

A Lesson on Priorities

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[0:00] So we are going to be in Matthew chapter 16. It's going to be a lesson on priorities. We'll start in verse 21. It says, Then said Jesus unto his disciples, So our discussion today is going to be about priorities and how it's an integral part of your everyday life.

Jesus set an example of placing the will of God first and foremost in his life. And in this lesson, we'll see how his forceful rebuke of Peter's seemingly well-meaning attempt to get him off track from his duty to God and fallen mankind.

So by the end of today, we should know a couple things. First, we should understand that God has a fundamental purpose for every person's life. Next, we should realize that self-denial is a requirement of following God's purpose.

And then lastly, we should choose to place God's will as the ultimate first priority in our own lives. So you've probably heard it said before that to get things done, you need to organize, deputize, and supervise.

And while that's true, there's another word that should be included, and that's prioritize. It's always important to get things done, but it's even more important to get them done in the right order.

[2:06] In my classroom, I have printed off on big, bold letters. I had to be kind of sneaky about it because it's a Bible verse, so I didn't include the reference. But, so that's me being sneaky.

And it just says, we will do everything decently and in order. And it's something I've been really pushing on my class because with eighth graders or, you know, how organized is a middle school classroom.

So, that's something that we say almost like a mantra every day. We will do everything decently and in order. What's most astounding to me about the moment in Peter's life that we're about to learn from, which would include a sharp rebuke from the Lord, is that it came right after one of the boldest declarations from Peter, saying, thou art the Christ, the son of the living God.

And, of course, Peter knew that Jesus was important, but evidently Peter still had more to learn. The education of a disciple is never quite finished. So, in this passage, we learn that to live by the best priorities requires denying ourselves as we seek to do God's will for our lives.

In John 4.34, it says, Jesus saith unto them, my meat is to do the will of him that sent me and to finish his work, telling them that even above the earthly need for food, the first priority is to complete God's will.

[3:27] So, we see here, first, a devotion to duty. In all aspects of life, Jesus is the paramount example for every believer. The central theme of all that he did on earth was simply this, that he came to fulfill the will of his Father.

Even on the night before his crucifixion, we see him praying that exact thing, not my will, but thine be done. At the age of 12, Jesus had told Mary and Joseph and Luke, and he said unto them, How is it that you sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?

And he kept this priority in its proper place throughout his entire life here on earth. In John 17.4, it says, I have glorified thee on earth. I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.

So, we see that Jesus had to go. In Matthew and Mark, Jesus taught his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem, that he must suffer, and he must be rejected, and that he will die.

And we know that every detail, and we know that all the details of the excruciating path that laid before him. Luke chapter 9, verse 51 actually adds a detail.

[4:40] It says, It came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem. This was literally his sacred duty, and he walked towards it with, as the Bible says, a steadfast determination.

So, Christians must understand there are times when Christ calls us to go places where we might have to go suffer or pay a price for our faith. Though our human reaction is to look for an easy way out.

And we think of Jonah. You know, God told him to go to Nineveh. And instead of going to Nineveh, where did he go? Tarshish. So, we must instead be willing to do the Lord's will, no matter what. In the Christian life, there will be times of hardship and suffering. Jesus actually promised that. You know, there's lots of promises in the Bible. People like to skip over that one quite a bit. John chapter 16, verse 33 says, Patriarchs, prophets, and apostles all went through times of intense hardship. Severe and even deadly persecution carried on through the days of the early church, the dark ages, through all the different reformations that were happening, and into many countries even today. You know, I think of what's happening in Nigeria over these last couple months, where there's been really a mass, and there's no other way to describe it, so forgive me for being a little crass, but slaughter of Christians in their home and in their churches.

[6:15] And for a while, it was so bad that if you got on Google Images, and you just went over where churches were located in Nigeria, where you could see the dirt stained red from the blood of believers that were just slaughtered in the middle of their church services.

Because terrorist groups, mainly Islamic terrorist groups, refused to allow them to worship the Lord. However, in 2 Timothy chapter 3, verse 12, it says, Today, Christ is looking for faithful soldiers of the cross who will go where he wants them to go.

When we follow the Lord's commands, we please our Savior. Paul describes this in 2 Timothy chapter 2, verses 3 and 4, writing to Timothy there, He's telling them it's not going to get any easier. The more you serve the Lord, the more people are going to oppose you. He says, No man that woth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.

This type of soldier will receive the ultimate praise of, Well done, thou good and faithful servant. You know, this year marks 25 years since September 11th.

[7:35] Over 400 firefighters and law enforcement officers died trying to save others in the World Trade Center in New York City. The vast majority were not there in normal courses of their day or responding to a crisis in the immediate call to duty.

Well, the Twin Towers inhabitants were fleeing. These heroes were running past them into the burning building, doing everything they could to save as many lives as possible, carrying all of the rescue equipment that they could handle as they ran up the stairs while others were rushing down. They could not have explained why they didn't stop to think about it. It was simply their job, and they did it with full acceptance of the risks. You know, following the Lord in the United States, we kind of have it pretty good.

You know, we don't experience the things like they are in Nigeria or other parts of the world. But undoubtedly, you know, that time will come, so we need to be prepared for it. So, real quick, turn over to 1 Peter 4, and we're going to see what it means to suffer for Christ's sake.

You know, the Bible talks a lot about suffering, and Peter, you know, writing this after he's experienced so much and learned so much from the Lord, it's easy as you read through the Gospels and then read Peter's own writings, you can almost hear the growth that he had from being, you know, quick to speak, slow to understand, probably a little arrogant.

[9:07] And when you read the two books that he wrote, 1 to 2 Peter, you find someone who is really thoughtful, slow to speak, understand. He's lived some life, and it's pretty evident.

Starting in verse 12 in chapter 4, the rest of this chapter, it's kind of divided into two parts. So, starting in verse 12, and going down all the way through verse 19, we're not going to read all of it, but this is Peter's discussion here about the Christian and suffering.

It says, Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial, which is to try you, though as some strange thing happened to you. But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's suffering, that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad with exceeding joy.

If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye, for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you. On their part, he is evil spoken of, but on your part, he is glorified.

Now, he continues here, because he has a contrast between suffering for Christ's sake, which, that's a good thing. We can glory in that. And then he has a quick note in here, one sentence, where he talks about, there is another kind of suffering, because you want to be a dum-dum, you don't glory in that kind of suffering.

[10:27] It says, But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other man's matters. Yet, if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God on this behalf.

So, you know, there's a lot of times when we give the devil a little too much credit for what's going on. You know, we can, in our own arrogance, think we're doing what we're supposed to be doing, and then suffer because of that, when it was never part of God's plan.

And then we get all spiritual, and you know, we come to church, well, you know, it's been hard, but we're praying through it. Well, it probably wouldn't be hard if you just listened to God in the first place.

So, don't give the devil more credit than he's due. Suffering for Christ's sake is a good thing, but suffering because we want to do something stupid is not anything to glory of.

So next we see that Jesus had to die. Throughout time, God has required death in order for there to be a life, in order for there to be life. Since Genesis chapter 3, we saw God slay an innocent animal to provide covering for Adam and Eve.

[11:38] blood has always been the only way of salvation. We saw it in the, when the Israelites were going to leave Egypt, you know, for the Passover, they had to slay an animal and put blood on the doorposts.

In Hebrews chapter 9, verse 22, it says, and almost all things are by the law purged with blood, and without the shedding of blood is no remission. Jesus' mission on earth was to die and shed his pure, innocent blood for the sin of mankind.

Had he refused, we couldn't be forgiven of our sins and we would die without hope. We see in Romans chapter 5, but God commendeth his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Much more than being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

Now, it's a hard thing to remember, especially, you know, it's easy to care for someone when it's easy to care for someone. When you hear on the news about these people, like the Lindsay Clancy trial, you know, it makes me so, mad to see people celebrating what happened.

[13:06] But we still got to remember, Jesus died even for those people. And that he loves them just as much as he loves us sitting here in a church service. The people blaspheming God on the street corner, God still loves them and he still died for them.

So that's something we got to remember. That they don't hate us, they hate God, but God loves them and we still need to share the love of Christ with them. Whether or not they accept it is up to them.

That's not our job to make them believe, but it's our job to tell them. John chapter 12, verses 23 and 24, And Jesus answered them saying, The hour has come and the Son of Man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall to the ground and die, it abideth alone. But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. Christ knew there could be no salvation without sacrifice.

In his song, Ten Thousand Angels, Ray Overholt was scripturally correct when he wrote that Christ could have called ten thousand angels to free him, but instead willingly went to the cross to suffer death.

[14:13] See that in Matthew chapter 26, verses 53 and 54. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scripture be fulfilled that thus it must be?

Christ lived and died fulfilling scripture. This was one reason he had to go to the cross. You know, Peter made a mistake that the Pharisees made just about every single time they would talk to Jesus.

You know, the Pharisees weren't dumb. They were very smart people. And if we got into a biblical debate just based on like biblical knowledge, they would probably smoke us because they had almost the entire New Testament memorized.

Now, did they apply it correctly? No. But if we had a sword drill competition, boom, they'd have it right there. And Jesus asked them multiple questions and it was usually the same question.

So I need some volunteers here. Let's see, one, two, three. I need four volunteers to read a couple verses if you get anyone. Okay, you're going to have Matthew, be ready because I'm going to yell at

you. Matthew 12, three.

[15 : 20] I need another one. Okay, Matthew 12, five. Matthew 19, four. So I went in Joe, Matthew 22, 31.

So the mistake that Peter made is that he knew the Old Testament. He knew, you know, every Jew being brought up, it was tradition that they would learn these things at a very young age.

So he knew what the Old Testament said, but yet, he still didn't apply it properly. So, when he was talking with Jesus, saying, Jesus, come on, you're not going to die.

Well, Jesus told him multiple times, yeah, I am, but Peter just right over his head, I guess. So, first, we're going to hear, and be ready because I'm going to yell at you, Matthew 12, three.

Okay, stop, stop, stop, stop, stop, sit down, sit down. Matthew 12, five. Stop, stop, stop, sit down. Matthew 19, four. Stop, sit down.

[16 : 25] You know what's coming, Joe. Matthew 22, 31. I haven't even done anything yet. Matthew 22, 31. Stop, stop, stop, okay, no, I'm just kidding.

All right, stop, sit down. What's the phrase, everyone? Have ye not read? It wasn't a secret. Jesus didn't sneak up on the disciples and be, surprise, I'm going to die.

Turn to Isaiah chapter 53. I think you have it in your handout. Jesus can be seen on every page of the Old Testament, but one of the most vivid passages depicting him is in Isaiah chapter 53, years and years and years before the cross.

The prophet Isaiah wrote of this Lamb of God who would take away our sins. Now, Peter knew that Jesus was the Christ, so he should have known that this was talking about Jesus.

Starting in verse 4, surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. Yet, we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him.

[17 : 36] And with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned everyone to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth.

He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter and a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment and who shall declare his generations? For he was cut off out of the land of the living, for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked and with the rich in his death because he hath done no violence.

Neither was any deceit in his mouth, yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him. He hath put him to grief when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin.

He shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands. Jesus was the one depicted in this passage and he fulfilled this prophecy when he was crucified.

[18 : 37] So Peter, have ye not read? And we make the same mistake. You know, we can over-spiritualize some issues, praying, asking God if we're supposed to do something that we probably know we should or asking God if we shouldn't do something that we know we shouldn't.

And God is in heaven saying, have ye not read? He gave you the answer. The Lord was committed to fulfilling his duty to die on the cross, but Satan was determined to use any opportunity he could to deter the Lord from going.

So we see a distraction from duty. Satan will use anything to dissuade and distract us from what we ought to do. If he can't get us to go against God totally, he'll settle for just getting us off track a little bit.

You know, when a pilot is flying, they have to be very intentional on flying a specific path because if they start off even a few degrees from where they're intended to go, by the time they reach the end of their destination, they're going to be hundreds of miles off the mark.

So Satan's goal isn't necessarily to make, you know, Christians stumble into some overt sin to, you know, decry from the cause of Christ, but if he can just get you distracted a little bit, time will do its thing and by the end goal, you're going to be way off of your mark.

[19 : 56] So sometimes the distractions are obvious and easier to combat. Other times they're subtle and sometimes those distractions can even come from people who are close to us or even genuinely love us.

In his classic devotional work, *My Utmost for His Highest*, Oswald Chambers said the greatest enemy of the life of faith in God is not sin, but the good which is not good enough.

The good is always the enemy of the best. Having discernment in a Christian life is not to discern between what is good and what is bad.

That's easy. Even little kids know right from wrong. Discernment in the Christian life is trying to figure out what is good and what is best.

The devil may not try to ensnare us with some major sin. If he can just distract us from the Lord's will for our life, he has succeeded. The scripture makes clear importance of staying on course in our own lives.

[20 : 58] See this in Proverbs chapter 4 verses 20-27. My son, attend to my words and climb thy ear into my sayings. Let them not depart from thine eyes. Keep them in the midst of thine heart. For they are life unto those that find them and health to all their flesh.

Keep thy heart with all diligence for out of it are the issues of life. Put away from thee a froward mouth and perverse lips put far from thee. Let thine eyes look right on and let thine eyelids look straight before thee.

Ponder the path of thy feet. Let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left. Remove thy foot from evil. As Jesus prepared to fulfill the Father's will at the cross, the devil tried to distract him by using one of his closest friends.

So we see Peter gave a rebuke. When the Lord told his disciples of the events in the near future, Peter couldn't stay silent. He said, Be far from thee, Lord. He instead or he insisted, this shall not be unto thee.

It's astounding to think of Peter trying to look God in the face and saying, no, you're wrong on this one. We know what's up, but no, you're not doing that one. He meant well and he truly loved Jesus and felt distressed to hear Jesus say that he would be crucified.

[22 : 15] And it's kind of strange. Hadn't Peter just confessed that Jesus was the Christ? But when Jesus told his disciples directly of the events that are about to happen, Peter became indignant at the prospect of losing his dearest friend and he refused to let it happen.

Come what may, at this time, Peter attempted to distract the Lord from the direction he needed to go. The Strong's definition of the word here used in Matthew, translated rebuke, is to tax with fault, rate, chide, rebuke, or reprove.

When addressing the Lord himself, this would seem to be outright disrespect, but we have seen and will see again Peter frequently spoke before he thought. Often in our human wisdom, we think we know better than the Lord, while we might not say it out loud, our attitudes and actions can betray us.

We know that Christ has said, we know what Christ has said, but somehow we're going to justify going in our own direction. You know, a popular piece today is just follow your heart. You know, the heart wants what it wants.

That's the dumbest thing I've ever heard in my life, and I tell my students that all the time. Like, that's stupid. That's a stupid thing to say. This, however, being a bad idea, Christians know that we're to follow God because our heart's feelings can deceive us.

[23 : 36] Feelings change all the time. You know, that's why our salvation is not grounded in how we feel. A very common issue, typically with younger children or someone who hasn't been saved a long time when doubts come if they were truly saved, you'll hear the phrase, well, I just don't feel saved.

Well, the problem there is you're trusting in your feelings rather than what Jesus did on the cross. Here's a little bit of wisdom for you. Salvation has nothing to do with you because if it were about you, you wouldn't be able to keep it.

So if you're trusting in anything else but then what Jesus did on the cross, you're going to have doubts and you're going to struggle and Satan's going to be able to throw you off track. Only what Jesus did is what matters.

So something that, you know, at camp, you know, we deal with kids, well, I just didn't say the right things. Okay? What are the right things? What does it mean to pray the right prayer?

What does God look at? The outward appearance or the inward appearance? He looks at your heart. Well, here's just a practical question. What if someone can't talk? How are they going to pray? God looks at the heart.

[24:52] Jeremiah 19, chapter 7, verse 9, the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. Who can know it? Proverbs chapter 3, verses 5 through 7, trust in the Lord with all thine heart and lean not on thine own understanding and all thy ways acknowledge him and he shall direct thy paths.

Be not wise in thine own eyes, fear the Lord and depart from evil. Throughout the Bible, many have argued to the Lord, this is not the way it's going to be. They've always found out differently. Cain brought an offering representing his own works. The Lord would not accept it. Saul attempted to kill David, his God-chosen successor. In the end, Saul was killed in battle and David became king anyway. Later, David's son, Absalom, tried to take the kingdom from his father but failed. Jeremiah wanted to quit preaching but the Lord wasn't finished yet. Jonah tried to flee from the presence of the Lord but found himself in the belly of a fish. Now Peter would find the exact same thing happening to him.

So now we see Peter getting a rebuke. As the rest of the disciples looked on, Christ rebuked Peter. Get thee behind me, Satan. Jesus told one of his closest friends and disciples.

[26:02] Now, let's use some divine imagination here. How many of you, when you were younger, ever had your parent or guardian call you by your full legal name?

Okay. Now when that happens, especially if you have siblings, it's like the air gets sucked out of the room because you know you're in trouble. Sometimes I'll memorize my students' middle names so when they're acting out I can call them their full legal name in the middle of class and undoubtedly it's like an instant mood change.

Everyone goes completely silent. So you can probably imagine the other 11 disciples standing there as Jesus says, get behind me, Satan. It probably went dead silent. And you can probably imagine John elbowing one of the other disciples like, look at Peter now.

He really messed up. So, you can imagine how much this probably stung for Peter. What a way to show gratitude, Peter must have thought.

After all, he had only spoken out of love and concern. Or had he? Think about it. If we truly love someone, then we would want exactly what God wants for that person.

[27:15] Even if we don't understand it. Nothing more, nothing less. As we said before, Satan's desire is to get God's people off track. Even if only slightly.

Look back real quick in 1 Peter chapter 5 and then look down in verse 8. 1 Peter chapter 5.

This one isn't in your handout. Peter is writing here. He's giving a warning. He says, Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary of the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour.

And a couple years ago, I was listening to a preacher who was going through this verse and he pointed out something that I never really noticed before. The second to last word in this verse is the word may.

Some Bible translations incorrectly translated to can, but it was very intentional, God was very intentional using this terminology, because this is a word for permission. Walketh about seeking whom he may devour.

[28:18] When you're saved and you have the Holy Spirit, sin has no more power over you. You only fall when you're drawn away of your own lust and entice. That doesn't mean Satan's not going to tempt you.

Oh, that's most certainly going to happen. But we see here a word picture that Peter's using of the devil as a lion. And lions hunt sneakily.

They don't jump out before they have to. They sit and they wait for one elk, gazelle, whatever it is, zebra, to get slightly off track, to wander off because now they've just given permission.

The lion can hunt you now. If they're in the pack, if they're following where they're supposed to go, that lion's not going to go into the middle of a herd of a bunch of wild buffalo because it's going to get beat up pretty bad.

But when one goes slightly off trail, whether it's distracted, sick, whatever it is, that lion is going to wait and wait and wait until it now has the opportunity to pounce.

[29:26] So the devil isn't sitting there with a sign on the street corner saying, come over here and sin. He's just sitting and waiting and waiting and waiting until you get slightly off track to now because you've let some sin in, he now has that permission to devour.

And I can't help but think Peter had learned from the rebuke he got from Jesus of trying to get someone just slightly off track. See, if Jesus had listened to Peter, he wouldn't have gone to Jerusalem and died on the cross for mankind's sin.

Had Peter succeeded in preventing this, Satan would have had a great triumph. So in a real sense, whatever his intentions were, Peter was doing the work of Satan. Therefore, he deserved the strongest rebuke the Lord could give.

Remember how Jesus had directly encountered Satan previously in Matthew 4 and Luke 4? We have the story of Christ's temptation in the wilderness. And I'm not going to get all into that too much, as Ethan spoke about it this morning.

But Satan was tempted. He went through it, and we have an example to follow. So Jesus understood it as for what it was, the voice of Satan, when he heard Peter say, Be it far from thee, Lord, this shall not be unto thee.

[30:41] And immediately he rebuked his greatest enemy, who was using perhaps his closest friend. Jesus' rebuke went even further, piercing to Peter's heart. Saying, Thou art an offense unto me, for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.

The Webster's 1828 dictionary definition for the word savor is to like, to delight in, or to favor. In essence, Jesus was telling Peter that he did not like or delight in the things of God.

God. How often did Peter remember those words in the coming years? I think it's evident, as you study throughout his life, not everything he did is recorded in scripture, but we have some historical evidence on how he lived.

He took this to heart. James 4, 7 says, Submit yourselves therefore to God, resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Ephesians 4, 27, neither give place to the devil.

No one enjoys being rebuked because we're naturally full of pride, and we hate to admit it, especially when we're wrong. Yet the word of God teaches us how to respond and how not to respond when we are rebuked.

[31:54] Proverbs chapter 9, verses 8 and 9 says, Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee.

Rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee. Give instructions to a wise man, and he will yet be wiser.

Teach a just man, and he will increase in learning. You know, it's really, really easy to argue with a smart person.

Really easy. It's impossible to argue with a dumb person because they refuse to change no matter what. You know, one thing that I tell my students, and this is a little humorous, but it's, I mean, it still works.

This is, in my classroom, don't be gross or weird. You know, Peter, in his writings, they can kind of be summarized in just a couple words, which is basically, don't be dumb.

Okay? It's pretty easy to live the Christian life if you just don't be dumb. And Peter knew that more than anyone else because he was the perfect example of ignorance and stupidity at times.

[33:00] God So, because Peter accepted the Lord's rebuke and maintained his love and loyalty for the Savior, he went on to be powerfully used of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost through that in Acts chapter 2, where God, working through Peter, brings thousands of souls to the knowledge of salvation.

And then Peter, of course, as we know, went to write various books of the Bible. So instead of naturally being filled with pride and were rebuked, we must learn to accept it and grow from it as Peter did.

In the verses immediately following Peter's rebuke, the Lord reiterates the necessity of complete self-denial to follow him. So next we see a denial for duty.

It's easy to take the path of least resistance, giving in to the pressure and requests of the world, but often a believer must firmly say no. The Bible is filled with examples of standing firm against the pull of temptation.

The Christ being our best example. We can also see things like in Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego where they were faced directly with death and they refused to compromise on anything.

[34:12] Standing against the world's pressure is not easy. Only through a close relationship with the Lord do we have the stability and power to remain steadfast, which is why it's so important to not get off that trail even slightly.

The devil's waiting, ready to pounce. Psalm 16, 8 says, I have set the Lord always before me because he is at my right hand. I shall not be moved.

The following passages teach one of the greatest principles any Christian could learn. Devotion to duty requires denial of self. Christ was attempting to teach Peter and the other disciples that they must always live with a higher calling in mind.

We're not left on this earth to indulge ourselves and to eat, drink, and be merry, but rather to serve the Lord. Paul, writing in Galatians, said, I am crucified with Christ.

Nevertheless, I live in the life which I now live in the flesh. I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.

[35 : 17] 2 Corinthians chapter 5 verses 14 and 15. For the love of Christ constraineth us. And it continues on. It is our Christian duty to deny the flesh with the affections and lust to follow and to obey the Lord wholeheartedly.

So, don't live for today because today will soon end. The world says eat, drink, and be merry for tomorrow we die. Solomon wrote that and throughout the book of Solomon, you see a person who is just complaining about life.

There's no point to anything and only at the very end does he get to but fear the Lord and keep his commandments. So, we see someone wallowing in their self-pity when even though he knows what he's already supposed to be doing.

This was the conclusion of the foolish rich man in one of Christ's parables. He planned to build bigger barns for his abundance and then enjoy a leisurely future. See this in Luke chapter 12 starting verse 16 and he spoke a parable unto them saying the ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully and he thought within himself saying what shall I do because I have no room where to store or where to bestow my fruits and he said this will I do I will put down my barns and build greater and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods and I will say to my soul soul thou hast much goods laid up for many years take thine ease eat drink and be merry but God said unto him thou fool this night thy soul shall be required of thee then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided so he that layeth up treasure for himself is not rich toward God in neither case was eat drink and be merry the way of God we're not to live for today only in the grand scheme of things today is short in an insignificant period of time you're going to be dead for a lot longer than you're going to be alive so what happens then and preparing for then is a lot more important than living for now the disciples were now aware of the details of the coming days and the verses immediately following surely the thoughts of their saviors impending crucifixion

Peter's rebuke and their own commitment to Christ were pressing in their minds as they listened of living for today we should purpose to live for eternity in perspective so do live for tomorrow in the light of eternity our lifespan is extremely brief you know I have friends that you know the older I get now that I have kids it seems you find yourself thinking about heaven quite frequently it would be a good day when we can see old friends again our emphasis should be to invest in lives so they can last for eternity we know that God inhabits eternity and is himself eternal we've learned that before throughout the

[38 : 37] Sunday School series therefore what is important in eternity is important to God and consequently should be important to us we must live with eternity in view we could say that eternity consists of all the tomorrows that there will ever be so make today count by spending it for tomorrow so today are you wisely investing the talents and resources the Lord has given you today are you serving others in heaven it won't matter how much fun you had how the desire was to submit to the will of him that sent him to die on the cross and that should be our priority too is to follow and obey

God's will regardless of the consequences see that in John chapter 6 verse 38 for I came down from heaven not to do mine own will but the will of him that sent me so we have another vital part of the education of a disciple as the Lord described the details of his impending death Peter's mind must have been reeling Peter had just confessed that Jesus was the Christ and now he thought he thought he was to accept that his Lord would experience such a gruesome death well not if Peter could help it and he acted without thinking and began to correct the very God of the universe who when Jesus firmly!

rebuked him Peter learned a lesson in priorities while the Lord knew going to the cross would not be easy he did it anyway as we see Peter learning what his priorities would be we should realize that God has a plan for every believer it is only when we follow that we find commitment in fulfilling God's plan for our life for a Christian to seek contentment outside of the will of God is useless in vain it will never satisfy it will never be found anywhere but God's will for us to do his will we must

die to self and deliberately choose to make God's will the number one priority in our life Joe why don't you close us out in prayer