

Living In Light Of Eternity

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[0 : 00] Good morning again, everybody. So, the great 20th century Christian writer, C.S.S.Lewis. He often quoted another great Christian writer from the 18th century.! Dr. Samuel Johnson once said, and C.S.Lewis talked about it often, that people need to be reminded more than they need to be instructed.

And I know that that definitely holds true for me. I'm kind of an in-one-ear-and-out-the-other kind of guy a lot of times.

Just ask my lovely bride. But a verse of scripture that comes to mind whenever I stumble past that quote is this from John 13, verse 17.

Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them. You know, we don't necessarily need more information all the time, but we need to be reminded of the simple truths that we know.

[1 : 20] And I guess that being said, this sermon I'm going to preach today is one that I'm sure that a few of you have already heard.

But I think that there are so many just thick, simple truths that I need to talk.

I need to be reminded of these things often. And who knows, maybe you do too. So we're going to talk today about one of the day-to-day challenges that we face as believers.

We're going to talk about living this earthly life with an eternal perspective. Or in other words, living in light of eternity.

I'm going to turn 60 in a couple months. And last year, when I turned 59, I have to say it kind of put me into a bit of a fog or a funk, you might say, for a little while.

[2 : 31] And it's because my perspective started to slip from an eternal one to a temporal one or to an earthly one, right?

And, you know, years ago, when I turned 40, you know, it was just another day. No big deal, you know, didn't feel any different.

And then what seemed like three or four years later, when I turned 50, that was not really a big deal either, you know.

It kind of came and went, didn't feel any different. But turning 59, the thought of turning 60 this year just kind of caught me off guard, you know.

And I guess, you know, maybe it's because I started doing the math, right? And, you know, if I'm going to be 60, you know, if I live to be 80, I'm already three-quarters of the way home, right?

[3 : 33] And it didn't help that when I started looking up, you know, friends that I haven't seen in 30 years on Facebook that I'm finding lots of obituaries.

So, you know, we've all heard the old saying, the older you get, the faster that time flies by, right? We've all heard that. And, you know, I'd hear that for years and I'd just be like, yeah, yeah, right, whatever, yeah. Well, until one day an older gentleman said that to me.

And I said, yeah, right, whatever. And he said, no, no, you think about this for a minute. He said, when you're 10 years old, aside from Christmas, what's the best day of the year?

Where? Your birthday, right? And the day, so on your 10th birthday, if you're anything like me, what are you thinking about the day after your 10th birthday?

[4 : 49] How long it's going to take to get to your 11th birthday, right? So, and you think about it, it's going to take one-tenth of your entire life up to that point until you have a birthday again.

However, when you're 50, it's going to take one-fiftieth of your entire life up to that time for another birthday to roll around.

So, you think about it. So, fractionally speaking, the guy was right. But anyway, like I said, the fog, the funk that I was in, it was because I let my focus drift onto my own personal situation, right?

And I wasn't concentrating on the truth of Scripture. The Bible makes it very clear that we are all eternal beings, to which, you know, some might argue, well, no, we're human beings. We're all going to die sometime. But that statement's only partially true. We are eternal beings trapped for a time in a human body that will one day, because of any number of reasons, give out. [6:11] But no matter how many years we've accumulated, in light of eternity, we are just getting started. King Solomon, who many say was the wisest man who ever lived, said something in chapter 3 of the book of Ecclesiastes that I want to start with.

He has made everything beautiful in its time. He, being God, of course, has made everything beautiful or appropriate or proper in its time.

As this word is used, the word used for beautiful is translated in other parts of Ecclesiastes. He's made everything beautiful in its time.

Also, he has put eternity into man's heart. He's made us eternal beings. We are eternal beings, but yet we're definitely, we definitely have our limitations.

Look at the end of the verse. He's put eternity into man's heart, yet, so that he cannot find out what God has done from beginning to end.

[7:23] In other words, we're eternal beings, but we can't know in advance what God's will is. We can't know in advance his sovereign plan for our lives.

And that can be pretty frustrating at times, can't it? And that's why so many things in this earthly life just don't seem to make any sense.

And since we don't know his plan for our lives, we obviously don't know how long this earthly life will last. And that brings to the first main point I want to make this morning.

And that is, if you have not yet decided to place your faith in Jesus Christ to save you, don't wait. Don't wait.

Since we are all eternal beings, when this earthly life is over, we will live on somewhere. And the Bible makes it very clear that we'll end up in one of two places.

[8:28] In a place called heaven, with God, or in a place called hell, separated from God. And the Bible also makes it very clear that if we haven't yet made that decision to trust Christ, that our default location is hell.

There is no middle ground. There is no safe spot to hang out in, to wait around.

There's no safety zone. It's not something we can ride the fence on. So, let today be that day.

Let today be the day of salvation. Respond in faith today to the simple, beautiful truth of the gospel. That word gospel, it simply means good news.

And that good news starts with some bad news, right? It starts with the bad news that nobody wants to hear. You know, the bad news that the world would say is terribly politically incorrect.

[9:46] Correct. The apostle Paul puts it this way in Romans 3. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. For all have sinned.

Every single one of us. And we have to realize that there is a price tag on sin. Because God is just. He can't let sin go unpunished.

In other words. For the wages of sin is death. But the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

What we all deserve. Because of our sin is separation from God in a place called hell. But. As the last half of the verse says.

But. The free gift of God is eternal life. In Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 5.8. But God shows his love for us.

[10:50] In that while we were still sinners. Died for us. God. Knew. Right. God knew. Long before any of us were ever born.

That. That we would all sin. And that we would all need. A savior. And that's. The reason. That Jesus came. The perfect.

Sinless. Son of God. Step down into this broken world. To go to the cross. And to die. To pay the price. For our sins. For mine. And yours.

And. That one. Act. Of sacrifice. Paid for. All of it. He came. And he died.

For us. In our place. Because. It was the only way. That. That God could bring his lost children home. And.

[11:47] As much as man. Has tried to complicate it. Down. Through the centuries. That is. The basic. Simple. Truth. Of the gospel. The truth that.

We are all imperfect. And we're all. In desperate need. Of a savior. Savior. And if we. Simply. Recognize. How badly. We need him. And confess. Our sins to him. And trust in what he's already done. At the cross. To save us. We can know. Beyond. A shadow. Of a doubt. That. We will spend eternity. With him in heaven. Romans. 10. 13. Says. For everyone. Who calls. On the name of the Lord. Will be saved. So. I strongly. Urge you. In. Light. Of. Eternity. If you've not yet. Made that decision. Do it now. Don't. Wait. Don't wait.

[12:46] James. Said. Yet you do not know. What tomorrow will bring. What is your life. For you are a mist. That appears. For a little time. And then vanishes. So. So don't put it off.

It's. The most. Important decision. Anyone. Will. Ever make. In their entire life. For the rest of our time today.

I want to talk about. How. Once we've made that decision. Whether. It was. Five minutes ago. Or. 50 years ago.

We need to keep our hearts and minds. Focused. On what. They need to be focused on. To. To live this Christian life.

Well. Right. Because. We know that the world. Is. Is working. 24-7. To take. Our focus. Off from. What it should be on. And.

[13:46] To do that. I want to take. A quick look. At just. A few verses. From. Chapter 12. Of. Hebrews. Where it talks about. Jesus. As the. Founder.

And. Perfecter. Of our faith. Therefore. Since we are surrounded.

By so great. A cloud of witnesses. And. We have to pause. Because of. That word. Therefore. Like. Like. So many times. When. We're. Reading. In scripture. Like. So many times. That pastor rich. Has taught us. It's all about. Context. Right. And when you see. That word.

Therefore. You know. We need to go back. A little bit. To see what. Came. Before. We have to go. Back to get the context. To see what.

[14:42] The therefore. Is. Therefore. Right. So we're gonna. We're gonna do that. Real quick. We're gonna look at. A couple. Verses in chapter 11. Now.

Faith. Is the assurance. Of things hoped for. The conviction. Of things. Not seen. For by it. The people of old. Received. Their commendation. And.

Chapter. Eleven. Goes on. To talk about. Old Testament. Saint. After Old Testament. Saint. An incredible. Faith. That they had. Even though. They never.

Received. What they had been. Waiting for. It talks about. Their incredible. Faith. In. The promise. Of what was yet. To come. Verse seven.

By faith. Noah. Being warned. By God. Concerning. Events. As yet. Unseen. In reverent. Fear. Fear. Constructed. An ark. For the saving. Of his household.

[15:44] By this. He condemned. The world. And became. An heir. Of the righteousness. That comes. By faith. By faith.

Abraham. Obeyed. When he was called. To go out. To a place. That he was to receive. As an inheritance. And he went out. Not knowing. Where he was going. By faith.

Sarah. Herself. Received power. To conceive. Even when she was past the age. Since she considered him faithful. Who had promised. Therefore.

From one man. And him. As good as dead. Were born descendants. As many. As the stars of heaven. And as many. As the innumerable grains. Of sand. By the seashore.

By faith. Again. Abraham. When he was tested. Offered up Isaac. And he who had received.

[16:43] The promises. Was in the act. Of offering up. His only son. But. We know that the angel. Showed up. Just in time. Right? By faith.

Moses. When he was born. Was hidden. For three months. By his parents. Because they saw. That the child. Was beautiful. And they were not afraid. Of the king's edict.

By faith. Moses. When he was grown up. Refused to be called. The son of Pharaoh's daughter. Choosing rather. To be mistreated. With the people of God.

Than to enjoy. The fleeting pleasures. Of sin. He considered. He considered. The reproach. Of Christ. Greater wealth.

Than the treasures. Of Egypt. For he was looking. To the reward. By faith. Noah. By faith. Abraham. By faith.

[17 : 44] Sarah. By faith. Moses. By faith. By faith. By faith. By faith. By faith. Right. What is. What did the first verse say. That faith was. Faith is the assurance.

Of things hoped for. The conviction of things. Not seen. These all. Died. In faith.
Not having received. The things promised. But having seen them. And greeted them. From afar.
And having acknowledged. That they were strangers. Strangers.
And exiles. On the earth. Strangers. And exiles. On the earth. Just.
Like. Us. Right. We are. Strangers. And exiles. On this earth. If you are.

[18 : 42] A follower. Of Jesus Christ. This. Earth. Is not your home. Heaven. Is your home. And I'm not talking about.

When you die. I'm talking about. Right. Now. If you are. A follower of Christ. Heaven. Is your home. C.S.

Lewis. Once said this. If I find in myself. Desires. Which nothing. In this world. Can satisfy. The only. Logical.

Explanation. Is that. I was made. For another world. Have you ever felt that way? Have you ever felt like.

You just. Did not. Fit in. To this world. Have you ever felt like. No matter. No matter. What you might. Accomplish.

[19 : 40] Or. What you might. Acquire. That there is. Still this little hole. That. That nothing can fill.

You. If that's you. If that's you. Just. Let me tell you. You are not. Crazy. You are right.

Where you should be. Because. There is. Only. One. Thing. That can fill you. And.

He is not. Of this world. It's. His name. Is Jesus. And he is. The only thing. That we need. The only thing.

That will bring. Complete. And total. Satisfaction. He is. The promise. Fulfilled. Therefore. Since we are surrounded.

[20 : 39] By so great. A cloud of witnesses. Let us also. Lay aside. Every weight. And sin. Which clings. So closely. And let us. Run with endurance.

The race. That is set. Before us. So. There's two things. That. The writer. Of Hebrews.

Is saying. That we need. To do here. To run this. Race. Well. Or. In other words.

If we want to live. With an eternal perspective. And stay focused. On what truly matters. We need to get rid. Of every weight. And sin. And the first one.

Can be. A whole lot harder. To recognize. Than the second. Sin. Most of the time. Is pretty obvious. And easy to spot. But. These weights.

[21 : 35] That. That he's talking about. Are. They're not necessarily. Evil. Right. In. In fact. They can. They can be good things. The weights.

That we're talking. About. Are. You know. Anything. That. Hinders. Our spiritual walk. Or anything. That takes. Our eyes. Off. Of. Of.

The Lord. I love to fish. Is. Is. Fishing a bad thing. Absolutely not.

But. If I spend. So much of my time. And energy. Fishing. That. It affects my. Spiritual walk. And. It. Cuts down. On the time. That. I should be. Leading my family. Building my family up. It's. It's a bad thing. Um.

[22 : 35] How about. Possessions. New toys. Is it. Is it wrong. To have nice things. Um. I would. Really.

Really like. A nice. New boat. One. That. Is. Big enough. That. I could. Get out on. Lake Michigan. On. On decent days. Uh. But yet. Small enough. That. I could still get. On to little. Inland. Inland. Lakes. And. Fish bluegills.

With. Jack. And Charlie. My grandsons. But. And. I mean. That's not a bad thing. Right. If. If I'm. If I'm using that big new boat. To. Have. Conversations. With my family. To have conversations. With people. About things of. Eternal significance.

[23 : 30] If I use that. As an opportunity. To have these conversations. It's. That's a good thing. Right. Right. But. If. Tom.

Gets his big new boat. And. Nobody ever sees him anymore. Because he's always. Out in his big new boat. Fishing. All alone. That's not a good thing. Laying aside.

Every weight. And the same. The sin that clings. So closely. Is. Is. Is not an easy thing to do. It takes. Time. And it takes a really. Honest look.

At our priorities. And how we're spending. Our time. To see that they're lining up. With God's word. And. We also need to keep in mind.

That. The writer of Hebrews. Is. Is not saying. That these things are. Requirements. For salvation. We saw earlier. That. Salvation.

[24 : 27] Is by. Grace alone. Through faith. Faith alone. In Jesus Christ. Alone. We could never. Earn it. We will never. Deserve it.

And. All of us. Will struggle. With sin. In one way. Shape. Or form. Until. Until we're in heaven. What the writer.

Is. Saying. Is. Let's get rid of the sin. And whatever. Is weighing us down. So that. We can run this. Race. With endurance. Or in other words.

So that we can live. This Christian life. With an eternal perspective. And. The only way to do that. Is to. Simply.

Obey. Verse two. Looking to Jesus. The founder. And perfecter. Of our faith. Or as the NIV translation.

[25 : 25] Says it. Fixing. Our eyes. On Jesus. Looking ahead. To what we know. Awaits us. Even though. Even though.

What we might currently. Be surrounded by. Isn't so good. Jesus said it himself. John chapter 16. In this world. You will.

Have. Trouble. But take heart. I have overcome the world. He promised us. That it would be hard. He promised us.

That. That we would have. Struggles. But on the other hand. He gives us. Everything. That we need. To do it well. He gave us.

Himself. He is our hope. And we need to keep him. At the forefront. Of everything we do. Living every day. Thankful. For what he's done.

[26 : 24] And then there's. The last half of the verse. That just about. Wrecks me. Every time I read it. Looking to Jesus. The founder. And perfecter.

Of our faith. Who for the joy. That was set before him. Endured. The cross. Despising. The shame. And is seated. At the right hand. Of the throne.

Of God. For the joy. Set before him. Do you know. What that joy. Set before him.

Was. It was you. And it's me. The joy. The joy. The joy.

That the Lord. Gets. From saving us. Was worth. Going to the cross. Isn't that an incredible thought. He chose. He chose.

[27 : 24] To go to the cross. For the joy. That would. Saving us. Would bring him. And. I have to admit. There are days. That it is. Hard for me.

To admit. That saving me. Would have brought him joy. When I think about. The things that. Fly out of my mouth.

At the people that I love. When I think about. The thoughts that creep into my head. And yet. Saving me brought him joy. Joy. He has. He has seen. Every one of us. At our absolute. Worst. And. He saved us anyways.

Because it brought him joy. Let that sink in. Consider him.

[28 : 24] Who endured from sinners. Such hostility against himself. So that you may not grow weary. Or faint hearted. Or.

As the NIV says it. So that you don't grow weary. And lose heart. Want to wrap things up this morning. With just a couple more verses. These are from chapter 4.

Of 2nd Corinthians. Where. The apostle Paul. Is talking about living. With an eternal perspective. So we do not lose heart.

Though our outer self. Is wasting away. Our inner self. Is being renewed. Day by day. For this light. Momentary affliction.

Is preparing. For us. An eternal. Weight. Of glory. Far beyond. All comparison. As we look.

[29 : 22] Not to the things. As we look. Not to the things. That are seen. But to the things. That are unseen. For the things that are seen. Are transient. But the things that are unseen.

Are eternal. We look to the things that. We look. We look. We look. Not to the things that are seen. But to the things that are unseen.

That is. The key. I have a. Side job. Driving a school bus.

And. Driving a school bus. Much like. This. Christian life. Can be. Kind of a. An exercise.

In controlled chaos. And. You know. There are constantly things. Coming at you. From. Every direction. That you need to.

[30 : 18] Be aware of. Things you need to address. Things. That. Truly deserve. Your attention. Just like. Life in general. Right. But.

If. I. Get. Too caught up. In the things. That are right in front. Of me. Right next to me. The things that I can see. Things are not going to go too well.

And. You don't notice it so much. If you're driving on US 10. The lanes are. A little wider. You have a little bit more. Wiggle room. But once you start turning.

Off the highway. On to. You know. Pave. Secondary roads. You know. You're. You're driving down the road. And. If you look close. I mean. You got about.

Six or eight inches. To the center line. And about. Six or eight inches. To the. Yellow line. And. If.

[31 : 24] If I. Concentrate. Too much. On keeping it between the lines. If I'm looking. Right. In front of me. I'm.

I'm. I'm. Constantly. Doing this. I'm. Constantly. Making. Minute. Little. Adjustments. To correct. You know. And.

I. I. I don't know how to really. Say this without it sounding. Unsafe. But here goes. Okay.

I cannot. Focus. Right in front of me. I. At what I can see. Okay. I have to look.

Way down the road. Like about a quarter mile. Or so. Not at. Something that's there. Not at. A car that's there. Not at.

[32 : 19] A tree. On the side. Not at a mailbox. That's up there. I need to concentrate. Way up there. At what I can't. See. And if I can do that.

It's almost like. That. Big old bus. It's like there's grooves. In the road. And the tires just kind of. Find the grooves.

Like it almost kind of drives itself. Because I'm looking. Way ahead. And when I do that. You know. All of these minute. Adjustments go away.

And all of a sudden. I've got a few seconds. That. I can look in the mirror. And I can see why little Johnny's crying. And. And all of a sudden.

You know. What. Used to be just this din. Of noise. All of a sudden. I can start making out. Voices. And actually hear. What.

[33 : 15] Kids are saying. You know. Like. Somebody. Two seats behind. That's saying. Mr. Tom. I think. I'm going to puke. But.

And it's. It's because. You know. I took my eyes. Off of. What's. Right in front of me. And looked. Further ahead.

At what I can't see. And all of a sudden. Things start to come into focus. If that makes sense. Um. And.

You know. The same is true. With this Christian life. Right. We can't. Focus. Too closely. On the obvious troubles. Right in front of us.

All the time. That seem like. They're. Insurmountable. We have to keep. Our focus. Out in front of us. On the one. Who right now. We can't see.

[34 : 13] But. Who we know. That we will soon. See. Face to face. If we can find a way. To do that. Just.

Like. The bus. Settling in. To the groove. And driving itself. Life will be so much easier. You know. We won't. Feel like we're constantly. Tossed. On the waves. Constantly adjusting. To keep. In the right direction. Things that don't make sense.

Will start to make sense. Things that. Big things. Will start to become little things. Right. And.

It will be. So much easier. To hear. That still small voice. You know. It'll be so much easier to hear. To understand what the Holy Spirit is telling us.

[35 : 11] Where he's leading us. What he wants for us. If we look. Not. To the things that are seen. But to the things that are unseen.

Let's pray. Lord. We thank you. For what you did for all of us at the cross.

Lord. We don't deserve our salvation. And we could never. Ever. Earn it. We don't. But you willingly went to the cross. To purchase it for us. You willingly went to the cross.

Because. Because saving you. Saving us brought you. Great joy. Lord. Help us to. To never lose.

The wonder of that thought. May we always keep that thought. Right in the forefront of our minds. As we. As we navigate this earthly life.

[36 : 14] That you've laid out for us. As we wrestle with the day-to-day struggles. That this life is sure to bring. May we. May we lift. Our eyes. And fix them upon the one.

Who has saved us. May we keep in mind. That. So many of the earthly struggles. That we wrestle with. Will one day seem like. Light.

And momentary troubles. Like Paul was talking about. And who knows. Maybe when we see you face to face. We won't even be able to remember them at all.

Help us to live every day. With that day. In mind. May we spend our time. Time here. Serving you. And telling others about. Why we don't lose heart.

We love you Lord. And we thank you. And I pray all of these things. In our incredible Savior's name. Jesus name. Amen.