

Eternity

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Date: 29 November 2020

[0 : 00] Let's go to the Word of God, Isaiah 57. Isaiah 57. And I want to talk on a theme of eternity today.

! Eternity. A man asked a preacher one day, don't expect to take forever this morning, but I would like us to turn our minds to eternity.

Think of that. Just the concept of it. It just blows your mind, doesn't it? Eternity. To consider eternal things. Friends, we are on the threshold of eternity.

Every one of us. Every one of us. We're about to enter a whole new dimension of living. Question is, where will you spend? Eternity.

This is a critical question. And you have to answer it, personally, for yourself. What if I told you, you are about to take a journey, and at your destination will be your new home, where you will spend forever.

[1 : 26] Whatever. What if your decisions now will determine that destiny, that location? You are about to take that journey.

Relatively soon, considering the shortness of time, and the enormity of eternity, and your decision is pivotal. It's like we're in a departure lounge.

Isn't it? A departure lounge. About to board our flight. Where is your plane headed? There is no end to eternity.

It is forever. Forever. Can we try and fathom the wonders of that concept? The enormity of eternity. And friends, this is a reality. This is not just picturesque language, or just some philosophical point I'm trying to make here. This is real.

[2 : 30] We are in a departure lounge. I know Julie likes to put on a voice, boarding now. She sort of makes a sound like you hear over the airline speakers, over the loudspeakers, and you generally can't hear half of what they say.

But I say, boarding now. Okay, get your boarding pass ready. I'm ready. Got my passport. Friends, where is your plane headed? It is a real question that we all have to think about.

We stand at the edge of this limited time zone. You know, your earthly span, however long it is, it's really limited, isn't it? And we're on the shores of a great lake, about to launch out into that which is everlasting.

Forever and ever. And we are all headed somewhere. And our departure from here and our arrival there, wherever it is, it is imminent.

So then, what are eternal things? I put to you, it's an essential thing to consider eternity, eternal things. Let's consider what the Bible says is eternal, forever.

[3 : 48] What does the Bible say is forever? we see that it says God is forever. Isaiah 57, Isaiah 57, verse 15 says that God is forever.

It reads, Isaiah 57, 15, for thus saith the high and lofty one that inhabits of eternity, whose name is holy.

I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

He inhabits eternity, he lives in the high and holy place, yet he can't dwell in human hearts by faith. He is all powerful, he is forever.

He's not constrained by time, he is from everlasting to everlasting, he has no beginning and he has no end. The Bible calls him an everlasting king.

[5 : 07] Jeremiah 10 verse 10 and we've got Queen Elizabeth but her duration of reign is limited.

I don't know who's next in the chair, whether it's Charles or whoever, but earthly kingdoms wax and wane, kings and queens die, but this king is everlasting, an everlasting king.

And it says he shall reign forever and ever and ever and ever. He shall reign, as that hallelujah song goes, isn't it?

He shall reign forever and ever. Eternal. God. And it says of him, this eternal God, that he's actually interested in you and me.

That's mind-blowing in itself, isn't it? That this everlasting king, this eternal God, he should care for such as we. He should consider that he should be interested in such as you and me, especially me.

[6 : 21] And he cares for us, doesn't he? And says the eternal God is thy refuge and under me are the everlasting arms.

Think of that. This eternal God is your refuge and he embraces you with his everlasting arms.

And he says, Jeremiah 31 3, I have loved thee with an everlasting love. What a love. This is no fickle human passing love.

This is everlasting love. Everlasting love. And Isaiah 54 verse 8 it says, with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee.

His love is everlasting, his kindness is everlasting and it says his mercy is everlasting. Psalm 100 verse 5, the eternal God, he loves you with an everlasting love, his kindness is everlasting, his mercy is everlasting.

[7 : 33] Aren't you thankful for that today? God is forever. God is forever. Trouble is, let's be honest, we have by and large left God out of our thinking much of the time.

by and large, we've crowded out God. Our lives are so busy, occupied with other stuff that we scarcely contemplate.

God is forever. Even though he is forever, we don't act like it matters. Half the time, I know, I've got to be honest, life gets such that we don't always have our heart and mind on him.

But God is forever and we should think about that. That should change us, shouldn't it? Amen.

Another point is that our souls are forever.

We might think of the humans in our lives, the men and women, the boys and girls that are in our family circle and our friends and social world.

[8 : 47] They are ever-living souls. Souls are forever. Souls are forever. It's been said, two things will surprise us when we arrive in heaven. Who is there and who is not?

Some will be there, some will not be there. We don't always know who's going to be there. It might be a surprise when we see who is there. You think, wow, I'd have written them off.

I wouldn't have thought they were a Christian. But God knows them that are his. We might think, well, where's so-and-so? They were at church every week. They were at church morning and night and mid-week and you name it.

But where are they? They're in the other place. Because they did not know the Savior. It matters to know where you're going. And souls are forever.

One day our souls will go somewhere. Somewhere else. This is not our permanent location. You might be very attached to your little humble dwelling here below, but it's temporary.

[9 : 51] It's temporary. And can we open our eyes and truly see for a moment? Take a look from an eternal viewpoint. It says in 2 Corinthians 4, verses 17 through 18, for our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh forth as a far more exceeding and internal weight of glory.

For while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen, are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

It's almost like we should put different glasses on, shouldn't we? We need to get that special x-ray Superman vision. We need to have some vision beyond just what we can see, don't we?

Take our eyes off dwelling upon what we can see and think about and dwell upon that which we cannot see with this human eye. We focus our eyes on things that are passing, they're momentary, and we miss that which is the last thing.

People of God, our souls are forever. Can we open our eyes and see human souls as God sees them, as precious, as of value? Consider things from the perspective of eternity and answer this question for ourselves.

[11 : 11] Am I living for eternity? As a Christian gentleman who went to one of the judges in the state of Georgia, this went to some kind of senior, you know, well-known judge, was a well-known man, and he said to the man, he said, Judge, I hear that you and your wife aren't to separate.

And he was highly indignant, sir, that's an insult. No two people in this world have loved each other more devotedly. Separate, nothing could separate us. And his friend said, but Judge, your wife is a Christian, and she's far from well, and the doctor tells me that she can't live long, and you are not a Christian.

Your wife will go straight to God, but you are turning your back on him. And the old judge stood with tears running down his cheeks and lips trembling and said, my God, I never thought of that.

No, you that are lost will not enter into heaven. You will be forever lost. Souls are forever. This should grip us, this reality.

We will be separated. If you are lost, you will be forever lost. Unless you turn. Now, yesterday, we did some outreach together, some of us, and yesterday, we met a young man called Bradley.

[12:36] Young fella called Bradley, about 20, and he looked like he just got out of bed. He had his PJs on, and they looked like watermelons all over his pajamas that he had on.

And when we first encountered Bradley, he said, not interested. but we got to talking with Bradley, and there he was in his pajamas, and he started to show a flicker of interest.

He started to show a flicker of concern, and it ended up that he sat down outside his front door, on his porch there with us. And we started a conversation about eternal things, and he started to speak to young Bradley, and we prayed for young Bradley, praying for him, that he might come to know the Lord, and I think he's not far off.

The Spirit of God is at work in him, I believe, and I trust that God will do that work in his soul.

There's a lot of brown things out there.

There's people out there, people of God, there's lots of people out there, souls, never-dying souls, may we not overlook the value of souls, they are forever, forever.

[13:55] Those ones you rub shoulders with at work, the ones you call your mates, say something to them, say something. They are forever, forever.

Even the most desperate and outwardly hopeless souls are still ever-living souls, aren't they? And we might, humanly speaking, kind of rape people. Oh, that's someone I don't want to be with, I'd like to be with this person.

People can get like that, that they rape people. We shouldn't do that, should we? God's not a respecter of persons. We shouldn't be either. Even the most desperate and outwardly hopeless are still ever-living souls.

And what matters is the forever things. God is forever, souls are forever. Ever-living, ever-living, they'll live forever, somewhere. People matter, souls are forever.

Also, number three, the gospel is forever. It's forever. Revelation 13, 14, rather, verse 6, it says, John says, I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the ever-lasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation and kindred and tongue and people.

[15:19] John says he saw an angel, and the angel was delivering, an angel means messenger, the angel was delivering an ever-lasting gospel.

Friends, we are angels, in that sense, in the sense that we're messengers. We're meant to be carriers of this gospel, and it is an ever-lasting gospel. The gospel always has been the gospel, and it always will be the gospel.

You know, I've met some people, hyper-disciplined socialists, who say, they try and say there was a gospel that was different way back. That somehow Peter's gospel was different from Paul's gospel. That salvation was somehow different for the Jews than for us today. But no, the Bible says this, it says the gospel is everlasting. The gospel is everlasting.

There's no two gospels, three. There's one gospel, there's one hope, there's one message, there's one saviour, there's one salvation. And the Bible says the gospel is everlasting.

[16:23] Adam could have got saved the same way that we can get saved today. By God's grace, through faith, the blood of Jesus shed.

Adam, of course, he didn't see the cross, but he can look forward to it. We can look back at the cross and thank God for it. It's the same gospel. We get saved the same way. We don't get saved by works.

We don't get saved by sacrifices of the Old Testament. We get saved by the one finished work, the one gospel. It's the same gospel, the same gospel for us as it was for anyone before us.

Right back to Adam and Eve. It's the same gospel message. The blood of Jesus is what saves. And this gospel message, this gospel is forever. The angel brings the everlasting gospel.

And friends, the word of God is eternal. This is forever. It's forever settled in heaven. This is forever, this book. It's permanent. It says in 1 Peter 1 that we're born again.

[17:30] New life is in this book. The salvation of God with the new birth, our new creation is because of the message of this book. We are born again, it says. Not of corruptible seed.

Seed that's going to corrupt and dwindle and die and be barren. But incorruptible. This seed is ever germinating, it's ever producing life, it's ever abounding, it's incorruptible.

By the word of God it says, which liveth and abideth forever, forever. And it says that it contrasts the word with man. It says, raw flesh is as grass and all the glory of man is the flower of grass.

We look in our gardens and we see as the weather starts to hit home, things shrivel up and dry and drop off and die. Our garden is like grass that withers and dies.

And man is such. You see, as we reflect, as we get older, we know more of them. People that we've known have now gone ahead of us.

[18 : 42] They've passed away. Friends, life is short. And as a preacher I stood at the graveside, stood in front of a grave, delivering words of hope and help.

And friends, we know death is written, the grass withers, the flower fades. But this word endures forever.

The word of God, the everlasting gospel. It says by the word of the Lord endureth forever. This is the word which by the gospel is true. It comes to you. So when you think then, let's think that through then, considering that this is God's forever book, oughtn't we to get acquainted with it? Oughtn't we to actually think, wow, this is forever? I should start to learn a little bit more about it. I should start to study it. I should start to take it seriously.

I should start to put some effort to get to know it, to get used to it, to love it. The gospel is forever. Friends, another forever is our ultimate destiny is forever.

[20 : 00] Our ultimate destiny is forever. And it's a very somber thought, this reality that this forever book talks about a forever place.

A forever place. It says this in Matthew 25, 41. That's when we say also to them on the left hand, depart from me and curse it into everlasting fire, prepare for the devil and his angels.

That's something forever, everlasting fire. Now I know we've got some firefighters and some budding firefighters in our congregation. And I were talking, Peter and I were talking about snatching them from the fire.

We are the fire rescue team. God uses human vessels such as we to be the ones who are the rescue team.

Snatching them out of the fire. I don't want to steal Peter's thunder because he's thinking about preaching on that one. Friends, there's an everlasting fire. Shouldn't that start to grip us?

[21 : 21] And what then of our lives now, in the light of these eternal truths, what then are we to do in the light of the fact that God is forever? Our souls and the souls of living and dead human are forever.

That the gospel is forever. That our ultimate destiny is forever. That should start to shake us, shouldn't it? That should start to grip us.

Thankfully, there is another forever place. it says, these shall go into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.

Now, it's the same word translated everlasting as it's translated eternal. The same punishment, the punishment is eternal, the life is eternal.

Which would you rather have as your forever place? Friends, there's no question. There is a reality of eternal life. There was a man, a creature of old, that was thinking of the fullness and duration of this wonderful life, of eternal life, everlasting life.

[22 : 37] And he spoke from his own experience just before he died. He said, I remember a year ago when a doctor told me, you have an illness from which you won't recover. Now, there's people here today that they've got such a situation, a condition.

They said, you're going to die. You're sick. You're going to die. You're not going to recover from this. And the preacher, it says, he walked out to a mountain site where he lived and it says he looked across a mountain that he loved.

He looked across this beautiful river that was flowing by, these stately trees and all of God's wonder all around him, God's poetry to his soul as he looked at the expanse of nature around him.

And he looked up into the great sky and he saw the stars and such. And he said this, I may not see you many more times, but mountain, I shall be alive when you are gone.

And river, I shall be alive when you cease running towards the sea. And stars, I shall be alive when you're falling from your sockets in the great pulling down of the material universe.

[23 : 52] Friends, we are forever. Even this world will pass away, but we are forever. We will last longer than terra firma, than the sun.

If the sun ultimately extinguishes, we will outlive the sun. Amen? We are forever. And if these things are true, of which we have spoken, and they are, it should make us think about eternity, shouldn't it?

And I urge you today, consider, contemplate, for yourself, for your soul, eternal values, eternal truths. Shouldn't that shape you? What you will do, who you are, this side of the grave?

It says in Matthew 6, our Lord urges the folk, he says, lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where molten dust doth corrupt, where things break through and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, where things do not break through nor steal, for where your treasure is, then will your heart be also.

If we just can put things in perspective, we can live a life totally wrap up in making a living, and there's nothing wrong with making a living, but not to be consumed with making material things our goal, that we will actually consider internal things, eternal things, forever things.

[25 : 27] So often we're held back by the earthbound thinking of that which is temporary. We can consider, young man, young woman here today.

There was a young man who came to this professor in a university and they had a bit of a heart-to-heart and the professor asked him, well, what did, well, and when you have finished your study, what do you mean to do then?

And the young man said, I shall take my degree, and then, then I shall get difficult cases and win fame by my eloquence and acuteness. He must have been studying to be a lawyer.

And then he said, and then, and then what will you do? Then I shall be promoted and become rich.

And then, after time has gone, eternity begins.

Now we can spend our life consumed with this and that earthly goal, with making a living, with making money, with acquiring property or wealth or substance, such that we miss the point.

[26 : 38] And then, ultimately, it's eternity, isn't it? Eternity begins. The Bible tells us that his kingdom shall reign forever.

And what on earth are we doing for heaven's sake? Are we laying up for ourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust just grow up, if things break through and steal, we've got to padlock everything, lock everything, put security cameras on everything.

It's going to corrupt, it's going to dissolve, it's going to perish. That flashy car will get dusty and grimy and damaged and scratched.

It'll rust away like a heap of rubbish. Friends, eternity is just around the corner. The Bible tells us of eternal things.

Have we got an eternal focus? There are eternal consequences to life in the now too. What we do now has an eternal dimension to it.

[27 : 48] What we sow now has a reaping later. For some may see life as a meaningless puzzle. even in the book of Ecclesiastes Solomon writing in the worldly philosophy thinking, he says this in Ecclesiastes verses 2 of 1, it says, vanity of vanities, saith the preacher, vanity of vanities, all is vanity.

Solomon says this 35 times. He's saying really from an earthly philosopher's point of view, life is utterly meaningless. It's pointless, it's meaningless, everything is meaningless.

He was voicing the philosophy of an earthbound man. You know, this is what people who don't know Christ would have such a thought, a thinking, that it's pointless, it's just there's no meaning.

If we look at life in a purely philosophical way, without that sense of eternity, our lives are meaningless. But for we that, oh Christ, our lives have an eternal purpose, eternal priorities are in view.

We have a forever outlook, because this is just momentary. This is forever. Heaven. The Bible tells us that on eternal throne, it says that unto the Son, we say it, thy throne, oh God, is forever and ever a scepter of righteousness as the scepter of thy kingdom.

[29 : 26] The throne of the Lord Jesus Christ is forever. He will not be deposed, there will be no successor, he is the king of kings and the Lord of Lords.

And eternal treasures are in store for you that believe. If we are ready, may we consider wisely how we devote our finite lives. salvation. I'm not saying we earn salvation, but our salvation works for us.

God works in us. There's something eternal happening in the present. There's a tombstone that sits outside the city of London that is visible, it says pass us by, and there's an inscription upon this tombstone that says, pass us by, stop and think, I'm in eternity, you're on the brink.

That's a thought, isn't it? We're on the brink of eternity, people, and can we then have that eternity kind of forever kind of thinking, wow, what would God want?

That would blow your mind, wouldn't it? When we devote so eternity to temporal things, that's just going to pass away. It's just, they're only with us for a moment, but forever things should occupy our thoughts, forever things.

[30 : 52] And that doesn't mean to be so heavenly minded we're of no earthly good, but that sense that our occupation on the earth is productive and useful and benefits others, we also have eternity in view, because eternal souls matter, eternal truths matter, everyone will exist for eternity.

You are about to embark on a great voyage. Are you ready to go? You can't take anything with you. Have you made your reservations?

Stress? It's a reality. You might say, preacher, I don't think I'm safe yet. I don't know that I've got my ticket as it were. I don't know that I know him.

The Bible says you can't know that you have eternal life. You can know it. There's something you can know. Yes, I know it. And you can have God's assurance.

You have it. It's a witness that he is to you. Now a common retort we get at the door, whenever you witness to someone not interested, do.

[32 : 08] How can you be not interested? It puzzles me. I know those that come out witnessing, how can you not be interested? How can you enter into eternity unprepared?

It's almost like you want to compel them to come in, doesn't it? We need to get some, I don't know, handcuffs or something or just grab them physically.

wanting to side of them and to compel them to get saved, to compel them to come in. Because it's got to be the conviction of God, the drawing power of God, we know that.

But you just want to shake some people not interested? How can you not be interested? This is the most compelling truth, this is the most vital, critical, pivotal point of life itself.

What will you say when you stand before the eternal throne, this eternal throne, and you come face to face with that eternal God and he says, what have you done with my son?

[33 : 16] What will your answer be when he asks you of your eternal soul? What will you forever be? Thankfully the Bible tells of an eternal redemption redemption, and he's the author of it, an eternal redemption, and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation.

It's all them that obey him. For the saved there will be eternal glory, eternal salvation, says 1 Peter 5.10, eternal glory, won't that be something?

Eternal, eternal glory, and the Bible tells Luke 16.9 of eternal habitations, eternal habitations. You know, you might have some swanky, swanky builder that you get your mansion built by down here, but it's going to crumble.

These habitations, Luke 16.9, are eternal habitations. It's interesting, the phrase eternal life, everlasting life, occurred no less than 44 times.

Same Greek phrase, eternal life, everlasting life, 44 times, many times in the book of John. This life is eternal. It's forever.

[34 : 49] That matters. That's precious. His forgiveness is forever. His pardon is forever. We can't understand how does he make it happen?

God performs a miracle in your heart. Salvation. Born again. New life. And friends, we can praise him forever.

Psalms 145, verse 2, every day. Well, I bless thee. I will praise thy name forever and ever. You know, the choir has got a little bit of a head start on some of us, but friends, I will praise him.

I will praise thy name forever and ever. Now, worship is another forever thing. We're just practicing for now, but this worship is going to be forever. Isn't that something?

We should worship him. Amen. God's word tells us to set your effects in. On things above? No, on things on the earth. Let's not get too occupied with earthly stuff.

[35 : 54] How is our heavenly thinking going? And fellow believer, how can you say you are not interested when there's a mission field all around you? Think of that.

And even your workplace is a mission field, where you're studying, where you're working, where you're shopping. It's a mission field out there, isn't it?

And all around you are never dying souls perishing for one of this eternal message. We are the messengers of this message. And when God's redeemed the gathered home, a far greater throng will gather at the edge of a burning lake of fire.

There'll be more there. And they will be cast there. and it will be eternal. People we haven't told. Don't you grip us, shouldn't we? God's the author of salvation. But we're the messenger of that message of salvation.

[37 : 02] We have a message to deliver. We're the poster. Just deliver it. deliver it. They might mock you and scorn you, laugh at you, deride you, hate you.

But deliver it. Nevertheless, deliver it. And God will help you to deliver it. Are you ready for eternity? Friends, what greater priority can we have in the present than eternity? in the present time that we have? What greater occupation of our energy can there be?

Can we see beyond our finite time span? You know, I don't know how many days I've got left.

Hours. How long have we gone? Do we see beyond the limitations of our own mortality?

Of time as we know it. It's just a vapour. gone. Up in smoke. Like a mist. What greater work can we muster our energies to engage in?

[38 : 11] Friends, these are thoughts to contemplate today. And as we close, we think of this great doxology, now unto the king, eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise guy, be honour and glory forever and out.

Amen. Let's pray. Lord, we thank you for every soul gathered here. We're all precious in your sight, in that you've made us. And Lord, we know the ultimate is to know you.

Lord, we pray each one can come to that faith by your great love and grace. God, that message that you communicate is a forever message.

That gospel, that good news is a forever gospel. And Lord, we thank you that you help us to see these truths. Lord, we pray each one can come to know that saving grace of God, that by your spirit you would draw us unto yourself.

Draw us to our knees, Lord. Compel us, Lord, that our eyes would be opened, that our hearts would be pierced, pricked, penetrated by your word, that it might cut deep, deep down.

[39 : 41] Lord, work a work of the spirit of God in us, in your church. Pray that if any, no you're not this day, that they might be compelled to think on these things until they find their rest in thee, Lord God.

Lord, that we might come to know your saving power, that at the cross everything was done, we can trust you now. Lord, we pray that each one becomes faith, that faith that is the mighty blessed work, that you can affect that heart change in such as we, that we can become a new creation, that you can perform a new birth, that our heart can be regenerated by faith.

Lord, we pray for each one to know that we can have eternal habitations, we can have an eternal life, an everlasting life, we can have an everlasting and eternal salvation, an eternal redemption, that we'll consider this forever book, your word, the Bible, that will take it Lord as something we should get to be acquainted with it, Lord, because it is forever.

And Lord, we pray that each one would know how can we be messengers of this forever gospel, that we can communicate to others, that Lord, give us the help to, give us the words to say, give us a heart of compassion, of love, give us tears, Lord, we think of loved ones who know you're not, Lord, help us to tell them, dear Lord, do a work in them, but most of all, may we be used of you, Lord, we want to be of heavenly affection, and it could be asked of us, what on earth are you doing, for heaven's sake, that we will think of that, and we want to do something, not for our own glory or praise, but because it's the right thing to do, Lord God, we thank you for these things, in Jesus' name, Amen.