

Diligence

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[0:00] Diligence. I've got a picture here of an ant. Have you seen all the ants running around lately with all this rain? They are busy creatures aren't they?

! And diligence is reflected in the ants. And the Bible says consider the ants. Thou sluggard, thou lazy person. Consider the ant. And the ant is a real picture of that.

Subject I want to talk about tonight. Diligence. The Bible speaks that we should be a diligent people. We should be diligent. And the Bible speaks of this godly character trait. This godly quality that we should aim for and want to have in our lives.

Diligence is a Bible word that speaks about our need for care and being conscientious. It's that persevering determination to perform a task, to be conscientious.

And to be diligent, it means to take pains, to strive for something, to work with a steady energy and effort to see something happen. It speaks of a focus, of a devotion, of an effort that is made.

[1:15] And the word of God tells us in Hebrews 11 verse 6 that without faith it is impossible to please God. For he that cometh to God must believe that he is and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. And as we diligently seek after God, he will reward us. It's his promise right here in this scripture, Hebrews 11 verse 6.

As we diligently seek him. And in the context of Hebrews 11, we see many examples of those that did just that. In Hebrews 11, the heroes of the faith, the hall of faith if you like.

Not the hall of fame, but the hall of faith in Hebrews 11. We see different ones who exercised their faith and they were diligent. In Noah's time, we see that Noah was one.

He was warned of God. And he was warned to prepare an ark because of the coming flood. And Noah was one. He was diligent.

[2:26] His faith was according to the word of God. He obeyed the word of God. And he built an ark. And God blessed those that took heed. And then we see Abraham, another example.

He obeyed God by faith. And Abraham sojourned in the land of promise. He took a time there in that land of promise. And he offered Isaac by faith.

He went to offer Isaac by faith. That's Hebrews 11 verse 17. And then we see by faith Moses. He refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter.

Chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God. That's Hebrews 11 verse 24. He was diligent. Moses and the children of Israel. It says that they passed through the Red Sea on dry land. They kept the Passover. By faith the walls of Jericho fell. As Joshua and Israel marched around the city for seven days.

[3:25] That would have taken some diligence, wouldn't it? They could have felt a bit tired by number five or number six. But they kept going. And they marched around the seventh time.

As God had said. And then God blessed as they obeyed his word. And all of these ones are those that are such that they diligently sought after God.

There was a diligence there. They were such that God is a rewarder of them. That diligently seek him. And we see these examples right through the Bible.

We see it's easy on the opposite side of the coin to get stagnant in our faith. To get lazy and careless in our faith.

And to just get stuck. But God wants our faith to grow and blossom and flourish. To have a faith that grows and keeps on growing.

[4:23] And in 2 Peter 1 verse 5 we see how we are to give diligence to add to our faith. In 2 Peter 1 we see various things.

Add to your faith. Virtue to virtue. Knowledge. And it goes on. Of those different qualities that we should exercise. Our faith shouldn't say stagnant and stuck.

But we should add to our faith. And add to it with diligence. Giving diligence. Add to your faith. Virtue. And to virtue. Knowledge. It talks about cultivating of our faith.

Doesn't it? That we don't want to get stuck with our faith. We want that faith to keep growing. And getting stronger. And more like he wants us to be. Adding to our faith.

So there's a diligence here too. To add to our faith. For diligence. It speaks of a going on. Of a going to great lengths. To find God. To search for his will.

[5:19] To obey his word. And it is God's will that we abound in this quality of diligence. It says in 2 Corinthians 8 verse 7. 2 Corinthians 8 verse 7.

Paul writes. Paul writes. Therefore. As he abound in everything. In faith. And utterance. And in knowledge. And in all diligence. And in your love to us.

See that. Ye abound. In this grace also. It's saying here. Abound in everything. In faith. In utterance. In knowledge. And in all diligence.

Our diligence. Our diligence. Should abound. In contrast. Again. Think about. King Joash's day. This is 2 Kings 13. An example.

On the other side of the coin. Of half heartedness. It's a contrast. With diligence. If you like. And in the context of 2 Kings 13. We see Elisha.

[6:15] The prophet. And Elisha came. To King Joash. Of Israel. And. Elisha was prophesying. To King Joash. About the destruction.

Of Syria. Their enemy. Their. Committed enemy. Syria. And it says from verse 18.

And he. Elisha. Said. Take the arrows. And he took them. The king took them. And he said unto the king of Israel. Smite upon the ground. So he was using this as a kind of.

Illustration. As a graphic picture. As a demonstration. Of what would happen. To Syria. Now there's other things that happen. In the context. But just to concentrate on this item here.

So he gave Joash. These. These three arrows. In his hand. And he said. Strike them on the king. The ground. And King Joash. Struck them. On the ground. Three times. He smote thrice.

[7:15] And stayed. Three times. And verse 19. And the man of God. Was wroth with him. He was angry with him. Elisha was angry with him. And said. Thou shouldest. Hast smitten.

Five or six times. Then hast thou smitten. Syria. Till thou hast consumed it. Whereas now. Thou shalt smite Syria. But thrice. Thou shalt smite.

So what. King Joash. Should have done. Was really smash those arrows on the ground. And really. Smash them. To bits. As a picture of what.

God wanted to do to Syria. To utterly destroy it. But he just did it half heartedly. Just three times. And he stopped. And so it was a picture. That illustrates half heartedness.

Joash. Joash. Was half hearted. In what God told him to do. Rather. People of God. God calls us.

[8:10] To not a half heartedness. But to a whole heartedness. Our diligence must be thorough. We must not be half hearted. There's an earnestness.

That God calls for us. That's our diligence. That he calls for us. He calls from us. In Matthew 16. We see our Lord Jesus speaking. And he was telling him. How to be a disciple.

And then in Matthew 16.24. It says. Then Jesus said. Unto his disciples. If any man will come after me. Let him deny himself.

And take up his cross. And follow me. For whosoever. Will save his life. Shall lose it. And whosoever will lose his life.

For my sake. Shall find it. For what is a man profited. If he shall gain the whole world. And lose his own soul. Or what shall a man give.

[9:06] In exchange for his soul. So the Lord says here. Let a man. Let a man deny himself. And let him. Take up his cross. And follow me.

Now there's something. Serious there. Wasn't there? No. As a Christian. We're called to commitment. We're called to take up our cross. We're called to follow Jesus.

We're called to deny ourselves. And not to get half-hearted. With our Christian call. What about us tonight? Are we diligently seeking after God?

We know elsewhere. Our Lord says in Matthew 6. Verse 33. He says. Seek ye first. The kingdom of God. And his righteousness. And all these things.

Shall be added unto you. There's a diligence there. Seek it. Seek it diligently. What about us? Will we take up our cross? As it were. Our Christian faith.

[10:02] And commitment. Even though it might mean sacrifice. To follow Christ. Will we take that commitment. Seriously. Even when the world around us. doesn't want to do that.

You know. Even the world. That we live in. Recognizes this quality. Of diligence. If you want someone to work on your house. You get a diligent worker. Don't you?

You get someone you know. Is going to put the effort in. And do the job. If you're a footy player. Who only puts in half the practice time.

Would the world say he is diligent? No. What about our church going? If we just go to half the services. You know.

Are we diligent? What about a student? Who rarely studies at home? Would the world say that they are a diligent student? Would their teacher mark them off as saying. This student is diligent.

[11:01] If they only do half their homework. No sir. How so with others? As God's people. When we fail to study the Bible.

When we neglect the Bible. At home. We're not being diligent. And God calls us to that. Psalm 119. It tells us how we should treat the word of God.

As the psalmist of 119. Which is all about the word of God. Says this. In verse 4. He says. Of the Lord. Thou hast commanded us. To keep thy precepts.

Diligently. We're to keep this book. We're to keep this truth. Diligently. We're to hold it. And keep it. And guard it. And take it. As read.

And do so diligently. Not half heartedly. Again. The world recognises diligence. It recognises that. If you want to. Elect someone.

[11:58] You elect someone who's going to be diligent about it. If you're going to employ someone. You employ someone. Who's going to be diligent in their work. You know. There's a degree to which I employ people.

In my secular. Side of life. And I look for workers. Who I can count on. Diligent people. People who will be diligent. And fulfil their duties.

And even in a secular club situation. The world recognises this. They recognise those. Who are about the business of being at the club. And being about the work of the club.

And you know. Sometimes in clubs too. You know. The footy club. Or the rotary. Whatever it be. You get people who might just turn up. But they're not really diligent. They're just.

Their heart's really not in it. And we can be like that with church sometimes too. But rather let us be diligent. So we know what it needs to be diligent. The world knows.

[12:57] What diligence is. So it's plain obvious. As we know. That God. Commends diligence. He says that he is a rewarder. Of them.

Who diligently seek him. And friends. Think of the church context now. There's lots of work to do. I don't need to labour things. That I touched on this morning. About serving God.

But there's much to be done. There's much we can do. There's much that every one of us. Any one of us can do. If we'll just see the need. And care. Now we do well to learn.

As I say about the ants. Go to the ant thou sluggard. Have a look at the ants. You lazy person. It's basically saying there. Isn't it? Go to the ant. Have a look at the ants there.

They don't sort of. Sun bake. Or put their feet up too long. They're always. Here there. Or everywhere. Aren't they? They're always. Always about some business.

[13:52] Always doing something. Always busy busy. Like a bee if you like. Go to the ant. Now sluggard it says. Consider her ways. And be wise. Next time you see an ant.

Think about diligence. Think about how you can learn from the ant. The humble ant. It goes on. Of the ants which have no guide. Overseer or ruler. You know.

They just go about their business. There's no one there cracking the whip. Telling them to work harder. They just work hard. And it says that the ant provides her meat in the summer. And gathers

her food in the harvest.

We can learn from the humble ants. About how we can be diligent. We can learn from people like Ruth. In the Bible. Ruth was one who was diligent.

In Ruth 2. Verse 17. Of this humble servant of God. Ruth. She gleaned in the field. Until even. And beat out that she had gleaned.

[14:49] And it was about an epper. Of barley. So here she was in the barley field. Working from sun up to sun down. Even into the evening. Gleaning the pickings from the field.

She was working hard. She was diligent. Ruth is an example. Of diligence to us. Hezekiah is another example. In 2 Chronicles 31. Verse 21.

It says. And in every work that he began. In the service of the house of God. And in the law. And in the commandments. To seek his God. He did it. With all his heart.

And he prospered. Hezekiah did his service. Whether it be in the service of the house of God. In the law. And the commandments. To do it. The word of God. It says that he did it.

With all his heart. And God blessed him. Hezekiah was diligent. We can learn from his example. Here's another one. Nehemiah. Nehemiah.

[15:46] We see his book. It's all about rebuilding that wall. That was broken down. And it says in Nehemiah 4 verse 6. The people said. So built we the wall.

And all the wall was joined together. Unto the huff thereof. For the people had a mind to work. The wall was built. Why? Why did they succeed? Because the people had a mind to work.

They had that mindset. They had that determination. They had that diligence. And God blessed their labors. So we see that diligence gets things done. Doesn't it?

Diligence gets things done. And so we can be encouraged. To find ways to serve God. Find some way to serve. And do it as Hezekiah did.

With all his heart. Diligence gets things done. We see in Acts 5 verse 42. Speaking of the early church.

[16:46] The church of God. In Acts 5 verse 42. It says that daily in the temple. And in every house. They cease not to teach and preach. Jesus Christ.

They were unceasing. In their teaching and preaching. We see in their number. As he came to know. Beyond the baptism of John.

Apollos was one. Another example of a diligent man. This man was instructed in the way of the Lord. And being fervent in the spirit. He spake and taught diligently.

The things of the Lord. He was fervent in the spirit. And he spoke and taught the things of the Lord. Diligently. He diligently did it.

Apollos was diligent. Titus was diligent. We read of him in 2 Corinthians 8.22. Of Titus. And we have sent with them our brother. Who we have oft times proved diligent.

[17:42] In many things. But now in much more diligent. He was diligent in many things. He was proven to be a diligent man. Titus was diligent.

Paul was diligent. 1 Thessalonians 2. Verse 9 of Paul it says. He says. For you remember brethren. Our labour and travail. For labouring night and day.

Because we would not be chargeable unto any of you. We preached unto you. The gospel of God. Paul is another example. You see Apollos, Titus, Paul. These early church leaders.

They were diligent in the things of God. What can we learn from these examples brothers and sisters. We can learn to tread in their tread. We can learn to tread in their tread.

What about us tonight. Can we ask ourselves. Am I diligently seeking God. How can I do that also. God can help us to have that diligence within our heart.

[18:40] It says in Proverbs 4.23. How we can personally apply this. This quality. Is there a diligence about caring for our spiritual state.

Do we truly. As the word tells us. Examine ourselves. See if you be in the faith. Are you even saved. Do you know the Lord as your saviour. Have you been born again.

Can you think back to a time in your life. When you trusted him. When you trusted him. For time and eternity. And received him. And for we that are saved.

It's urging us here. Keep your heart. Keep thy heart. With all diligence. For out of it are the issues of life. Guard your heart. Keep your heart.

And we all can fall. And fail. I heard about a preacher. Well recognised. Who's fallen. Of recent times. It's a sad thing. When men of God fall. When women fall.

[19:38] And we're all human. So the Bible says. Keep your heart. Keep your heart. With all diligence. For out of it. Are the issues of life. Is there a diligence. About caring for our soul.

Are we diligently. Seeking after God. It's a question for all of us. To consider. How is my heart. Am I diligently. Seeking after God's will. God commands diligence.

And so it's something. That we can pray for. That quality. For God to give it to us. And diligence. Is about doing our duty well. God is looking.

For diligent people. Diligent people. Not that through works. We're saved. Again. As I've said.

Before. But as a Christian. Our faith works. And Christianity works.

It works. It works in the day by day. It works in the 24 by 7. It works Monday morning. When we're out there. Rubbing shoulders.

[20:33] With those who don't know the Lord. It will mock. Our faith. Our faith is real. And it will see that. It will see us through. And we won't fail.

But we'll have diligence. So God commands that. That we do our duty well. God is looking. For diligent people. It's interesting. As we look back in the Bible. That really. God never called out. Lazy people. To do divine assignments. He usually called people. Who are already busy. You know. God looks for people. With a mind to work. Abraham.

Isaac. And Jacob. They were all herdsmen. They were out there. In the fields. Out and about.

Moses and David. Were shepherds. Elijah was plowing. When he was called.

Peter. Andrew. James. And John. They were fishermen. They were busy people. They were diligent people. They already had that heart. And the word says. That the Lord is looking. For labourers.

[21:27] The Lord of the harvest. Is looking. Out for labourers. To go into. His harvest field. It's interesting isn't it. That he wants us to be what? Labourers.

What is it? Labourers. You know. The common task of labouring. The work in the harvest field. Now I've been a labourer.

In a factory. A labourer. In a factory. Working three shifts. Turning tyres in Bridgestone. And then. I was fortunate enough to go. To be chased to a day shift.

So I could spend more time with my family. And I became a cleaner. Cleaning the toilets. Cleaning up the grease. And the muck underneath the machines. In the factory. It's an honourable occupation.

Whatever your labour is. Is honourable. Whether you're a cleaner. Or whether you're a labourer. In a factory. A process worker. Every job is honourable. And there's a blessing to labour.

[22:25] God commands labour. For us to be labourers in his harvest field. To get out there in the harvest field. And to be about the work of labouring. For him. And so let's be encouraged in that.

In contrast. We see Amos 6 verse 1. It says. Woe to them. Who are at ease in Zion. It's like they're on the gospel. Train to glory. And they're just coasting along.

Just sitting back. And enjoying the ride. Woe to them. That are at ease in Zion. They're just taking their Christianity. Cozily. And comfortably. And carelessly. But rather.

God commands the diligent. Those who will take their faith seriously. God commands the diligent.

But he condemns the lazy. It's interesting. He commands the diligent.

But he condemns the lazy. You see that. In Proverbs 12 verse 24. It says. The hand of the diligent. Shall bear rule. But the slothful. Shall be under tribute.

[23:20] So the slothful will be under the pump. Under tribute. But the hand of the diligent. Shall rule. As a blessing. When you're diligent. So friends.

Today. The Lord calls us to diligence. It's a blessing. And beautiful quality. That God wants for our lives. I referred to this this morning. That Romans 12 verse 11.

It says. Not slothful. Not lazy in business. Not slothful. Not lying back. And just doing nothing. But rather fervent.

In spirit. Serving the Lord. For that's something you can do for God. And do it well. You know. There's tracts to give out. There's opportunity to witness to people. There's opportunity to minister to people.

And I can give you jobs to do. If you're feeling. You know. There's no excuse. For you to feel bored. As a Christian. If you feel bored. As a Christian. There's something wrong with you.

[24:17] There's no excuse for you to feel bored. In the kingdom of God. There's lots and lots of work to do. I can keep you busy. Quite busy. With jobs that I can delegate to you. Believe me.

And so. God calls us to diligence. Not slothful. In business. But fervent. In spirit. That's what he wants us to be. Serving him. The Lord. Our Lord. Our Master.

And this word fervent. It means to boil with heat. To be hot. It's used of a boiling anger. Of love. Or zeal. For what is good or bad. But in this context. It means a burning zeal.

For the will of God. That you'll get fired up. And you'll get boiling hot. Is the sense of it here. Fervent. God calls us to this kind of diligence.

This kind of diligent spirit. That will empower us. And so we won't settle for something. Half done. We're not going to settle for second best. We're not going to settle for our near enough.

[25:14] It's good enough. In Hosea 7 verse 8. We see. Ephraim. This nation. Referred to. And God says. Ephraim.

He hath mixed himself among the people. Ephraim. Is a cake. Not turned. So it's saying here. The people of Israel. This tribe of Ephraim. Was mingled with godless people.

With godless things. And was making them worthless. As a half baked cake. It's a cake. Not turned. Okay. So. Now.

I know there's people here. That are very good at cooking. It's usually the women folk. You know. There's people that are very good at cooking things. And. God is saying here.

That this is like. A half cooked cake. It's. It's. Nice. It looks nice on the top. But underneath. It's all doughy. And. It's all.

[26:11] Half cooked. Half cooked. And so. This picture. If you like. Of this cake. Not turned. Is a picture. Of a kind of. Mixture. Of a kind of.

Compromise. That was going on. In Ephraim. It's like. This cake. Not turned. Cooked on one side. But doughy on the other. A half baked. Cake.

And you know. Christians. We can be like that. Half baked. With our service. For the Lord. But it ought not. To be that way.

Not a half way thing. Let's bake that cake fully. Amen. That's the kind of picture here. That we should turn the cake over. Let's not be half done. Let's not be half way.

With our Christianity. Because it's second rate. We don't want to give God. What's second rate. We want to give him our best. Don't we. To be. Not a cake. Not turned.

[27:07] But that would be a cake. Well cooked. And so. The picture here in. This context was. Of this nation. Of this people. That they were mixing. With worldliness. It was like a mixture.

Of a. That which was right. With that which was half right. This worldliness. And worldliness. Can be a spirit.

An attitude. That can infect us. Like a contagious thing. And we can pick up the attitude. Of the world. And it can weaken our faith. Our stand for God.

There's a danger here. Brothers and sisters. That we can. Have a weak. Kind of Christianity. A half baked. Kind of Christianity. Where we. Might.

Attempt to do something spiritual. But. Yet. With a worldly spirit. With a lack of. Full commitment. And. When we think back to these times. We think of Israel.

[28:03] They worshipped idols. While at the same time. Professing. To worship. The true God. They were having. It both ways. So they thought. You know. I've heard it said.

You know. If you sit on the fence. Realise that the devil. Owns the fence. You can't sit on the fence. The devil owns the fence. Get off the fence. One side or the other.

Alright. Either fully serve God. Or. Give it up. Be serious about your faith. Let's not be half baked. Let's be a.

Fair dinkum. Christian. Not. A half baked. Half hearted one. And so let's be diligent. Brothers and sisters. There's no time. To toy around.

There's no time. To mix your Christianity. With that which is. Half right. Half hearted. Rather. Let us be diligent. Let's not. Have a Christianity. That's complacent.

[28:59] And careless. And uncaring. But a Christianity. A spirit. That is diligent. That you'll be. Diligent for God. You'll seek after God. And sure.

You'll have times. When you won't measure up. But you'll get back up again. And you'll head down that track again. Now Israel got into trouble. When it was a mixed multitude. There was a time. When there was a mixed multitude. And they had people. From other nations. Who served. And worshipped other gods. And they failed to. Exercise separation. And we see that. In churches now. As they adopt. The worldly ways. And compromise. Left right. And censored. So it seems like. You're not entering a church. It's a nightclub.

Rather. Let's be diligent. Let's be a people. Who care about the things of God. We're not going to settle. For second rate. We're not going to settle. For being a half-baked. Kind of Christian. We're going to be.

[29:54] Full on. Not accommodate. Laziness. And sloppiness. But God helping us. We'll seek after God. Diligently seek after God. God. In the word it says.

If you seek me. With all your heart. You will find me. It says that. And so we should be encouraged that way. Not accommodating worldliness. And neglecting our spiritual needs.

But rather seeking earnestly. And diligently. To hear God's voice. And to take heed of it. So in Exodus 15. We see. How. There's an exhortation here.

That we should. Diligently. Hearken. To the voice. Of the Lord. Thy God. To do what is right. In his sight. To give ear to his commandments. To keep all his statutes.

And then it promises a blessing. Friends. Let us. Earnestly seek after God. Hearken to the voice. Of the Lord. Do what is right.

[30:52] In his sight. Give ear to his commandments. And keep. All his statutes. Care about what God says. And our Lord will bless. Our Lord wants this for us.

He wants us to be a diligent people. So hear his voice. Hear it is. Not in some Latter-day prophet. Supposedly. But this is his voice. And he says.

My sheep. Hear my voice. Let us do what is right. In God's sight. We see in Deuteronomy 4. Verse 9. It says. Take heed to thyself.

Keep thy soul diligently. There's that word again. Keep thy soul diligently. Lest thou forget the things. Which thine eyes have seen. And lest they depart from thy heart.

All the days of thy life. But teach them thy sons. And thy sons' sons. So it's saying here. Pay special attention. To the word of God. Let it be something you care about.

[31:47] That you diligently exercise your soul. That you diligently seek to pass it on. To the next generation. To the next generation. Verse 9. Teach them diligently.

There's that word again. Teach these things diligently. It's saying. Teach the word of God diligently. Diligently teach the word of God. To your children. And shall talk of them as you sit in your house. When you walk by the way. When thou liest down. And when thou risest up. So all the time, speak the word of God.

You know, I know some people love to have plaques with scripture texts on the walls of their home. So they're declaring the word of God over their home. Let's be such a people to seek the kingdom of God.

Not to be half-hearted, not to settle for second rate, not to settle for half-baked, but to rather be diligent. It says in Hebrews 12, we should look diligently, lest any man fail at the grace of God.

[32:45] Lest any roots of bitterness spring up, trouble you, and thereby many be defiled. It's saying look diligently, lest any man fail at the grace of God. It's saying that diligently watch out for one another.

Diligently let's help one another, encourage one another. Let someone fall back and fail to secure God's grace. Let's look out for one another. Let's be diligent and care diligently for our own soul and for others too.

And not let bitterness get in the way. Let nothing stop you from this diligence. Now sometimes there's hard times to strike a Christian. Don't let bitterness come and spoil your race.

Don't let anything entangle you. Don't let anything weigh you down. But rather, press on. As Hebrews 12 talks of, looking unto Jesus, the author, the finisher of our faith.

Let's be encouraged. Brothers and sisters, let's be encouraged in this gospel race. Be encouraged this day. God will reward your diligence. He will reward you for it. Proverbs 13, 4, it says, The soul of the sluggard, the lazy man, desireth and hath nothing.

[33:52] But the soul of the diligent shall be made fat. You know, I've known some people that they've got lots of desires. I've known some worldly people and they were very religious.

They religiously did cross lotto every week. They desired some things. The soul of the sluggard desireth and hath nothing. You know, it's foolishness to think that the cross lotto is suddenly going to make you rich.

You've got to work for it. You've got to put the hard yards in. You've got to put the sweat of your brow into it. The soul of the diligent shall be made fat. So God wants you to have a fat soul.

Amen? It doesn't matter what the outside looks like. God wants you to have a fat soul. Alright? What it's saying there is that your soul will be healthy and strong.

God wants our soul to be healthy and strong. You know, you might go down to the gym and pump the iron and spend all the time on the physical man and the physical appearance and the cosmetic jobs that you might want to have to make yourself look nicer.

[34:57] But what really counts is your soul. Is your soul right with God? Is your soul right with Him? Is your soul being made fat? Is your soul being made strong and vibrant and alive?

That's what God wants for us. And it says that the soul of the diligent shall be made fat. So it's about getting a good feed on the Word of God to nourish yourself up on wholesome words.

It says in the Word, the Word calls us to diligently get ready for the coming of the Lord. Here's another reason why we should be encouraged to be a diligent people. It says in 2 Peter 3 verse 14, it says, It's saying there, let's be diligent, let's care enough, let's be serious enough about our Christianity that we'll be found of Him in peace without spot and blameless.

We're going to take our Christianity seriously. We're going to be diligent. It's going to mark how we live. It's going to mark the attitude we have to service. It's going to mark how we associate with our world.

It's going to mark our everyday responsibilities. Now, friends, you might think, you might say to me, Preacher, I've tried and tried. I've tried and failed. I've tried and failed.

[36:16] I've lost that diligence. It's gone out the window. I'm messing up every which way. You might say to me, Preacher, I've lost that diligence. I don't know whether I've ever had it.

I don't know whether I've ever been diligent. You can find it again. You can find that diligence again. You know, it says in the Word, the righteous man falls seven times, but God lifts him up again.

And you can find that diligence again as you seek after God. Seek after God with that diligence.

And you can regain what you've lost. You know, there's a story our Lord tells in Luke 15, amongst the story of the good shepherd and the story of the prodigal.

He tells of this woman who lost something. Now, have you ever lost something? And you got really frantic about it. You know? Could it be the keys for your car? Whatever it be.

Something important. And you're sweating profusely, searching and striving and crying. Where did I put that thing? And you turn your house upside down to find those keys, whatever it be that's gone missing.

[37:22] And here's the picture here in Luke 15 of a woman who had ten pieces of silver, but she lost one. One coin was missing, but it was important to her.

And it says that this woman, having lost ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle and sweep the house. You know, she gets the light out.

She sweeps the house. She looks under every nook and cranny, behind every item of furniture. She looks high and low. She scours the place to find that one lost coin.

And she seeks diligently until she finds it. It's a picture of diligence there. Right there. Maybe next time you lose something and you search diligently for it, maybe, well, I could make that a spiritual application.

I need to search for God as strongly and as enthusiastically as I look for that missing item, those missing car keys, whatever it be. And so this woman found the coin after searching for it, notice, diligently.

[38:24] She found it after she searched for it, diligently. Now, friends, today, we're all prayerfully, I believe, anticipating that one day we'll see our Lord.

We'll see the Lord Jesus face to face. And he will say something to us. And will he say something such as, well done, thou good and faithful servant?

In order to hear the words, well done, we have to do it well. Don't we? If he's going to say, well done, we have to do it well.

Not that we say it by doing. Not that we say it by anything we do. Nothing we do can ever match everything he is. And all that we've done wrong. It's not he weighs it up on a scale and says your good outweighs the bad.

We're lost without his grace. Our only hope is the saving grace of God. Our only hope is the Lord Jesus dying in the place of our sin, paying our price, our penalty.

[39:26] And yet, as a saved man or woman, one day he'll say, I trust. Well done. But we must make sure we do it well. Do it well.

Do it diligently. So it says, but without faith, it is impossible to please God. For he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

I encourage you tonight, if you're not a Christian, you might say to me, preacher, I go to church, I've got a faith of sorts, but I've never trusted Jesus.

I've never made that personal commitment to say, Lord, I want you to save me. I want you to receive my faith. I want to receive your gift of eternal life.

I want to receive your payment for my sin on the cross. If you're in that state today, you can know him by simply calling on his name. Call on his name and you will be saved, it says.

[40:28] Call on his name. Turn from your own way and turn to his way. Turn from your own sin to faith in him. Turn to Jesus as your Lord and Saviour. Make today that turning point that makes eternity real for you.

So that you'll say, yes, on this day I trusted Christ. I prayed and I trusted him. I called on his name and I received him personally as my Lord and Saviour. That is the moment.

Your eternity changes forever. And one day you'll say, well done, that good and faithful servant. If you are such, that search for him. And he will reward your diligence if you search for him diligently.

If you come to him by faith. If you come to the end of your own self. And you come and trust his grace. And if as a believer, as a Christian, we'll have that diligence.

We'll have that enthusiasm that we want to honour our God and bless him. We want to be not as Joash just three times.

[41:31] We want to really destroy the enemy's works in our life. We want to be victorious in our Christian war. We want to be as those that our Lord called.

We want to be as the Ant. We want to be as Ruth. We want to be as Abraham. As Moses. We want to be as those that diligently searched the word of God.

Those that diligently taught the word of God. Like Apollos. And Paul. And Titus. And as the early church. That they were diligent. They were adding to their faith.

Diligently adding to their faith. We want to be like Joshua. Marching around the walls. And diligent like Nehemiah. And the people there. We want to be diligent like Noah.

And to be as the word of God says. He that cometh to God. Must believe that he is. And that he is a rewarder of them. But diligently seek him.

[42:29] Let us pray.