

Where is my Focus?

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[0:00] We want full attention and focus. That's my message here is about focus. What are you looking for is my question.! Where are you looking? Where's your focus?

And something we all need to think about. Where's my focus in life? And Hebrews 12 verse 1 through 4 talks about where we should look. It says, Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every way, and the sin which does so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest you be wearied and faint in your minds. You have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.

Now there's a lot here, and if you were to spend time just unpacking what we just read, it's just mind-blowing really, isn't it? We're compassed about. We've got a race to run.

We've got a finishing line. We've got Jesus ahead of us. We're looking unto him. He's the author and the finisher of our faith. He starts our faith and he sees it through. He gives us that knowledge of himself.

[1:25] And it says, For the joy that was set before him he endured the cross. You would see that we would trust him, that joy of our salvation. He saw that even in the agony of the cross as he endured it for us.

And now we know he's sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. And there's a call there to resist, to strive, to focus, to look unto him, the author and finisher of our faith.

And my message tonight is going to be a little bit of a hop, skip and a jump, you could say. There's some verses here and there scattered that have this common thread of this common theme, looking, where we look, where we focus, where we pay our attention, where we direct our eyes.

And there's eternal realities here that we're talking about. And so we're talking about these things. We want to focus. We don't want anything to deter us or distract us from this, this essential focus that we must have.

The focus of life really, looking unto Jesus. And that's the right focus. And we'll get back to that. For some, their focus is on other things.

[2:32] Other things. They've got the wrong focus, you could say. Now, some miles back, I know Julie and I, we like to talk of our trip of a lifetime. We were in a very special place, on a tour bus.

And it kind of struck me, as we were driving along on this tour bus, and it was actually, it was in the vicinity of the lake, the Sea of Galilee. It was in the vicinity of the Sea of Galilee.

and we had seen Cana I think it was and Capernaum. We'd seen the Sea of Galilee and one place that was really lovely was that Julie and I went down to the River Jordan and there was all these tourists there, some getting sort of re-baptised in the River Jordan which we didn't do.

And I went down to the riverside and I put my feet in the water and all these little fish came and I took my shoes off and these little fish were kind of all around my toes and my feet, it was amazing. There's all sorts of little things and little stories we could tell. But one thing that struck me which kind of relates to this message here tonight in part is that we're on this tour bus and the one who's giving the announcements is telling us all these wonderful amazing sights all around us and he's saying over here is the Valley of Megiddo where the Battle of Armageddon is about to be fought as the Bible speaks of it and it struck me that one of the passengers on the bus was really focused on the book that he was reading.

[4:04] I thought here's someone who's possibly paid a considerable amount to be there, to be in the country, let alone to be on the bus and having a

tour guide showing them and telling of all these sights and he's reading this book and I thought it must be a very important book that he's reading but it just looked like a novel or something that wasn't really that important and I thought his focus is wrong.

Here he is, he could be looking at these amazing sights and the scenes and just the vital place of being in that place and that time and the places where our Lord had spent time and places that are in the Bible that are important for us to be aware of and to be knowing about and just the privilege of being able to see them but his eyes were engrossed in the book and you know we can have the wrong focus can't we and I put to you that sometimes we can have the wrong focus.

For example there's some that they look at the world and they're allured by it. They're obsessed with the world and such that the world and its tentacles have got a hold of them and they're in this pursuit of feeling good in 1 John 2 verse 15 through 17 it tells of those that they are loving the world and John writes, he says, love not the world neither the things that are in the world if any man love the world the love of the Father is not in him for all that is in the world the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life is not of the Father but is of the world and the world passeth away and the lust thereof but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.

The love of the world can get our focus, can't it? It's a wrong focus, isn't it? When the world is predominating our thinking such that that's all that we're occupied with and we spend every waking thought thinking about the things of the world the things of this material world such that we miss those things that really count the things of God the things of eternity.

Another wrong focus is for some they look back they look back they hear the message of God they hear about the Lord they hear the witness they hear and they might have some interest but they look back they look back they're drawn like a magnet away from God this can happen to all of us, can't it?

[6:34] where at times we have an interest in spiritual things but we're drawn back we're drawn away and it makes me think of Genesis 19 through verse 17 Genesis 19 verse 17 when it tells of Lot and his family and of the angel coming and taking them by the hand leading them out of this city bound for destruction the city of Sodom and Lot was there and his children and his wife and the angel beckoned them in Genesis 19 verse 17 and it came to pass when they had brought them forth abroad that he said escape for thy life look not behind thee neither stay thou in all the plain escape to the mountain lest thou be consumed this is Genesis 19 verse 17 the angel said escape for thy life look not behind thee Lot's wife looked back didn't she she looked back our Lord warned her don't and she did it's a wrong focus is to look back you know we can look back and some even almost in there and I've heard it said of some they give their testimony but they almost dwell on all the all the rubbish and dross and the misery and darkness that they were in our glorification is of our Lord not of our past we don't really want to even look back to when we were lost to the to the pig's the pig's will as it were to the pig pen that we were in when we were lost and our Lord warned about looking back he said in Luke 9 62

Luke 9 verse 62 the Lord Jesus said unto this man he said no man having put his hand to the plough and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God our Lord warns us don't look back don't don't have some harking back some some drawing back backwards that backsliding he says look forward don't look back look not behind thee a man looking back is not fit for the kingdom of God the wrong focus isn't it for some they look to materialism it's as if their life is all consumed by that accumulation of wealth that they can't get enough they gain and gain but really they lose don't they the Bible says you can gain the whole world lose your own soul it's like people think they're well off and well to do when all their lives are consumed with getting getting getting but really they're losing out they're losing out big time their life is consumed with getting but really they're losing and we see that for example in 1 Timothy 6 verse 10 that's the scripture that talks about the love of money 1 Timothy 6 verse 10

I know it's probably hard to keep up with all these scriptures tonight but 1 Timothy 6 10 it says Paul writes to Timothy for the love of money is the root of all evil which while some coveted after they

have erred from the faith and pierced themselves through with many sorrows the love of money it's the root of all evil when it's not money per se but the love of it that greediness that grasping that coveting that that greed that just seems to consume people that they just want to gather and accumulate and that money is all it's all about the money you know in the sun we know it's difficult when on a Sunday for example you get double time time and a half whatever it is double time and a half whatever people get it can be quite a draw to some they'd rather go and work and earn money than be in the Lord's house and to be in the worship of the Lord you know for some and yet some do make that decision no the money is secondary to me it's not that's not primary to me what's primary to me is to worship the Lord that's where I put my priority and it says of them that this love of money it says that they've coveted after it says that they've pierced themselves through with many sorrows that sounds painful doesn't it pierced through with many sorrows ouch I don't want that do you to be pierced through with many sorrows you know for some the regret the loss the eternal loss you know think of some sadly where their family's missing out when the when the father the mother doesn't come and fellowship the children stay home and so they get in that habit of not fellowshiping and then the children think nothing of staying home or doing other things on a Sunday what we look for shows what is driving us doesn't it what we're obsessed about what we're attached to what is it that our affection is directed at for some it's misdirected they're fond of earthly loves sometimes we can kind of gauge this I'll put to you but sometimes it's reflected by what we talk about all the time what is it that we talk about all the time and you know in these modern days what is it that we post on Facebook all the time all you spiritual people who don't have Facebook probably don't know what I'm talking about but you that do know that on Facebook you have this little window into a person's life and you see what it is that they seem to just dwell upon some spiritual things I've been encouraged by some posts some people post they're out there this is a billboard for my faith to be declared for my testimony for my love for Christ to shine through and my love for family and other things but there's nothing that's derogatory or damaging to my testimony that I'm going to post out there our affection shows by what we go on about doesn't it what it is that we like to talk about what it is that we think about all the time what we dwell upon Colossians 3 verse 2 says set your affection on what things above Colossians 3 verse 2 set your affection on things above not on things on the earth what ought we to be looking for where ought we to be looking we've seen as we've read looking unto

[13:09] Jesus when we direct our gaze towards him and when this life this transient life this life that is passing what is it that will remain what is it that matters when we set our gaze towards him when we fix our eyes on Jesus today Abraham was commended for some things and one of them was that he was looking for a city Abraham in Hebrews 11 verse 10 Hebrews 11 verse 10 that chapter of faith of the heroes of the faith of the hall of faith Hebrews 11 it tells of Abraham he was commended for this one thing for he looked for a city his builder and maker is God a city which hath foundations where was Abraham looking he was looking to heaven wasn't he looking for heaven he was looking to heaven look for what is heavenly look for what is fit and write of that heavenly calling that you have in 2

Peter 3 verse 13 I know it helps if we project the scriptures but I didn't have time to prepare that 2 Peter 3 verse 13 it says Peter writes nevertheless according to his promise we look for new heavens and a new earth where in dwelleth righteousness 2 Peter 3 verse 13 through 14 wherefore beloved seeing that you look for such things be diligent that you may be found of him in peace without spot and blameless according to his promise we look for a new heaven and a new earth now whether there's climate change or not this climate is going to change and this earth is going to change and this heaven is going to change it's actually going to be totally changed the old heaven and the old earth will pass away and there'll be a renewed heaven and a renewed earth and it says in this new heaven and new earth there's going to be righteousness there that's where righteousness is going to dwell and Peter says beloved look for such things be diligent that you may be found of him look to heaven and try to have that heavenly thinking that heavenly perspective of life this life is just an eye blink isn't it it's just a it's just a moment in time compared to eternity and if we just think what of heaven can I be about on this earth that our business on earth is essentially it is about heavenly things it's about being a messenger showing people the way to heaven is so

important for all of us we can have the wrong focus another wrong focus is this for some they look out for number one they're selfish they are selfish in their thinking in Philippians 2 verse 4 Paul challenges the Philippians he says look not every man on his own things but every man also on the things of others this is Philippians 2 verse 4 Paul is saying look out for one another don't just look out for number one as the world would put it don't just look out for yourself and your own self interest but have an eye and a care and a consideration for the things of others that's a good focus to have that we're not selfishly focused let's watch out what not to look at here's another thing not to look at and Proverbs 23 Proverbs 23 from verse 31 through 35 some would try to argue about this and try to say oh this and that but the Bible says quite clearly what not to look at here I put to you

Proverbs 23 verse 31! Proverbs 23 verse 31 it says look not thou upon the wine when it is red when it giveth his colour in the cup when it moveth itself a riot at the last it bites a serpent and sting a flock an adder!

some! And the Bible says it's not something to look at.

[18:03] It says it's going to bite like a serpent. It's going to sting like an adder. Your eyes are going to behold strange women. It makes people loose in their morals.

It makes people utter perverse things. It's like a man on the top of a mast, the bird's nest, the lookout on the ship as the storm throws the boat all over the place.

And it says you're going to say someone struck me when I was not sick. People have beaten me. People are awake from their drunken stupor and they're beaten and black and blue.

As we know, there's no control. There's no sense. People lose sense when they're drunk. And the Bible says don't look at the wine.

Let's not be distracted by that. For some it's like they're hanging out for the next drink. Something not to look to, isn't it? Don't take a drop of it.

[19:06] Be the best decision you can make. We are encouraged. Take a look in the book. It says in James 1.25, But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

James 1.25, it says to take a look at the perfect law of liberty. Now this is the perfect law of liberty. There's liberty here. There's freedom here.

There's a setting free. The message here is a message that delivers people. The message of his saving. The message of his grace. And it says look into this, the perfect law. God's perfect law.

God's perfect book. And continue therein, not being a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the word, of the work. Friends, I'm urging you this evening.

My message is simple, really. This is a very simple message. To cut to the chase, look to him. Look to him. It says in Psalm 34 verse 5. Psalm 34 verse 5.

[20:08] It says, Psalm 34. It's talking in the context of God's rescue, of his saving. It says, The light went on.

They could truly see. They could clearly see. They looked unto him. And their faces were not ashamed. Here's salvation, really, isn't it? Simply put. Simply put.

It's salvation is to look unto him. And we know some have even been saved by just this very scripture here. In the next one, Isaiah 45 verse 22. Isaiah 45 verse 22.

There was a simple lay preacher that took this simple message and declared it. And it was the saving for the man who heard it. In Isaiah 45 verse 22, it says, Our Lord declares, Look unto me and be ye saved.

All the ends of the earth. Isaiah 45 verse 22. Look unto me and be ye saved. All the ends of the earth. For I am God and there is none else.

[21:17] Look unto me. That's his declaration. And if we just catch that. Three words, isn't it? Simple. Look unto me. Look unto him, he says. Look unto me, he says.

And be saved. That look unto Jesus is a saving look. It's a look that rescues. It's a look that saves. How about you? How about you? What are you paying attention to?

We talked about these different focus things of life. These different things we can focus our attention upon. And it's easy to be distracted. And it's easy to have eye problems.

You know, I know there's people here, as I do myself, who wear glasses. I wear glasses sometimes. You know, at the moment you look a bit foggy. Some of you on the back row there. I need some glasses just to get the focus right. And we need to get the focus right, don't we? And I was listening to a preacher recently who talked about eye problems.

[22:13] Problems with your eyesight. And, you know, for some of us, it's short-sightedness, you know. Or it's far-sightedness. We either can see things really close when we, you know, we're like this, reading the fine print.

Or we see things far away. But we don't see things close. And the preacher is making the point how sometimes we can, we might have our focus on heavenly things such that we still miss out on the practicalities that we've got to look after, the needs of our family and the needs of life, the needs of the day-to-day and being a good witness and a testimony in the present.

And then some might be too focused on that such that they're not focused on the future glory and the heavenly focus of, as a Christian, our focus is on heaven in many ways too.

And then some, it talks about how this preacher was going on, how some suffer colour blindness where they can't tell. Everything is just different shades. There's no colours. There's no colour there.

And he was making the point how spiritually you could relate that to, for some, they lack discernment. They can't tell what's right and wrong. It's all just a bit of a blur. It's just different shades.

[23:29] They can't define what's right, what's wrong, what's black, what's white. They can't tell. And there's the sense in the word where God says something is right, something is wrong.

We need to know that. We need to be clear about that. There's discerning things. There's a lack of discernment. The preacher was going on too about another eye problem is conjunctivitis. Conjunctivitis.

It's when you get something, some foreign matter in your eye and you're making your eyes a bit itchy now. You feel that there's a bit of grit there or something. And the dirt gets in your eye and conjunctivitis can set in.

And he was making the point that sometimes what goes in the eye gate can make us dirty. The things that we look at, the things that we look upon, the things that we watch, the things that go in the eye gate goes in the brain, doesn't it?

It goes in the mind. It goes in our thinking. And we can get dirt in our eyes. And the Bible talks about the church of Laodicea that we should anoint your eyes with eye salve.

[24:27] We should anoint the eyes with that washing. He was talking about the Laodicean church. They had spiritual issues. And he was saying that spiritually they had a blindness.

They needed to wash their eyes and get them clean. And, of course, we can get blurry vision, double vision, where we can't focus. And I guess that's what we're kind of relating here tonight is that sense of not having the right focus.

The focus is wrong. There's something, there's this blurriness, there's a lack of clarity, a lack of clear vision. And as Christians, we can be challenged in that regard. But one thing it says, look unto me, look unto me.

And that's the look, the look that rescues, the look that saves. Are we looking unto him? What about are you looking for his returning? What about that? That's something we should be doing.

We see that in Titus 2 verse 13. For example, this is our hope, our blessed hope. It's our joyful, glad, glorious and certain and sure hope. Our hope and our certain assurance that Christ is coming, is coming back.

[25:31] We see that in Titus 2 verse 13. This is our hope. Our hope in a world that is largely hopeless, isn't it? There's a lot of people, their lives are hopeless. They're without hope, without God, without salvation.

And Titus 2 verse 13. It says this, looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Are we looking for his returning? That's a good focus. That's the right focus. We must look at the right things and look away from the wrong things. Amen? Let's keep our focus right.

Proverbs 4. Just another one further. About keeping our focus right. Proverbs 4 verse 25 through 27. It says, The writer of Proverbs here is saying, Don't look to the right or to the left.

Look straight on. Keep it straight. Keep straight ahead. Keep looking straight before thee, it says. Proverbs 4. 25. Look right on. Look straight before thee. In other words, don't be distracted.

[26:47] We can be distracted. Can't we? Oh no, I can. Sometimes life gets busy and you just, this comes out this way, this comes out that way. And before you know it, everything's just, the day's gone and you've not done what matters.

And even doing spiritual things or things in the church, you know, Martha was cumbered about with much serving. And we don't want any of these ministries such that you're pulling your hair out or you're getting more grey hairs or you're starting to steam coming out the ears because it's not working.

You know, we can be cumbered about with much serving. But Jesus says, Mary has chosen the good part. She sat at my feet. She's heard my word. And sometimes we can be so busy, busy, even doing good things, that we miss the best things.

Amen. To sit at his feet, to hear his word. And we can be distracted. Friends, we can all be distracted. Life's so busy, isn't it? It's like in these days of labour-saving devices, it seems like we're busy more than ever we've been.

And your life just gets consumed with this and that. There's so much media you can tune into. And time just evaporates. Don't be distracted.

[28:04] Let thine eyes look right on. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left. In other words, look straight before thee. There's that sense where it's about maybe filtering out all the noise, all the things that can take us away from what counts, from the word of God, from living for him.

And 2 John 1 verse 8 says, further, to watch out for yourself. This is 2 John chapter 1 verse 8. John writes, Look to yourselves, that you lose not the things which you have wrought, but you receive a full reward.

It says, look to yourselves. There's a sense where, you know, I think there's a scripture that says, take heed unto thyself. There's scriptures that say, you're responsible for your own walk with the Lord.

Now some will think, oh, I'm not a very strong Christian because maybe it's the church's fault. Or maybe this, that and the other. We can put blame on others or other things.

Maybe I'm not as spiritual as I should be. And maybe it's because it's someone else's fault. Maybe the church didn't teach me well enough or whatever it be. But really it's take heed to yourself, isn't it?

[29:16] It's look to yourselves. You know, we're accountable to God for ourselves. It says every man, every one of us, shall give account of himself to God. So watch out for yourself.

Look out for this person in your shoes. And careful watch. 1 Peter 5 verse 8 tells us, again, in the context of these days we're living in, 1 Peter 5 verse 8 says you've got an adversary.

You've got an enemy. An opponent. He's committed. He's rock solid committed. He's investing his energy in trying to bring you down. And we heard this morning about Job as he roams around and he kind of looks, who can he pick off?

Who can he target? You know, who's he going to get to next? And in 1 Peter 5 verse 8 it says, Be sober, be vigilant because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.

It's saying keep careful watch. Be vigilant. There's a sense of vigilance, you know. You hear stories, I know, like having worked in sectors where you're supposed to keep awake at night and you've got a job to do and you hear these stories of someone snoozing, you know.

[30:30] They got caught napping. That's serious, you know. We might think it's funny someone falling asleep when they've got a job to do but, you know, when they've got a responsibility, it's very serious. They could lose their job for that.

It's falling asleep when you're on night shift, when you're supposed to be looking after people, for example. The Bible says be vigilant. You've got to be vigilant. You know, do what you have to do. Put matchsticks in. You know, some of you might need that by now.

I've gone on a bit long here. But, you know, the sense of it, we've got to keep our eyes wide open, don't we? We've got to keep awake. We've got to keep wide awake. Keep alert. Don't let your eyes go bleary. Keep vigilant.

Keep alert. These are days when our adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion walketh about, seeking whom he may devour. And so what should we be doing?

We should be alert. We should be sensitive to the Lord. What is his spirit telling me? What is his word quickening to me? What is he telling me? We have his message, but we sometimes, I put to you, we can turn a deaf ear.

[31:30] As was talked in some prayer earlier, I think. We can turn a deaf ear to the word of God, can't we? You know, some, they've got kind of Bible highlighters that are more like a black texter, you know, a big black texter.

Oh, I don't like that verse. That's something that says I should behave myself. Oh, I'll cross that out. Oh, this is a verse that's talking about bad language. Oh, I don't, I'd like to use a bit of bad language or cross that out of my Bible.

Or this one, oh, you're supposed to forgive people. Oh, I don't want to forgive so-and-so. I'm going to black that out of my Bible. Or, you know, this one's saying you should be spiritual. Oh, I'd like to be carnal. I'm going to cross that one out of my Bible.

That's how some people treat the Bible, isn't it? But the Bible is the Bible. And we need to be sensitive to what the Bible says, what it says we should do. We should be sensitive to the Spirit of God.

And we can turn a deaf ear to it. And we can turn a blind eye to what the God is pointing. When he's showing us the way, when he's saying this is the way, walk you in it. We can say, I don't like that way. That way looks a bit hard.

[32:32] You know, that's a narrow way. That looks a bit kind of confining, a bit restricted. That's a bit kind of, oh, that sounds, I like to have a bit of, you know, I like to be kind of doing my own thing.

I don't want to go that narrow way. I'd like to go on this little by-path over here where it looks nice and green and more comfortable to walk. We can turn a blind eye to the leading of God's Spirit. And sometimes we have our eyes looking for reasons why not to obey God. For reasons why not to serve. Why not to go? For example, in John 4, verse 35, when our Lord is talking to the disciples and he's telling them of the witness that they are to undertake.

And John 4, 35, he's saying, say not ye there are yet four months, and then cometh harvest. Behold, I say unto you, lift up your eyes and look on the fields, for they are white already to harvest. The Lord Jesus here is saying to the disciples, he's saying, lift up your eyes. Look at what's happening. Look at the need. See the need. The harvest is ready. And likewise, I put to you today that our Lord is beckoning us to see the need.

[33:38] It's all around us. This is our mission field. This is a mission field. There's other mission fields. But the minute you step outside that door, you're in the mission field. In fact, for some of you, even your home could be a mission field because you've got unsaved ones that you can be a witness to.

And we like to witness in physical ways by door knocking, inviting, personal acknowledgement, personal witness. We've got tracts. We've got thousands of tracts you can give out.

And I know some are doing that. God bless you. We've got ways you can witness. There's so many ways you can witness. Just by being a bright and shining testimony for Christ in your workplace, in your living place, in your home, in your world that you walk.

And our Lord says, lift up your eyes. There's lots that you can do. And he's saying, don't wait. Don't say four months. It's ready now. The harvest is now. And our Lord is beckoning us to see the need, to see the need.

It's all around us. He's calling us. He's calling us to go. And may we look out with a willingness. May we look out to him. Look to him as a servant looks to his or her master.

[34:46] That's how we should look to our Lord, shouldn't we? And not as an irksome thing, as if our master is going to be some slave master, as if he's going to put some yoke on us to break us, to make it heavy and hard, his burden is light.

His yoke is easy. And he says, look to me, he says. Look to him. Look to Christ today. Look to your master. Look to your Lord. And some will say, Lord, Lord, but he's not their master.

It's just Lord, Lord. When you say Lord, you're saying master. That's what you're saying. When you say Lord, you're saying I'm your servant. That's what you're saying. Let's not beat around the bush here.

If you're calling him Lord, you're saying I'm your servant. And may we look to him. Look to him. Look to him as a heart of a servant. As a servant would look unto his or her master with a willingness to serve and to listen and to obey his bidding.

When we look to him, we look to him as a servant looks to the master. And it's glad service. Our service for the Lord is a glad, joyful service. Wow.

[35:55] What a privilege to serve. What a joy for me, for you, to be his own servants. And what's more, his sons and daughters. Wow. That he would count you such a privilege.

So when we think of it now, consider what is God showing you? What is he putting on your heart to do? Each one of us has a different calling, a different invitation, a different opportunity, a different service.

Let's all have eyes to see the mission field all around us. See it for what it is. It's a harvest field. And it's about focus, isn't it? I'm talking about focus here today.

We can miss it. We can have double vision. We can have clouded vision. We can have a lack of discerning as far as what's right, what's wrong. We can miss that straight and narrow way.

We can miss those priorities. And we can use our eyes to chase after what is not helpful to us. Some things it's better not even to look at. Keep the focus.

[37:06] Keep the right focus. And we come to Philippians 3 verse 12. There's another example. As Paul was talking, he says, I've not arrived. He says, I'm still on the road.

I'm still on the way. I'm not being made perfect yet. One day, by his grace I will. Well, Philippians 3 verse 12, he says, not that I had already attained either.

We're already perfect. But I follow after. He says, I'm going to pursue this. I'm going to chase after. That I may apprehend. That for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.

For rather I count myself, not myself to have apprehended. But this one thing I do. He had a focus. He said, this one thing I do. Sometimes we've got to be about one thing.

One thing. Forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

[38:05] Consider this today. You have a high calling. A high calling. And what a privilege it would be if you got a phone call from a president or a prime minister or a queen or a king to say, I'm appointing you to this role.

You've got, you've had that call. You've made that call. You've got a high calling. You've got a heavenly calling. You've got the calling of God. You know, this is more important than being an ambassador in some foreign land for your government and your nation.

This is a higher calling than being a general of the army of the nation. This is a higher calling than being the president, the prime minister, the king or queen. You've got the high calling, the highest calling.

The highest calling. The high calling of God. You can't get higher than that. The high calling of God in Christ Jesus. So we ought to take it seriously, shouldn't we? Press toward the mark for the prize. The high calling of God.

Let's not settle for anything less than this. The high calling of God in Christ Jesus. And what does that mean? It means that's our focus. The high calling. That's our focus.

[39:16] Yet for some, what matters is temporary. They're just obsessed with temporary things. We know that people are all around us like this. Really, they're the walking dead. They're like zombies. They're dead, but

they're walking, but they're dead.

They're spiritually dead. They're dead in their trespasses and sins. And for them, they're driven by temporary things. They're driven by a thirsting for the things of the world.

And they're like flowers that will fall. They're like the grass that withers and dies. It might look green today, but it's going to be dry and dead. Just a dead stick in the ground.

2 Corinthians 4 verse 18. Again, I apologize. I know I'm touching many scriptures and probably just, only just touching them on them. 2 Corinthians 4 verse 18.

Paul writes to the Corinthians, 2 Corinthians 4 verse 18. While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

[40:17] Friends, you might have a fancy car and a nice house and lots of material goods, but it's temporal. It's going to rust.

It's going to decay. The things are going to break through and steal. It's just going to end up dust. But we're not looking at that. We're looking at things that are eternal. Things that are eternal.

And so some, they get the wrong focus where they focus on the temporary world, so much so that they miss the eternal. You get people like that, don't you? They think, oh, it's going to cost me too much to be a Christian.

It's going to be too hard for me. You know, I want to kind of have it, you know, just sort of play the field, try my chances, just do my own thing. And maybe at the end, I might have a little, you know, a moment just to repent at the end of my life.

And they think that they're just so dwelling on the temporary that they're missing the eternal. You may not get that chance. It could be bang, brick wall, car crank, bang, you're dead.

[41:20] You know, our vision can get clouded. Our energies can be misspent. Will we look to the Lord? Brother, sister, look to the Lord. Look unto me, he says. Look unto me. There's a time limit for looking.

It's going to be a time when we can't look anymore. It's going to be over. In Matthew 6, 33, you know this one, I'm sure. But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

And all these things shall be added unto you. It's getting that right perspective, isn't it? Seek ye first the kingdom of God. Not second, not third. First the kingdom of God, his righteousness.

Seek that. Isaiah 55, 6, 3, 9. It sort of picks up this point I'm trying to make that there's a time limit. You know, when Noah and his family answered the ark, God shut the door.

Time's up. Planet Earth. And maybe there's people knocking on that door. Crying out. Let me in. No. Over. It was over.

[42:22] Too late. Friends, seek ye the Lord while he may be found. Seek ye the Lord while he may be found. Call upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts.

Let him return unto the Lord and he will have mercy upon him. And he will, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord.

For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, my thoughts than your thoughts. Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts. He will abundantly pardon.

Seek ye the Lord while he may be found. The son, they just think, oh, I'll get around to it. I'll get around to sorting things out with God.

To getting things straightened, to getting fired up again, to getting back to it. There's a time limit. Seek the Lord while he may be found. This is for a limited time only.

[43:25] Now, I'm sounding a bit like a telemarketer here, but you've got to sign up now. I mean, this time is short, honestly. Some sort of these deals, they say, you've got only four hours.

We might only have, and I'm not meaning to cheapen this or make it crass here, but there's a sense where we don't know how much time is ticking on that clock that is our life.

Seek ye the Lord while he may be found. People of God. It's a limited time only in the sense that some will seek him too late. They will. I know loved ones, friends, family, they're not seeking him today.

Maybe once they did, they're not seeking him today. It grieves my heart. They're toying with their faith, whether they have a faith.

Don't leave it till your deathbed to get right with God. Now, I've seen that. I've been by the deathbed of a man. It's not a pretty sight. And this man, he was dying of lung cancer.

[44:31] He was a heavy smoker. And he was such that he couldn't say anything. His throat was so cancerous.

He couldn't utter a word. And I urged him to trust the Lord. To indicate that by squeezing my hand. And he did that. Only God knows.

Only God knows with that man. I believe he was saved on his deathbed. I believe he was. But don't leave it till then. Don't leave it so late that there's this risk that you'll leave it too long.

Seek ye the Lord. There's lots we can look for in this life. And for some, it's a vain search, isn't it? I remember years ago when there was a program. And I know my folks and I watched it when I was a kid.

It's called The Long Search. Remember that? The Long Search. It was about religion. And it was going through different religions of the world. All persuasions. And this report, it was quite an intriguing program.

[45:33] Comparing different religions and faiths and philosophies. It was all about religion. But I'm not sure the man who was reporting these stories ever found the God of the Bible and his saving grace.

It was an intriguing program. The Long Search. Some are searching yet never find. Seek ye the Lord while he may be found. Fall upon him while he is near. Now, Bible truth is spiritually discerned. Some might be well versed in this book and yet miss it. They might have theological training and degrees and diplomas and they might be reverent doctor bishops and whatnot.

Yet miss the point. Spiritually blind. This book is spiritually discerned. We've got to have our spiritual eyes on to know what it is. Many are spiritually blinded.

Even a church was called blind. The Laodiceans. Professing Christians. Yet blind. Some hear a message like this and this challenge and they'll think, oh, he's talking to someone else today.

[46:35] That's a message for somebody else that's here but it's not for me. And they'll keep blindly going on their own way with other things. Other things that they focus their lives on such that they will not seek the Lord while he may be found.

Instead of coming to God. Friends, it's between you and God. And this is not to insinuate that you are not right with God.

But this is a very personal question for you. For you to answer for yourself. We can keep blindly going on our merry way instead of coming to God.

We can hear all the other voices when he is still calling. Look unto me. Jeremiah 6.

Just to close it says, Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the paths and see and ask for the old paths. Where is the good way?

[47:39] And walk therein. And ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein.

You know, I see some people, there's people I know having trouble sleeping and I know that can be a terrible thing. I don't have trouble. I just snore away. My wife has trouble.

We have this trouble sleeping. It's a terrible affliction, isn't it? the Bible says you can find rest for your souls. Don't you want that?

A rest for your soul. But they said, We will not walk therein. If you're searching for God, for peace, for rest, for your soul to be right with God, don't say we will not.

Say we will. We will. And it goes on to talk about watchmen over you saying, Hearken to the sound of the trumpet. But they said, We will not hearken. We don't want to hear it.

[48:40] Shut up. I'm using the Andrew Craig version there. The watchmen are over you. Hearken to the voice of the trumpet. And they're saying, We will not hearken. We will not listen.

I suppose in some small measure, I'm a watchman here talking to you. And I'm saying to you, Listen to God. Listen to his voice.

He says, Come unto me. He says, Look unto me. And some will say, We don't want to hear it. Shut up. Blah, blah, blah. Not listening. We need to be watchful.

Every one of us. We're all watchmen in a way, aren't we? You're a watchman too. It's not just the preacher or whoever's preaching. You are a watchman as in the sense that you have a voice to declare, come to God, find rest for your souls.

It's not about the one man. It's about all of us. We're all ministers of the gospel. We're all servants of God. And we're all meant to be watchmen, watchwomen, to be about the work of warning.

[49:44] Keep looking up. Your redemption draws near. And friends, our Lord says, Watch and pray. Though your eyelids may grow heavy, keep looking for what God wants you to look for and what he wants you to do.

Our Lord says, Watch and pray. When he went to the garden, the garden of Gethsemane, here he is in agony of soul, his body perspiring, as it were, drops of blood, great drops of blood falling to the ground.

And he says, Pray for me. One hour. Just watch and pray. But they were too sleepy. They didn't. What a reproach. I'd imagine that. Was it Peter, James and John?

Those ones that he beckoned to pray and they didn't. What a shame that would be on them. Only they just prayed. Just prayed. How hard is it to pray?

Really? How hard is it to pray? Watch and pray. And the Bible says, Walk circumspectly in Ephesians 5.15. Walk circumspectly. In other words, keep your eyes wide open.

[50:50] We're in a world where we're under attack as believers. We're in a world where there's many things that would distract and take the focus away from what counts. And back to our first verse, it says, Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.

Friends, there's many things we can look at. Many things that will distract. Many things that will take our focus and our attention. There's many things that can afflict our eyes, as it were, our spiritual eyesight, such that we lack clarity.

And things get blurry. There's confusion. We lack discernment. And there's just so many voices out there. But if only we'd just hear his voice. He says, Look unto me. Look unto me.

Let's pray. Our God and King, Lord, we look unto you, Lord Jesus. We look unto you. We look unto you, Lord, when this world would have us look at so many other things. We want to look unto you.

We want to look unto you, our great God and Saviour, that we know you're coming back for us. We want to look unto you, Lord. As you say, Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth. We want to know your saving power.

[51:50] We want to look unto you. We want to look unto your word. It's the perfect law of liberty. It's that which sets us free. It's got the message of hope, of redemption, of salvation. Lord, it's the message that liberates and delivers the soul and gives us rest unto our souls.

Lord, we want to look unto you. We want to look unto you. Above all the voices and sounds and sights of all this planet would throw at us, Lord. And we want to filter out those things.

We want to seek first the kingdom of God and your righteousness, Lord. We want to have our eyes open to see the harvest. It's ready. It's now. And you call us to it, Lord.

You call us to be servants. Lord, we want to look and hear. We want to hear as a servant would hear the master's voice because, Lord, if we call you, Lord, you're our master and we are servant.

Help us to have that heart that we will be a servant of God. Lord, help us, we pray. Pray for anyone here, present, that has yet to trust you. Perhaps there's been some uncertainty that they're not sure where they're at, Lord, that they might put their trust squarely and entirely in you, knowing that you died on the cross for our sin.

[53:02] And we put our trust, our personal trust in you to know your saving power. We bless you. We love you, Lord Jesus. We love you. We honour you. We lift up your name.

Lord, help us to be a people who will look unto you and keep that spiritual eyesight wide open. Lord, in Jesus' name we pray.

Help us to watch and pray. In Jesus' name. Amen.