

A Priority Question

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[0 : 00] Thank you for that. This morning, go ahead and take your Bible sermon to Mark chapter 12 this morning. Mark chapter 12. As we continue to look into the Word of God here this morning and looking for what God would have for us.

I trust you've come prepared this morning to hear from the Lord, not just the words the preacher speaks, but hear from the Word of God and what God would have for you this morning. And so as we continue on in our series here in Mark chapter 12, we come to a priority question that's been asked. And you know, Jesus here, since He's been in the temple, has been asked many questions. Many came and were asking Him different things about His authority and using that to catch Him in His Word that they might cause a hindrance or to downplay who He is or even their ultimate goal was to remove Him from the scene. And we find here that He had just dealt with them on some errors from the Word of God and concerning two specific areas. One of those was the resurrection. And the second one was marriage. But He made an important statement at the end of that, that the reality that He's not the God of the dead, but He's the God of the living. You know, that we are alive in Christ.

And, but while all this was taking place, we find something that often happens in life. Because when things are taking place, you have multiple things happening. If you're having a discussion with somebody, or you're talking to somebody, you know what's often happened? Somebody else is in the corner listening.

[1 : 31] You know, and when you're witnessing or talking about the Lord, it's amazing how many people's ears tune in to what's going on, to start paying attention. And even try to surmise, okay, who are you?

And what are you saying? And, you know, whenever I hear somebody mention God or Jesus, it's some of the things that does perk your ear just to say, what are they saying? You know, is it accurate?

Is it what it ought to be? Is it opinion? Is it based in Scripture? You know, because people say a lot of things. And this morning we're going to see an individual who was there when all this was happening, but he was paying attention to what was being said by both sides and was trying to discern some things about Jesus.

Because, you know, oftentimes people learn from conversation. They learn from those things. And here we find an individual who was there. He was part of the...

His peers had been ones making the inquiry. You know, the account this morning reminds us of just that. You know, the reality is, as a believer, people are watching you.

[2 : 41] People are listening to you. People are paying attention to details that are going on. Just as this man was paying attention to Jesus. Because he made a note of how Jesus answered.

But also what Jesus answered. He was trying to discern some things about Jesus and who He is and, you know, how He responded. You know, remember these people came with hostility in their heart towards Jesus.

And He was paying attention. How did Jesus reply? How did Jesus hold up when He was provoked? You know, they were trying to provoke Him and prod Him into something.

And we're going to find here that the answer that He gives is something we need to keep in mind also. because when Jesus answered, it was done in the right spirit, the right attitude, with the truth attached to it.

And to understand the importance of that is critical for us today. And just even answering in that right tone. Have you ever noticed that tone gets you in trouble sometimes? You can say the right thing at the right time in the wrong tone and get in trouble.

[3 : 51] You know? This man was observing all those things about Jesus. And we're going to look here this morning about what His observations were because Jesus here describes what was happening around Him.

And we're going to see here this man here this morning. And so if you found Mark chapter 12, let's go ahead and stand this morning in honor of reading of the Word of God. And we'll pick up here in verse 28 this morning.

You want to follow along in your Bible? We find here, and it says, And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceived that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all?

And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind, with all thy strength.

This is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.

[5 : 02] And the scribes said unto him, Master, well, Master, thou hast said the truth, for there is one God, and there is none other but He. And to love Him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love His neighbor as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.

And when Jesus saw that He answered discreetly, He said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durst asked him any question.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, as we come before you this morning, Lord, we're just thankful for your word. And Lord, we're thankful for earnest and sincere ability to know you, Lord, just as this man this morning came, with an earnest and sincere desire to know.

And Lord, the importance of that. But Lord, also the necessity of knowing you, not just in a book, or just knowing you on the surface, but Lord, having that relationship with you, Lord, being your child. And Lord, what that means, that we might not be just outside the kingdom. Lord, we pray, just have your hand upon each heart, each life here today, as we look at this, here, this, here, we might ask earnestly, for loving you with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind, and with all our strength.

[6 : 36] And Lord, we just ask all these things in your precious name. Amen. You may be seated. You know, as we look here this morning, we see here that this man had been monitoring what was going on.

As one of the scribes in the other text, it talks about him being a lawyer and a Pharisee. In other words, we're going to look at all those things played into this man's response, here, and he had been monitoring these interactions in the temple, and sought an honest answer from Jesus.

You know, as we've looked before, you can ask questions for a couple of different reasons. You know, so have you ever noticed that some people come and ask questions just to stir the pot? And then you have people who come with sincere questions.

And their desire is to say, I want to learn something, or to understand something, or to affirm something in this. And this man here came sincerely seeking, because he wanted to know who Jesus is.

Jesus had intrigued him with his answer, because as we see this individual, he had been hearing Jesus, been hearing the answers, and wanted to know, Jesus, what do you think on this?

[7 : 45] Because this was an important question of the day. You know, which commandment is the greatest? Which commandment is the greatest? And in Jesus' day, they were debating that, because, you know, which one gives the greatest?

This word greatest means priority. And whatever has the highest priority, what we're going to see here today, is the fact that that priority puts everything else in its proper place.

Jesus says that on this hangs all the law and the prophets upon these two things. In other words, to organize those things correctly and keep them in the right priority, because priority is important.

You say, preacher, why is priority important? Because when you look at all the commands of God, and this individual here was looking at 613 commands that God had given to them through the Old Testament.

And he's looking at them, trying to balance them, because have you ever noticed that sometimes things we're supposed to do, things that are good, things that are right, sometimes come in conflict

with one another? Because you can have a choice between two good things, two right things, and the question is, how do you prioritize those things?

[9 : 01] That's important to understand. What's the one that supersedes the other? Because you have all these commands from the sacrifices to the things, the rituals they were supposed to do within the temple.

There was a lot of commands, a lot of detail. And this man was asking Jesus, what is the highest priority item? Which is the ones that guide everything else that we do?

What are those things that we're supposed to put under other things? If there's a conflict, what takes precedence over it? And so we see here this question of priority, you know, which is the first commandment of all?

You know, we realize he's not asking which was given first. You know, the first command that God gave was to Adam and Eve not to eat of the tree.

He didn't ask which one was first given. He's asking which one is first in priority. How do I organize this? How do I live the way I ought to live and putting those things in the right place?

[10 : 08] You know, we find here that just like today, the religious leaders would question and consider among themselves which command is more important. You know, we do the same thing today because people will prioritize things to say this is the utmost dynamic that you have.

I mean, they'll try to measure things in wrong ways. You know, and we measure people all the time in wrong ways. You say, well, how do I do that?

Have you ever looked at somebody and just made a measurement of them? Have you asked, how are you measuring that? What's your basis of that? Why do you think like that about just that when maybe you're not even having talked to them or spoken to them?

That you make assessments. You know how you make assessments of the things that you see as priority and how do they fall under your priority list? You know, that can come into many different areas of life, but when we understand that sometimes we can get things out of order just like they did in the Old Testament.

You know, and in the New Testament where Jesus is, Mark chapter 7 is a great example of this.

You had a group of people that said, well, we're going to declare this stuff we have as Corban.

[11 : 26] Now, that's a word we don't use, but simply it's this. When they declared something Corban, it meant that it was dedicated to God and couldn't be used for anything else. And Jesus called them out.

He said, you hypocrites. You declare this Corban, but you don't take care. You don't honor your parents the way you ought to honor them. You know what God's saying?

You had, you guys are, there's nothing wrong with dedicating something to God, but there is when you put it in the wrong priority. Because to honor your mother and father holds a pretty high priority. And those priorities make a difference on how we order those things. And we think about it just the different things that people do. Oftentimes, people will change priority of things to make it okay to do what they want to do.

You know? They'll downplay one command that God gives and puts up something else or the absence of a command, of a direct command, and say that, well now, see, God doesn't forbid me to do it, so therefore I can do it.

[12 : 28] Now I'm going to throw one out here today just for you to contemplate. One of the things we see in today's culture is you have a lot of Christians think they can just go drinking. They make excuses. Well, God doesn't explicitly say I can't take a drink of alcohol.

Thing is, if you read through the scripture, you'll find out he has nothing good to say about drinking. Alcohol has a purpose. There's a lot of things in life that have a purpose and are good when used in the right context.

And for the right reason. Social drinking is not a right reason to implement alcohol. Look at the scripture. Everything about the consumption of alcohol leads to destruction.

You'll not find a positive phrase mentioned about it. And people will say, well God didn't directly forbid me from doing that. I want you to understand that there's other commands and other principles that God's given that says, hey, we can make good judgment and sound judgment because the priority is that ought to be filled with the spirit of God and not with the spirit of alcohol. The Bible does tell us that pretty clearly. All sorts of things people will let and allow when they make excuses.

[13 : 47] We need to understand priority. What's the priority item that we have? And this man arrived at a conclusion from his own study of scripture. This man came knowing what answer he was looking for.

And Jesus even commends this man for knowing the right answer. He came to see what Jesus' answer is going to be. Did Jesus, from his understanding of scripture, how did it fit in these things, in this priority of things?

And this man arrived at a conclusion from his own study and we know he studied the scripture because he was a Pharisee. The Pharisees were very religious. He was a lawyer and he was a scribe.

That's how the Bible describes him in the passages where it's referenced. In other words, we know he was religious. He went through the ritual.

Pharisees were very ritualistic. So he understood the ritual. We know that this man was a lawyer. In other words, he was one who said, I want to understand how do I practically use what God says in day-to-day life?

[14 : 56] You know, how does the law implement? And then a scribe. In other words, he was one who would take notes or even copy scripture. In other words, he was very familiar with all these things.

And so he comes and asks Jesus, which is the first commandment of all? So Jesus says, okay, I'm going to give you the answer. The answer of the priority, the answer begins with Jesus quoting scripture.

Jesus goes back to Deuteronomy chapter 6. Deuteronomy chapter 6 is a portion of scripture that Jews would repeat all the time.

This portion of scripture is called the Shema, which was quoted every morning and evening by the religious Jews, even still today. The reality of what it says, it would be written down and worn upon the body in what they call phylacteries.

And these are little boxes and they place these boxes, you know, even on their doorposts. And so Jesus reveals that it's nothing new or earth shattering to the crowd.

[16 : 03] In other words, he didn't break this guy out with some new information. He said, let's go back to the basics. Deuteronomy chapter 6. Look over there in verse 4 and 5 because this is where Jesus is quoting.

Deuteronomy chapter 6 in verses 4 and 5, he says this. He says, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

You know, something important happens here that I want you to take note of because when Jesus responds to this man, he didn't respond in a generic.

He responds personally to his question. The Bible says that Jesus answered him. In other words, with all the crowd around, with a public question, Jesus looked at him and spoke directly and he said very clearly something important to him to understand that these words were not just words but they were a command that needed to impact him.

Deuteronomy chapter 6 and verse 6 goes on and says, and these words which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart. Because there's a difference between knowing something and having impact and application of something.

[17 : 28] The impact and application is its purpose. When we just know something, that's just information. We need to have those things that are application. That they apply in principle to our life.

And so you see Jesus here is revealing that from the start that these were not just superficial declarations but were to be applied internally and in our life.

The first part of this establishes something very important though because notice here where it says, Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is what? One Lord. Jesus is reminding this man of something very important because remember even in his day there was a pluralistic idea of gods.

You know today we still live in a pluralistic idea of different gods. People worship all sorts of different things and they're multifaceted of their priority instead of the priority of God's command it's the priority of my God.

And what Jesus is saying he says, spells it very clearly he says, the priority is the Lord God, the creator. the one that is above all and stands alone.

[18 : 41] The Lord our God is one Lord. That word one is that same idea of priority. Prominence.

That there is no other. When we understand that Jesus is God and that God is the one and if we're going to worship God, if we're going to have a right relationship with God, the first thing we need to understand is you need to realize there is a God.

Offentimes people will give lip service to God. Oh thank God that happened. Sometimes people will curse God but we need to understand that God is not just something we say but God is.

Look over to Hebrews chapter 11 for a moment. Hebrews chapter 11 we see this over here we say, but without faith it is impossible to please him.

For he that cometh to God must what? believe that he is. That he is. The Lord our God is one Lord.

[19 : 45] To hear it, understand it, to understand that if you're going to come to God you need to believe that he is and he's the rewarder of them that diligently seek him. Jesus had 613 commands that he could have pointed to and he says, hey, I want you to understand this one is the one that is the highest priority you can give.

That's the focus upon the Lord himself. When we see here this morning, take a look down here in verse 31 because notice what Jesus says here at the end of verse 31.

he says, there is none other commandment greater than these. None other commandment.

Matthew chapter 22 in verse 40 tells us this, and on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

In other words, Jesus said, well, I'm going to tell you here the first one is God has priority. To love God with all your heart, with all your mind, with all your soul, with all your strength. Basically, it sums up this way with everything that you are, everything that you think, everything that you process, your priorities, all the effort you put forth needs to be contained in that so that these guiding commands are there.

He says, look in verse 30, he says, and thou shalt love the Lord thy God. Thou shalt love love. Now, this is a very specific love because love is another word today that gets a lot of traction with people.

[21 : 22] You know? But love comes, presents itself differently depending on how and what definition you're using. That's one of the things that's always important is define your terms.

Because today, love is gushy and mushy. You know, I don't want to dare, you know, upset anybody. That's how I love them is I never make them upset.

You know what? Sometimes if you love somebody, there's going to be some conflict. I can't imagine trying to parent and say, well, I don't want to upset my children. You know, as a parent, sometimes you're going to upset your children. Not because you're being mean, but because you love them.

And you say, hey, if they do this, they're going to be in trouble. You know, it's going to cause harm. It's going to cause damage. I love them, so therefore, I'm going to put some restriction.

I'm going to guide them. I'm going to draw them. Sometimes they're not always happy. Sometimes it's uncomfortable. But he says, thou shalt love. This type of love we're talking about here is an intelligent, purposeful, and committed love.

[22 : 29] You know, oftentimes today, our philosophy of love is, well, if they love me, I'll love them. That's the matrix with which we often filter things through. The love that's being spoken of here is a love that is intelligent.

It's thinking. It's purposeful. It's committed. And it's not built upon emotion or affection. You say, how do you separate love from emotion or affection?

I want you to understand that when you love this way, emotion and affection are attached to it, but they're not driven by it. Because to love God is not cold.

It has a power that impacts us. Because it gives warmth in our life because of who God is. This love is unconditional, unselfing, changeless.

It's the eternal love that gives itself without expectations in return. You know, this is a genuine love that says, I'm choosing to love you no matter what.

[23 : 29] Whether what you are or who you are benefits me or not, I'm choosing to do it. And nothing you can do can change my mind. This love is unchanged by circumstances or situations.

Have you ever noticed that over the years I've seen many people, oh, I love God and something happens in their life and suddenly they don't love God anymore. When Jesus said to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind, with all thy strength, he said no matter what, stick with God to stay there considers the same love that God gives towards us.

Romans chapter 5 and verse 8 says, but God commendeth his love toward us and while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. The Bible says we were his enemy and he loved us enough to say, I don't care how you're acting or what you're doing, out of love I'm going to give you what you need. I'm going to provide what is needed. You know, oftentimes we get the idea that we can just, our love to God just flows out from us, but think about what 1 John chapter 4 tells us.

1 John 4, 19 says, we love him because what? He first loved us. We simply cannot do this unless we understand his love for us first, which is to know that he is, and when we acknowledge him as our God, it's an invitation to know him personally as your Savior, surrendering to him and believing the gospel, the truth of how one is saved.

[25 : 04] You know, this love is to be with your whole heart, impacting all that you do, all that you say, the places that you go. It involves your heart. You know, your heart here is the center of who you are, the reality of who you are, the soul.

That's your being. It's what makes you you. The Bible says that Jesus, or that creation, God breathed into man the breath of life. He became a living soul. That soul is who you are.

A soul is eternal. Contrary to some people that don't understand, the reality is a soul doesn't just dissipate. A soul is eternal. And that soul will spend eternity someplace.

And there's only two choices. The Bible says the soul's going to either have eternity in damnation or eternity in heaven. There's no middle ground. There's no in between. There's no in between. Your mind.

That's your thinking and your thoughts. If you love God, it's going to impact how you think. It's going to impact how you process things that take place. Your strength.

[26 : 10] That means your energy and your efforts that you put forth. It guides those things. It prioritizes them. Prioritizes those things. Simply, it is a love that affects everything about you.

Now, I want to put it to you this way. What Jesus starts out with here is very simply is a vertical love. In other words, it's a spiritual vertical between you and God. It says to love the Lord thy God.

Now, I want to point something out here because it's the Lord thy God. That term is personal. It's not mama's God or daddy's God. It's not the preacher's God.

It's not the God that I heard about. It's thy God. Let me put this another way. It ought to be my God. That means it's to be your God.

The term here is personal. It's not generic. It's not just a big picture of God. It's a personal dynamic with God. That vertical spiritual relationship with God.

[27 : 10] And Jesus here in verse 31, he says, and the second is like. In other words, he says, the second one falls under the priority of the first one, but the second one gives you the other dynamic that happens in life and that's what happens with interactions with people.

Because let's face it, we all understand we have two things going on. We have a spiritual dynamic that's taking place and we have a people dynamic, physical dynamic that's taking place. That's reality.

Those things are happening and he says, I want you to be right with God to recognize him, but he says, if you're right with God, the next priority that supersedes and helps guide everything else is to have a right relationship with other people.

Because see here what he says, these horizontal relationships. Now as he tells them this, he says this, he says, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

He draws this from Leviticus chapter 19. Leviticus chapter 19 and verse 18. And that's another good passage to study sometime if you want to study something because notice how the verse starts.

[28 : 18] It says, thou shalt not avenge nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people. In other words, those around you, those that you deal with, they have the right attitude and spirit about them, but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

I am the Lord. In other words, he says, I'm commanding you to seek and desire to have a right relationship. Now this love he's talking about is the exact same love from the first verse.

That unconditional, not loving somebody because of what they could do for you. When we understand, it ties to the first one because the Lord is over everything already.

This is the same love, that unconditional love, and it's described to us in 1 Corinthians chapter 13. You know, if you want to know what this love looks like, go read 1 Corinthians 13.

It describes what it looks like. What are its characteristics? How does it play out? Because it's a love that puts others first even if they don't respond in kind.

[29 : 26] It's a love that looks out for the best interests of others. It's an enduring love never being cast off. You know, you can stop and read through those things.

I encourage you to go and to think about that even this afternoon a little bit and consider am I loving God as God loves me? Because 1 Corinthians 13 describes how God loves you.

How God loves you. Jesus here brings forth these things to this man. He says, hey, you want to know what the most important commandments are?

Here's the two that guide everything else. Now Jesus, we're going to see here an application of that priority. How is this to be applied? How is this to be used in our life?

Look at the scribe's response there in verse 32. Notice what the scribe said. He said this, and the scribe said unto him, well, master, thou hast said the truth.

[30 : 22] For there is one God and there is none other but he. And to love him with all the heart and with all the understanding, with all the soul and with all the strength.

And to love his neighbor as himself. Now notice this last phrase here that the scribe adds. This tells you his understanding of what Jesus is talking about.

He says, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices. Now that's a statement that we can expound on here in a moment. Here's this scribe came and he had an understanding from his study of the word of God and he said, you know what?

I've come to understand that my priority is to love the Lord with all my heart, with all the soul, with all my mind, to love my neighbors, myself, because all the rituals that I do are not going to make me right with God.

Now I want you to see he didn't say those rituals, those sacrifices that God commanded didn't serve a purpose because there's a purpose in them. God didn't give them to them just to be ritualistic, just to have a process.

[31 : 38] Our life as a believer is not a process. It's a relationship that grows and matures. And he says here that these burnt offerings and sacrifices that your participation in them didn't put you in a right relationship with God.

You know, there's many people today that show up and go through ritual thinking the ritual makes them right with God. There's people who get themselves wet in all sorts of forms and say, now I'm right with God.

Being baptized doesn't make you right with God. Now I want you to understand to be properly baptized is important because God commands it but it's not what makes you right with God.

You have people who do rituals. Even very, just today, you'll have people that are participating participating in a ritual to them because they will take a piece of wafer and some juice or some wine and they'll say, by doing this I make myself right with God.

If I symbolize the ritual of the sacrifice, I'm right with God therefore I'm okay. This man declares something very important.

[32 : 47] He says, Jesus, I know you've spoken the truth because when I read the scripture I understand the reality that I can do all the right things outside but what's inside is what makes the difference.

That transformation that needs to take place he understood what Paul later describes in Galatians chapter 3. Galatians chapter 3 in verse 24 he says, wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ that we might be justified by faith.

In other words, the rituals pointed out that we're a sinful people and that sin has a price. The wages of sin is death. You know, it's amazing that this man, this scribe understood something that many around him that day missed.

He understood something he knew he needed to know the Lord and not just perform for the Lord.

Knowing God is not a performance. This is where we get confused because sometimes we get confused about this because if you love the Lord with all your heart, with all your mind, with all your strength, with all your soul, it's going to result in certain actions.

But those actions of themselves don't matter as much as the relationship that's there. Think about Romans chapter 3 in verse 20 where it says this, therefore, by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

[34 : 20] I want you to understand this man understood that all these other commandments, these other 613 commandments giving all these other details, especially the ones about the sacrifice and what offerings you're supposed to bring and the time you're supposed to bring and how you're supposed to do them, those did not save him, those did not build a relationship with God, but were given to draw us to God, to understand our need for God.

This religious man had come to the conclusion that the purpose of the sacrifices and offerings was not to make you right with God just because you went through the ritual.

He understood that relationship is far more important than religion. He knew that he could not keep all the law and offer all the sacrifices and still not be right with God.

He said, I can do all the things I'm supposed to do on paper and still miss the point. He said, I need to love God. It's a truth that we need to understand today because all over the world people go to church and go through their rituals thinking they're in a saving relationship with God and in truth they're lost and on their way to hell.

Hebrews chapter 10 tells us this, it says, for the law having a shadow of good things to come and not the very image of those things can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.

[35 : 50] Consider what it's revealing to us, it says, for then would they have ceased to be offered because that the worshipers once purged would have had no more conscience of sin but in those sacrifices is a remembrance again made of sin every year.

In other words, we see here that they did those things. God set that up to remind them that they're a sinner that needs to be saved by grace. A sinner that needs the Lord.

Verse 4 says, for it's not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins. Now I want you to see something important here as Jesus responds to this man.

This man tells Jesus, he says, Jesus, I know you've spoken the truth. He says, I know there's something different about you because you've given an accurate description of the word of God.

He's making a note here about Jesus and I want you to see Jesus' response to him. Look down in verse 34. And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, thou art not far from the kingdom of God.

[36 : 58] Notice that Jesus acknowledged where this man stood. That's an interesting statement that Jesus makes in that assessment, isn't it? This man says, I understand I need to love the Lord thy God with all my heart, with all my soul.

That relationship is important. That's a right priority. He recognized who God is. He recognized that those other sacrifices were not going to save him.

That there needed to be something more than those sacrifices. And Jesus looked at him and said, thou art not far from the kingdom of God. You might ask, why did Jesus say that?

Because here's a sincere man, sincerely seeking, sincerely desiring to be right with God and the one that was going to make him right standing right in front of him.

Because Jesus is the one here in just a few hours from this point before the weekends will be the sacrifice for sin.

[37 : 56] He looks at him and says, thou art not far from the kingdom of God. He still lacks something. Because Jesus was right there. He was standing before him, the one that could save him.

Jesus was speaking to a decent man, a religious man, a humanly speaking would be a good man. This man that Jesus was speaking to, everybody on the outside would say, this guy has it together. This guy's right with God. And Jesus looks at him and says, you're almost there. Almost. You know what this reveals to us? You can do all those things and come up short.

Often times we try to measure by those things, but we come up short. Because what we're short of is the Savior. We need to rely upon the Savior, failing to trust in Christ alone and not works.

You know, Titus 3.5 tells us this, not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to his mercy, he saved us by the washing of regeneration, the renewing of the Holy Ghost.

[38 : 54] Ephesians 2 tells us, for by grace are you saved through faith and not of yourselves as a gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast. You know, the sad thing is, is often times you'll have people that'll be in church their whole life.

They can hear the truth, they can know the truth, but they've never called upon the Savior. When they appear before the Lord, he says, depart from me, I never knew you. Because there was no

relationship.

You know, the sad thing is, it's possible to go to hell from the church view. It's possible to know all the right answers. It just puts you not far from eternal life.

One cannot rest upon our own good works, our own goodness, but we need to rest upon the Savior. You know, this morning, where this man was is important to realize that there could be many.

There may be one here today that knows all the right answers, but is that close. Because they've never called upon the Savior. What a sad place to be, to be not far from the kingdom of God.

[39 : 55] You know, this morning, maybe the Lord is speaking to you, maybe you've never trusted Christ as your Savior. He's the one to save your soul and you need to come to Him by faith today. You need to turn from, repent from your sin and believe the gospel to be born again.

Because nothing would be of greater shame than to go to hell from a church view. To have the truth and do nothing with it. This morning, how about you, Christian? How is your relationship with God? If Jesus says, on all these things, hang all the other aspects of life, all the law and the prophets, how's your love for God and how are you loving others?

This morning, the Savior awaits your response. As heads are bowed and eyes are closed, I want you to consider between you and the Lord today, not the assessment on the outside, but the assessment from your heart.

Where are you with God? If you're here today and you're not sure, if it's not soundly set that you understand the reality that I've called upon Him, I've recognized Him as Savior, I've asked Him to save me, I've turned from my sin to Him knowing He took all my sin for me.

If you've never done that, I encourage you to come. We have somebody show you from God's Word how you can know. Have that settled. But maybe you're here today, Christian, and there's some things that your love is waning.

[41 : 10] Other things have taken priority. That love that we ought to have for God. The same love He has for you. We love Him because He first loved us.

Fathers, we just come to You this morning, Lord. We just thank You for Your Word. Lord, You know each heart, each life here today. Lord, we may hide from one another, but we cannot hide from You. Lord, we pray just have Your hand upon each one.

Lord, we may not depart from here and walk out those doors the same way as we came in, but Lord, that we might evaluate our love for You, where we are with You.

We might love You with our whole heart, our whole soul, our whole mind, and all the strength, all that we do. Lord, as we give an opportunity to respond today, Lord, You might work upon each heart, each life here today.

Lord, we just turn the invitation to You and give You all the praise in Jesus' name. As the piano plays, what about you?