was like for me as I came into this church and even now? And so I think many of us know what it's like to have intercourse, so to speak, with demons and devils and evil spirits.

And because the devil doesn't want us to know the truth about ourselves and he doesn't want us to know the truth about God, it's often even harder when we want to do something connected to God.

It's often even harder when we come to church. In fact, many people, when they say, you know, when I stopped going to church, I felt so much better. Well, that's not because you are better. It's just because you've listened to blasphemy about who God is and how he sees you and what he can do for you and what he's doing within you.

So this text that we're going to look at today, and if you don't have a Bible with you, we're going to look at the Bible. It's 2 Corinthians 6, verse 3. It'd be a great help to you and to me if you were to open your Bibles or fire up your Bibles if you're using phones.

And the devil will say when you fire up your Bible, I'm just going to check my Facebook update really quickly or see what's on Twitter. It's the devil speaking. It's not God. If you fire up your phone, that's one of the nice things about having this.

[5 : 49] It's actually impossible to be tempted to check Facebook when you're using this ancient technology called paper. And by the way, in my daily devotions, I use my phone.

So I'm not dissing electronics. There's extra Bibles here if you don't have a Bible of your own or if you know that you're too tempted to check Facebook or Twitter, and then that might help you actually listen to God's Word better.

So the text today is a very, very good help to us in just thinking about this. How is it that God sees followers of Jesus?

How is it that God sees the world? And so the text begins like this. And by the way, usually I don't say this, and usually the translations are very good, but there's a bit of a mistake in the translation or an unhelpful bit in the early part of this translation that I'm going to point out.

It's very rare. One of the reasons I use the ESV, because it's very rare, but there actually is a... they've put the colon in the wrong place in the translation, at least according to the learned commentaries that I have read, not because George is a great Greek scholar.

[7 : 05] I stand on the shoulders of people who are vastly smarter and more learned than I am. So chapter 6, verse 3, 2 Corinthians chapter 6, verse 3, we put no obstacle in anyone's way so that no fault may be found with our ministry.

And if, you know, this is part of a book, and he's talking about this new covenant ministry, it's where you tell people about what Jesus has done and how God loves us and sent his son to die on the cross for us and how it's for people and how God has done everything that's required to make human beings right with himself.

We add absolutely nothing to it. Human beings want to add something to it. Human beings want to feel worthy, but the message, this ministry is that we don't do anything to make ourselves more worthy to God.

We don't do anything to make ourselves less worthy to God. We've already had lots of sin. We contribute nothing. God does everything. It's through Jesus that God reconciles the world to himself.

And those who have been reconciled to God, God actually makes his appeal to Ottawa, to Angola, to Zambia, to Hong Kong, to the bee people, to Afghanistan, to Kazakhstan.

[8 : 15] God makes his appeal to the gay community, the transgendered community, the Rockcliffe community, the university. God makes his appeal through ordinary people like you and me who have been reconciled to God by what Jesus has done on the cross.

And that's what he's talking about. That appeal that actually, I know it sounds like God's made a huge mistake using people like us, but that's his plan, not our plan.

That's what it says just before this. And so just to go back, verse 3 again, we put no obstacle in anyone's way so that no fault may be found with our ministry, but as servants of God, we commend ourselves in every way.

And what that's really meaning here is we're commending ourselves as servants of God. It's as servants of God that we commend ourselves. The emphasis is on what God is doing and what God has called us to.

And then here's the mistake. It has the colon after way in the English Standard Version, but it should actually be after by great endurance. In fact, Andrew, do you want to put the first point up?

[9 : 22] Or when you get back, you can put the first point up. And could you add to that point when you put it up, greatly endure? Eventually. As servants of God, we greatly endure.

And that's really how it begins. As servants of God, we greatly endure. And then it's going to look at these terrible things that happen. It's going to look at different things that are part of endurance. It's going to look at the way the world understands us compared to reality.

And the emphasis is that as servants of God, we greatly endure in all of these things. The colon's in the wrong place. But now that you sort of just look to all of these things that befall us.

Verse 4. In afflictions, in hardships, in calamities, in beatings, in imprisonments, in riots, in labors, and actually in the original language, the word in is before each of these words.

And for English style reasons, they've taken it out. But it's, in the original language, it is in afflictions, in hardships, in calamities, in beatings, in imprisonments, in riots, in labors.

[10 : 35] Another way to understand that is struggles, in sleepless nights, in hunger. Now just sort of pause before we go anywhere further.

If we're really dealing with great affliction in our life, if we are going through a very, very hard time, maybe we are going through a great time of hardship as we're trying to deal with our studies.

You're worried that you're in engineering and you're just not keeping up and you're going to be kicked out of the program. Maybe, you know, whatever it is, it's a hardship in a relationship.

Calamities. I mean, that's just, a calamity happens that you've been promised some money or you've been promised a job and it gets withdrawn from you and it's a calamity. You were counting on that.

Not many of us maybe have been beaten or at least not this week. But probably if we were actually to talk with each other for any length of time, we would discover that some people are still dealing with the beatings they had at different points in time in their life.

[11 : 47] Imprisonments isn't something that many of us have to deal with at least for being Christian. Although, it might very well be that some of you have done time behind jail. The first time that I ever went to visit somebody in a prison, there was another person from my congregation also in the jail.

They looked unbelievably shocked that I knew their secret. In many places, I mean, it's now, you know, to be gay or transgender is to be out and to be proud.

But even back in those days when people were very deeply ashamed of that, I think people who spent time in jail were families who had members doing a hard time. They were a far deeper shame about that. When I was in my previous congregation, I learned about people who had children who were gay or transgendered long before I heard of the people whose kids weren't working in Alberta in the oil rigs but in fact were doing hard time in jail.

In riots and labors and sleepless nights and hunger. If you're dealing with any of these things in even the smallest way, the devil is going to work you over like crazy.

And maybe right now he's working you over like crazy. If I was a real Christian, I wouldn't be going through this time. If I actually was really a success, I wouldn't be going through this time.

[13 : 14] If I actually prayed more and just was, you know, far better at following holiness, my marriage wouldn't be in the hard time it is right now. If I, you know, there's just something wrong with me, there's something cursed about me, there's something broken about me, there's something twisted in me that can never possibly change.

I am doomed. And if you're going through any of those things in that list, and it's a pretty terrible list of nine things, then the devil will speak in very powerful ways about you.

But how did it begin? Just look up again. And Andrew, do you have that point up there now? Yeah. As servants of God, we greatly endure.

I'm going to talk about this a little bit more, but it's not saying I greatly endure because, you know, I'm well educated. I'm not greatly enduring because I'm really good at praying. I'm not greatly enduring because I'm a superstar.

I'm not greatly enduring because I'm male, or because I'm female, or because I'm white, or because I'm not white, or because I'm straight, or because I'm gay. I'm not enduring because of any of these things.

[14 : 24] and it's not, it's when we take our eyes off of who we are in Christ that we have a hard time enduring. It's as a servant of God that I endure.

Talk about this more in a moment. I mean, Jesus didn't pick me because I'm a superstar. I'm not a superstar. He doesn't pick you because you're a superstar.

I know your mom told you you were a superstar, but you're not. That's one of the hard things. You go on a date and relationship or something and you get married. Your mommy told you you were a superstar, but why is it the other person doesn't think you're quite the same superstar after you've been married for a certain length of time?

You're not a superstar. It's not that we have this great endurance because there's something special about us. It's because God has made me his servant and called me to be his servant.

And it's when, as the gospel grips me and I understand that I'm not called to tower like a superhero or cower like a loser, like a doomed person.

[15 : 41] But God has chosen people. If you go back and read 1 Corinthians chapter 6, it's very, very powerful. One of the things that's very powerful in 1 Corinthians chapter 6 is he mentions people who are prostitutes, you know, who are gay, you know, who are straight, who are like robbers, a whole pile of this, you know, all these terrible things.

And then he ends it by saying, and such were some of you. And such were some of you. And then he goes on to talk about ministry and change life in Christ.

He doesn't call people because they're so brilliant, super star. He calls you because he loves you. And he knows better than you your failings and your shames.

God knows those better than you do. And still, and Jesus knew those better than you do. He knows them now, and still he went to the cross to die for you. But the matter is, is that the devils, the demons, actually don't tell you how bad the doom was before you gave your life to Christ.

They just have you dabble in the puddles, the shallow puddles of your trouble, just enough to depress you.

[17 : 01] But at the same time, the devils don't tell you how greatly and eternally how the heights and the depths of God's love for you and Jesus' death upon the cross for you.

That's part of the devil's blasphemy to keep from you. In fact, your doom was vastly worse than your worst nightmare. and your destiny in Jesus is unimaginably greater than your most proud thought.

Let's continue. Verse 6. He does these nine things, but then he takes a pause before going into some of the other things by what it means to endure and how it is that we learn to endure and what we hold on to in endurance by purity, by knowledge.

And that primarily means knowledge of God and knowledge of ourselves in light of who God is. By patience and kindness, fruits of the Holy Spirit.

By the Holy Spirit himself. By genuine love. Also a fruit of the Holy Spirit. By truthful speech. And there in the original language the idea is it's not just mere truthful speech, although it is truthful speech.

[18 : 28] It's a fine translation. But it's not only truthful speech in general. It's truthful speech in telling people about what the word actually says and who Jesus actually is.

But through truthful speech, where was I? And the power of God. And the power of God. You endure by the power of God.

You are the servant of the God who formed the universe, who keeps it in its courses and will bring all things to its proper end. And then it gets back, well it sort of pauses, verse 7, with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left.

Those of you who know your Bible, it's a bit of an image to Ephesians, a letter he's going to write a little bit after this where he develops it in Ephesians chapter 6. But then he goes back to this whole thing and the different ways that the demons, and not just demons, the world itself, which I'll talk about in a moment, can talk about us through honor and dishonor, through slander and praise.

We are treated as imposters. And yet, we're not imposters. God knows that we're true. We're treated as if we're unknown, completely and utterly invisible, unimportant.

[19 : 47] The eyes of the world, we are unknown, we are invisible, we are unimportant. And yet, well known by God. As dying, in other words, we're just beginning, we're diminishing, we're diminishing, we're getting less and less and less.

But behold, we live. Read chapter 3 and 4 and 5 of 2 Corinthians, and so our outer self, from the perspective of the world, is wasting away, our inner self, that part of us, which is grasped by God, which will live for eternity, is being prepared for an eternal way to glory.

Behold, as punished, and yet not killed, as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing, as poor, yet making many rich, as having nothing, yet possessing everything.

Very, very, very powerful passage of scripture. And you know, not only is it, you know, it's not just the reason that the demons and our own flesh can be so beat up, that when we're in fact being treated as invisible, when people overlook us, when they don't notice us, and you know, this is especially a problem for people as, you know, it's funny, it's a problem for people when they're young, they feel like when they're teenagers, or maybe young adults, that the people don't notice you, you know, you go into a work placement, and the boss comes in, where the workers come in, and the workers are coming in, they're looking for the boss, the boss comes in, he's looking for the important people, and the student interns are like, well, well, they're wall weeds, wall flowers, but not as pretty, and they're like wall weeds, and nobody notices them, in fact, all you do is you try to trim the weeds, get rid of the weeds, they wonder, who are those people doing here?

I don't know who they are, are they important? We feel invisible, the same thing happens as we go older, in fact, most of our life we're living with the fact that we're going to be viewed as invisible, and in the eyes of the world, the option is, you tower, where you, and there's two different versions of this, you cower, where you become less, and less, and less, so in the eyes of the world, the goal is to tower, to tower over your marriage, to tower over your social circle, to tower over your place of work, to tower in the society, that the entire goal is to tower, and in our minds, we've internalized this, so it seems as if the only options before us is either to seek to tower, or that we become nothing, or at worst, that we cower under the powerful people, and the Bible here is saying there is a completely different option, because in fact, it's completely and utterly ridiculous that any human being, in the words of Ecclesiastes, a pillar of dust, that has a longing for God, at its center, a creature, that a microscopic presence, that literally we can't see, unless we have powerful microbes, that can, microscopes that come into us, can completely and utterly ruin our lives, kill us, and yet we believe, that we can be like God, we believe that we can be, and tower over the world like God's, and if we cannot tower, then there is nothing left, there is only diminishment, there is only cowering, there is only invisibility, and so the devil, he, you know, you're poor, you're not rich, you're not towering over money, you're not towering in the world of honor, you're not towering in terms of being known, you're not towering, and the Bible said, there's a completely different option, which is to recognize, that there is a God, who does exist, who's created all things, sustains all things, will bring all things to their end, a God that does exist, who is our creator, that we are, we are alienated from, and we cannot fix for ourselves, and this same God, who created all things, and brings all things to their completion, and all things to their end, this same God, who knows us perfectly, with perfect knowledge, when he knew us with perfect knowledge, and knew our helplessness, and knew how ludicrous, our pretensions, and our ambitions were, this same God, not because human beings, called out to him to do mercy, but in the face, of human hostility, and enmity, without wanting God to save us,

[24 : 07] God still loved us so much, he sent his one and only son, to die upon the cross, that whoever puts their faith, and trust in him, will not perish, but have eternal life, that is a different option, than tower or cower, and that same God, who loves us, and sends his son to die for us, and does everything, that's required to do, to reconcile us to God, he calls me to be his servant, and in my flesh, I want a tower, and in my flesh, I want a tower, in my flesh, I want a tower, and being gripped, by the gospel, is learning, that the goal of life, is not to tower, and you don't have to listen, to the devil in the world, that says, that if you do not tower, you are invisible, and you are going to cower, or you are worthless, there's another option, I am the servant, of the most high God, not because I'm a superstar, but because he loved me, and he did everything, that needed to be done, for me to be reconciled, to him,

I can add nothing to, my service, adds nothing to it, and there's a very different, way to live, there's a very different, way to endure, I do not endure, as a superstar, I endure, as a servant, of the most high God, could you put up the prayer, Andrew please, here's a take home, and if you can't get these, if you're interested in them, they all go up on the webpage, on Monday, or some early this week, dear Lord, please make me a disciple, of Jesus gripped, by the gospel, who is learning, to see myself, as your servant, and then endure, in living for your glory, now just before, we go into the next part, you see there's another, thing about this, not only the towering, the cowering, but here's the question, does how I feel, tell me who I am, or what I should do, like I think,

I've answered that question, but it's a very, very powerful thing, in our culture, that how I feel, tells me who I am, and how I feel, tells me what I should do, I mean partly, it's because in our culture, institutions have so much, failed us, in our culture, like you know, the institution of marriage, has failed so many people, universities fail us, the media fails us, you know, I mean I put it in the bulletin, basically the entire knowledge class, got everything about the US election, completely wrong, and virtually nobody, in the knowledge class, is saying, you know what, we got everything wrong, like virtually nobody, in the knowledge class, is saying, we were completely wrong, maybe we have a problem, with hubris, that's excessive pride, have to show off, I went to university, every once in a while, as an aside, anyway never mind,

I don't go down that road, anyway, where was I, it's a very, very powerful belief, in our culture, that how I feel, tells me who I am, and how I feel, tells me how I should live, and what I should do, and the Bible here is saying, yes, you have this basic sense, that you need, some type of transcendence, you need to be connected, to transcendence, in some way, to understand, who you are, you have, that proper insight, that there's a clue, and for many of us, sexual knowing, is a type of transcendence, and so therefore, and other things, connected to sexuality, must be that source, of transcendence, that transcendent, emotion, or experience, that helps me, to understand who I am, or some other, longing, or yearning, that, but it's, those are hints, that we need to listen to God, could you put up the second, sorry, did I put that point up, yes, you're good, and could you put up the prayer, very simple prayer, it's a conversion prayer, it's a discipleship prayer, dear Lord, please make me a disciple, of Jesus, gripped by the gospel, and living for your glory, because it's only in God, that we ultimately, understand our identity, in fact, as many of us know, if you do what feels right, you're normally doing what's wrong, is this really, there's this deep paradox, that, if you do what feels right, it's probably something wrong, but if you go against, how you feel, to do that which is right, you end up feeling better, at least in the long run, because goodness, is good for you, we were made, to be at one, with the created order, in fact, you know, when it's talking about, the righteousness, and all here, weapons of righteousness, in that text, it's really talking about, the word righteousness there, is talking about, being right, with God, and with his created order, because we have a basic sense, that we should fit, with the created order, that we should fit, with our creator, and so, righteousness here, isn't just talking about, rule keeping, and it's not talking about, calculating harm, it's talking about, as you get connected, to God, and as you start to learn, to set aside, the towering, the cowering, and listening to his word, and as the gospel, shapes us, to be able to, to want to do, his word, and as the gospel, draws us, and as the gospel, models it, and that we start, to live certain ways, what we're actually doing, is starting to live, in a way, that fits, with the created order, and with the creator, who created that order, and sustains it, now some of you might say,

George, that sounds really, really wonderful, but you know, then isn't there, that text that, you didn't say anything about it, but didn't Ken read something, about not being, unequally yoked, with believers, like George, this is the problem, I have with Christian people, is you know, you say things like that, and yeah, my heart starts, to get stirred, but then you know, and I don't think, it's the devil George, I think it's just, I start to you know, look at Christians, and so many Christians, they live narrow, fearful lives, narrow, fearful lives, and then it goes ahead, and tells you, not to be unequally yoked, and George, that sounds elitist, you know, it sounds like, those people, you know, they don't want to try, hummus, because it's like, it's like ethnic food, hummus, good grief, why wouldn't you try that, they don't want to try Thai food, you know, they don't want to do anything, you know, it's like all those baby boomers, that still listen to music, from when they were teenagers, come on, give me a break, why are those baby boomers, so filled with fear, they're still listening to music, from when they were 16, and so many Christians, are like that George, like doesn't it go against, what you just said, let's look, verse 11, chapter 6, verse 11, it's very interesting, because in fact, it's a very good translation, but the individual, the literal word, underneath, these next couple of words, it doesn't make good English, so they don't use it, but it's actually what, we'll read it, verse 11, chapter 6, verse 11, we have spoken freely to you, and actually the word freely, is openly, like our goal,

[32 : 12] Paul is saying, is that, you know, if you folks knew, what I was like, before I met Jesus, if you knew, how narrow, and full of fear, I was, and condemnation, before I met Jesus, and I'm a really sinful guy, I have so many problems, I fight with, I have all these problems, but as the gospel grips me, it creates within me, openness, and wideness, it's translated here, is freely, we have spoken freely to you, Corinthians, our heart is wide open, you are not restricted by us, and the word is, in the original language, it's the image of being narrowed, narrowing, restricted is a good translation, and narrowing would sound like weird, right, but that's actually the idea, but it's not as if, as I go on in Christ, I want to become narrower, and narrower, and narrower, and narrower, my goal is, an open proclamation, and, and have this sense of the world, as an open place, that we can go into, so we read again, we have spoken, verse 11, spoken freely to you,

Corinthians, our heart is wide open, you are not restricted, narrowed by us, but you are narrowed, in your own affections, restricted, and narrowed, in your own affections, in return, I speak as to children, widen your hearts also, doing what is wrong, and serving idols, narrows hearts, but the gospel, as it's gripped, widens our hearts, and what happens, you see, is that we, in churches, what happens, is we want to turn, from being shaped, by the gospel, and we want to turn it, into religion, or we want to turn it, into spirituality, which just narrows us, but let's get to that text, the problem text, verse 14, do not be unequally yoked, with unbelievers, the Bible does say that, that Andrew, could you put that up, as the point, we're not hiding it, we're going to talk about it, it's an important point, for people to see, do not be unequally yoked, with unbelievers, for what partnership, has righteousness, with lawlessness, that's this word, righteousness, being fitted, to fit, in the created order, and fit, with our creator, or what fellowship, and the word there, is actually communion, koinonia, those of you, who know a little bit, about the Christian, terms, what koinonia, or fellowship, has light with darkness, what accord, has Christ with Belial, which is the devil, and the word, for accord there, in the original language, is the same word, that we get symphony from, so what symphony, has Christ, with the devil, or what portion, what in common, does a believer, share with an unbeliever, what agreement, has the temple of God, with idols, for we are the temple, of the living God, that's the big idea, if you were to, actually try to follow, if this was to be, like not, like written in a way, that's sort of more, the way, like as teenagers write, or kooky people write, with lots of bolding, and everything like that, it would be bolded, because it's actually, from a literary point of view, it's like the key idea, of this whole big text, for we are the temple, of the living God, as God said,

I will make my dwelling, among them, and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people, therefore go out, from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing, then I will welcome you, and I will be a father, to you, and you shall be, sons and daughters to me, says the Lord, almighty, since we have, these promises beloved, let us cleanse ourselves, from every defilement, of body and spirit, bringing holiness, to completion, in the fear of God, so this text, do not be unequally yoked, with unbelievers, it's not promoting, church splits, it's not saying, that we should live, in the ghetto, and it's not, it's not saying, that we shouldn't get jobs, that we shouldn't live, amongst the community, that we shouldn't go, to a whole pile of restaurants, what it's telling us, is that in three, particularly deep areas, of our lives, we don't enter, into formative relationships, in these three areas, of our lives, not because, we're better, not because, it's not saying, it's not like reading, an English, it's not like watching, an English period drama, where a noble person, would never marry, a commoner, what is it in the crown, with her common, piggish nose, and face, right, if you watch the crown, and I think that's episode three, the way one of the, people describe, what we now refer to, as the, as Queen Elizabeth's mother, and it's, it's not,

Downton Abbey, it's not, unequally yoked, because we're superior, what it's just telling you, is, you know, if in the very, very central areas, of your life, you can't be going, opposite directions, you can't be going, opposite directions, like, so one of those, three intimate areas, of your life, it's marriage, it's talking about, sexual knowing, in particular, it's talking about marriage, I, you know, in the financial post, on Saturdays, I have this odd habit, on the financial post, I, I look at this thing, about retirement, it's, I don't, I'm not interested in retirement, I just look at the profile, of the person, and it, there's a different story, every week, in this past week, there was a 60 year old woman, making \$11,000 a month, and, worth, you know, a million and a half, and, it was all about her, retirement preparedness, and I always look down, the thing, and one of the things, it gives you in the column, is how much money, a person spends, on average, on gifts, gifts, or charity, and or charity, so this person, making \$11,000 a month, sure she's a great person, by the way,

I don't mean to put her down, I don't know her, guess how much money, she gives to gifts, or charity, every month, if you guess zero, you're right, \$11,000 a month, worth over one and a half million dollars, she gives zero dollars, a year, in gifts, zero dollars, a year, to charity, now let's say, a huge tragedy, befell me, and, and my wife died, and I have to remarry, and this woman, maybe she's very pretty, maybe she's very witty, and she's making a lot of money, my life would be more comfortable, how could I live with her, I strive to give away, 10% of what I make, she gives nothing away, and the 10% of what I give, I try to give to God, that doesn't count the money, I want to spend on gifts, like how would we actually, manage life together, in that situation, and I'm a pastor, it's a bit different, if she married me, she'd know I have to go, and do things on Sunday morning,

[39 : 26] I know, you know, it's your job, she'd tell her friends, it's his job, but for you, who aren't pastors, and the text tells you, to not forsake, the assembling together, of yourselves, how's it going to work, you know, you go into that marriage relationship, say yeah, yeah, and she says, okay, well how's our money, well where's all money going, well I wrote all those checks, to you know, to compassion, and to a missionary, and to the church, you gave \$800, away this month, and on top of that, every Sunday morning, when I would just like to sleep in, you go to that bleepity bleep church, and on top of that, you want to go have this, mentoring relationship, with a friend at lunch hour, rather than being on the phone with me, and on top of that, some other night of the week, you want to go to a Bible study, are you crazy, how can you be married, how can you be married, if your lives are going, very very different directions, if you have very different values, how can you be married, this is a very, it's,

I mean in a lot of circles, it's not a very popular text, it's a very important text, and that doesn't even go on, to talk about the fact, that that's why Christians, should have nothing to do, with Ouija boards, they should have nothing to do, with astrology, they should have nothing to do, with anything, it's one of the reasons, what if you take yoga, you should be deeply careful, about yoga, because yoga is completely, and utterly designed, to try to connect you, to certain states, of consciousness, and relationships, with Hindu gods, with repeating certain words, even the postures, I know, I'm not saying, that you can't do yoga, in such a way, that it's just a type, of stretching, and Pilates, only spelt easier, but it goes on, to these other, deep intimate relationships, and that's why, it's telling us, and it's telling us, because God loves us, because he wants you, to endure greatly, in making a difference, in being fruitful, Andrew, could you put up the prayer, dear Lord, please make me, a disciple of Jesus, gripped by the gospel, who is learning, to say no, to the relationships, and involvements, which take me away, from the freedom, that comes, from being led by you, to live well, as I live for your glory, let me tell you folks, it is so much more freeing, to be generous, with your money, than to be cheap, sorry,

I don't want to, I don't want to offend people, who are cheap here, I didn't mean to do that, I just want to bear witness to it, there is something freeing, about not having money, as an idol in your life, and trusting God, for part of having, your needs met, it's God, these words of God, are for our freedom, and I already described, if you're connecting, to idols and demons, it's what, this whole sermon began, with what demons say, into our ears, and the complete, and utter difference, I mean, so many people, who do, I bet if you discovered, that that man, who just attacked, those two young girls, in Abbotsford, I bet he was listening, to voices, and demons, want you to kill people, and they want you to die, but the God, of the Bible, dies for you, the world, is completely different, between the world, of the devil, and the demons, and of darkness, and of idols, it is completely, and utterly different, from the world, of the living God, it is the culture, of death, versus the culture, of life, and he does it, because he wants you, to be free, sort of running out of time, just want to be clear, this is not, just a pep talk, if you just be patient, with me for an extra second, here,

I've heard this, at lots of funerals, and I just heard it, at a very recent funeral, and a person, who just, in their talk, because they want to say, something about the deceased, they say, I just want to tell you all, that the deceased, let's call him Bob, that as I was walking, thinking about what to say, at this funeral, Bob wanted me, to let you know, he's fine, Bob wanted me, to let you know, he's fine, don't worry about Bob, now okay, time out, like really, really, but you know, they mean very, very, very, very well, people who say that, and maybe one of you, have said that, and I don't, how many people, have I offended this morning, you can have a little, maybe you should have, a chart up there Andrew, people could send in texts, offended, offended, offended, we have a little chart,

George keeps speaking, whoa, it's been a real offensive morning, this week, at Church of the Messiah, people mean well, when they say that, but it's, we all know it's, crap, and so maybe, when I'm telling you, that God loves you, and all of these types, of things, in fact Andrew, could you put up the next, the final point, we are the temple, of the living God, that's verse 16, what agreement, has the temple of God, with idols, for we are the temple, of the living God, that means, that God himself, dwells, amongst each of us, as individuals, and amongst Christians, as a group, and that I will be their God, and they shall be my people, that I will welcome you, I will be a father to you, you will be my sons, and daughters, it is the Lord Almighty, who is speaking, it is the Lord Almighty, who meets with us, in the center of who we are, that dwells there, this is not me, being sane, wishful thinking, if this is God, correcting me, then I am in real trouble, no, sorry, you didn't know,

[45 : 44] I had my phone up here, I use it to try to keep track, of how long I am talking, that has never happened, to me before, and really the funny thing is, it is from a Christian, who should know, that I am in church, I mean, he goes to an evangelical, Bible teaching church, he should know, that I am probably in church, anyway, I don't know, what is going on there, so anyway, maybe somebody stole his phone, and pressed that, that must be the case, that is, it couldn't have been, that person actually, calling me, here we are, we are the temple, of the living God, here is the thing, why is this not just a fantasy, because Jesus, walked amongst us, Jesus claimed, that all of the, that all of the Old Testament, claimed that God would send a deliverer, that God would send a Messiah, and Jesus came and said, I am that one, that God has promised, that would, he would send a Messiah, and all of the wisdom, of the Old Testament, and all of the goodness, of the Old Testament, it's all connected, and Jesus says, all of the things, in the Old Testament, that are good and true, they point to me, and to prove it,

I am going to die, upon the cross, because I came to die, and on the third day, I will rise, and he said it time, and time, and time, and time again, and then in history, he did die upon the cross, and in history, on the third day, just as he promised, the grave was empty, the tombstone, was rolled away, not so he could get out, but so people could look in, and the tombstone, was gone, the tomb was empty, the body was gone, and it wasn't just, that the body was gone, but that over the next 40 days, Jesus appeared to 500 people, at one time, he appeared to his mother, he appeared to people, the Bible is very clear, all of the historical records, are very clear, nobody believed, he would actually do it, nobody believed, he would rise from the dead, everybody believed, that that would be, a complete and utter failure, that it was the end of Jesus, but the stone was rolled away, the grave was empty, the body's gone, and Jesus appears, and he convinces, hundreds and hundreds, of skeptics, that he is still alive, and his death, and resurrection, vindicates, that he in fact, is God's provision, to make us right with him, it is God, it is vindication, that when his followers, say that we are the temple, of the living God, it is not like a person, at the funeral, saying that Bob is alright, in history, in reality, he is vindicated, and he can be known, with our mind, and with our faith, please stand,

Andrew, could you put up, the final prayer please, the final prayer is, dear Lord, please make me, a disciple of Jesus, gripped by the gospel, who is growing, in remembering, that you live, within us, as we live for your glory, that you live, within us, as we live for your glory, friends, maybe you have been, really struggling, the devil has been, beating you up, maybe you are like me, the devil likes to beat me up, and then puff me up, he likes to play me, like a yo-yo, I go from despair, to pride, can all be in the same, car drive, and I'm not talking, about driving to Toronto, I'm talking about, driving 10 minutes, and maybe you're like me, there's no better time, than just to say, once again, Father, thank you for Jesus, thank you for what he did, for me on the cross, please make me, a disciple, gripped by the gospel, who is living, for your glory, and Father, please silence the devil, some of you, if you're really struggling, with accusation, one of the best things, you can do, is tell another brother, or sister, that you're struggling, with it, and ask them to pray, for you, and for some of us, it's a long obedience,

God, the devil has his grip, since he can keep playing us, like a yo-yo, but we, can greatly endure, as we remember, that we are servants, of the most high God, that God himself, lives within, those who put their faith, and trust in Jesus, and if you have not, given your faith, and trust to Jesus, there is no better time, than right today, ignore all my other prayers, ignore the rest, of the service, and just call out to God, and say, I don't know the words, I need you, I need your son, as my savior and Lord, forever, right now, forever, let's pray, Father, in the name of Jesus, not because of our righteousness, or power, but in the name of Jesus, by his shed blood, as his adopted children, by grace, we ask that if there are, any demons present, that in the name of Jesus, they will be bound, in the name of Jesus, they will be cast from here, in the name of Jesus, that they will not return, and Father, we ask that you do not leave us, swept empty, but that you would pour out, your Holy Spirit, deep within us, with an even greater power, that as your Holy Spirit, falls, and as we dwell in your word, that you will make us, grow in us, day by day, more increasingly, disciples of Jesus, gripped by the gospel, learning to live, as your servants, to bring you glory, and this we ask, in Jesus' name,

Amen.