

# Living In Light of Eternity

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- [ 0 : 00 ] Well, good morning again, everybody. Today we're going to take a little break from the Gospel of Luke that Pastor Rich has been so skillfully leading us through for the last several months.
- Eternal perspective or living in light of eternity.
- And this is going to be one of those sermons that the preacher that's preaching it needs to hear it, needs to take it to heart just as much or more than anybody else that's in the room.
- And I say that because I recently kind of went through, I don't know, what I'd call a fog or maybe a funk.
- So I had a birthday a little over a month ago. And, you know, when years ago when I turned 40, it, you know, it was no big deal.
- [ 1 : 21 ] It was just another day and nothing felt too different, you know. Well, then what seemed, looking back, what seems like two or three years later, when I turned 50, even then, you know, it didn't seem much, much different.
- Just another day. But next year at this time I will be 60. And I don't know, for some reason, why are you cheering back there?
- For some reason, this year that kind of, I don't know, it just kind of hit me. And I guess maybe because I started doing the math, you know, if I'm 60 and, you know, if I make it to 80, well, you know, if you look at it from a worldly perspective, you know, I'm already three-quarters of the way to a hole in the ground.
- But, and it didn't help that I started looking up old friends.
- And I mean old friends, like people that I haven't talked to in 20 or 30 years. I start looking people up on Facebook. And I'm finding, instead of contact information, I'm finding obituaries.
- [ 2 : 49 ] So, that didn't help. And probably also adding to that is just how fast it seems that time is flying by, you know.
- We've all heard the old saying, the older you get, the faster time goes by, you know. And for years I'd hear that saying and, you know, I'd just be like, yeah, okay, whatever.
- A few years ago, I heard an older gentleman say that. And I said, yeah, okay, whatever. And he said, no, seriously, think about it.
- And he explained it this way. He said, okay, when you're 10 years old, aside from Christmas, what's the very best day of the year?
- What's that day? Your birthday, okay. And so, the day after your 10th birthday, when you wake up, what are you thinking about?
- [ 4 : 01 ] Yeah, if you're like me, you're thinking, it is going to take so stinking long until I have another birthday. However, when you're 50 and you have a birthday, you only, well, like when you're 10 years old, okay, you have to wait one-tenth of your entire life until your next birthday rolls around.

But when you're 50, you only have to wait one-fiftieth of your entire life up to that point, and boom, you have a birthday again.

So, fractionally speaking, I guess, the old guy was right. But anyway, my problem, my funk started because my perspective, it started to drift onto myself and onto my own personal right here, right in front of me situation, instead of keeping it firmly planted on what I know is the truth of scripture.

The Bible makes it very clear that we are eternal beings. And, you know, a lot of people would immediately argue, no, we're not.

We're human beings. We're all going to die sometime. And I would argue that's not completely true. We are eternal beings trapped for a time, for just a little bit of time, in a human body that, at some point, for any number of reasons, is going to give out.

[ 5 : 51 ] But no matter how many years we've been around, no matter how old we are by worldly or earthly standards, our lives are just beginning.

King Solomon, who many say was the wisest man who ever lived, he said something in chapter 3 of the book of Ecclesiastes that I want to start with this morning.

And it comes right after the little section that the old folk singer, Pete Seeger, used to write a song, and that the band The Birds had a number one hit with, way back in 1965.

Do you know the song I'm talking about? Okay, Eric, you want to sing the song? To everything turn, turn, turn.

There is a season turn, turn, turn. And a time for every purpose under heaven. Under heaven. And King Solomon, verse 11, he has made everything beautiful in its time.

[ 7 : 07 ] Or, as the word beautiful is also translated in other parts of Ecclesiastes, he has made everything proper, or everything fitting in his time.

Basically, there is a time for everything. And, also, he has put eternity into man's heart.

He has made us, he, being God, has made us eternal beings. Or, as we sang in the very first song this morning, you placed eternity in our hearts.

Very first line of the first song that we sang. We are eternal beings, but yet we definitely have our limitations, right?

Yet, so that he cannot find out what God has done from beginning to end. In other words, we're eternal beings, but we can't know in advance what God's will is.

[ 8 : 09 ] We can't know in advance what God's sovereign plan for our lives is. And, that can be pretty frustrating at times, can't it? And, that's why so many things in this earthly life at times just don't seem to make sense.

And, since we don't know his plan for our lives, we don't know how much time we have yet left on this earth, this earthly life. Which, brings me to the first point that I want to make this morning.

If you haven't yet decided to place your faith in Christ to save you, don't wait. Don't wait.

Since we are eternal beings, when this life is over, we will spend eternity in one of two places.

And, the Bible makes it very clear what those places are. Either in heaven, with God, or in hell, separated from him.

[ 9 : 20 ] And, the Bible also makes it very clear that, if we have not yet made that decision, our default is hell.

And, there is, there is no safety zone. There is no time out spot to wait, to figure it out. So, I would just, if you're thinking about making that decision, I would urge you today, don't, don't wait.

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

And, that good news, it starts with some bad news. It starts with the bad news that the world around us would say is terribly politically incorrect.

It's the bad news that nobody wants to hear. It's what Paul would put this way in, in Romans. Chapter 3. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

[ 10 : 34 ] All of us, he says, 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.

God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. In the 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 in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us.

God knew. He knew long before any of us were ever born that we were going to sin. He knew that we would all need a savior.

[ 11 : 48 ] And that's why Jesus came. The perfect sinless son of God came and stepped down into his own broken creation to go to the cross to pay the price for our sin, for mine and for yours.

And that one act of sacrifice paid for all of it. And when he rose from the grave on the third day, it proved that his sacrifice was acceptable to God the Father.

All that we have to do is just to realize how badly we need a savior, right? All we have to do is confess that to him and trust in the fact that what he did was enough.

There's nothing we could ever do to earn it. There's no way that we could ever deserve it. It is simply a gift from God. Jesus came and died for us in our place because it was the only way that God could bring his lost children home.

And as much as man has tried to complicate it down through the years, that is the basic, simple, beautiful truth of the gospel.

[ 13 : 15 ] The truth that we are all imperfect and we're all in desperate need of the Savior. And if we simply recognize how badly that we need him and confess our sins to him and trust in what he's already done at the cross for us, we can know beyond a shadow of a doubt that we will spend eternity with him in heaven.

Romans 10, 13, 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 been wrestling with that decision, do it.

Do it today. Don't wait. Book of James chapter 4, verse 14, says, 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. Do it now. Don't wait. Trust him for salvation.

It is the most important decision that any of us will ever make. For the rest of the time today, I want to talk about how once we've made that decision to trust Christ as Savior, whether it was five minutes ago or 50 years ago, we need to keep our hearts and our minds focused on what they need to be focused on because this world that we live in is working 24-7 to take our focus off of it, to give us a worldly focus or a worldly perspective as opposed to an eternal one.

[ 15 : 19 ] And to do that, I want to take a quick look at just a few verses from chapter 12 of Hebrews. Hebrews. Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses.

Okay. And this is a pause place. Okay. This is a great example of how so many times when we're reading in scripture, we have to go back before and look what came before to, we have to go behind the therefore to realize what the therefore is there for.

Sorry. So, we're going to back up to chapter 11 and look at a few verses there. Verse 1 and 2 of Hebrews 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 11, it goes on to list Old Testament saint after Old Testament saint after Old Testament saint and the incredible faith that they had in the promise of what was yet to come.

Verse 11 talks about Noah. By faith, Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear, constructed an ark for the saving of his household.

[ 17 : 06 ] By this, he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.

Next old guy they talk about is Abraham. 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.

And we hear about Sarah. By faith, again, 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. Skipping down a few more verses yet, we hear more about Abraham. By faith, Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac.

[ 18 : 21 ] And he who had received the promises was in the act of offering up his only son. But we know that the angel stopped him at just the right time, right?

Then we switch to another old guy, Moses. 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.

So, actually not Moses, actually the faith of Moses' parents. But then, we hear about Moses. By faith, Moses himself, 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 the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward.

He had an eternal perspective, not an earthly one. So, by faith, Noah, by faith, Abraham, by faith, Sarah, by faith, Moses, by faith, by faith, by faith, we hear.

[ 19 : 53 ] What did verse 1 say that faith was? Now, faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

it's the very definition of what an eternal perspective is. All of these people that we just talked to, these all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeting them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.

Strangers and exiles on the earth. Just like you, and just like me.

We're all strangers and exiles in this place. If you are a follower of Jesus Christ, this earth is not your home.

Heaven is your home. And not necessarily when you die, it's your home. It's your home right now.

[ 21 : 16 ] C.S. Lewis, the great Christian writer, 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 don't fit in to this world?

Have you ever felt like no matter what you might accomplish, no matter what you might acquire, there is still something missing?

There's still a little hole? Well, if that's you, let me assure you, you are not crazy.

You are right where you need to be. We're not supposed to fit in here. there's only one thing that can give us complete and total satisfaction, and he's not of this world.

[ 22 : 38 ] His name is Jesus, and he is the promise fulfilled. Therefore, therefore, since we are surrounded 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 telling us that we need to do here, right? two things we need to get rid of if we want 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, right?

Sin, for the most part, is pretty easy to spot, not. You know, it obviously hurts us, it hurts others most of the time.

On the other hand, a lot of these weights that the writer's talking about here, they can be good things. What the writer of Hebrews would consider a weight to be would be anything that hinders our spiritual walk, or anything that continually takes our focus off from God.

[ 24 : 22 ] I love to fish. Is fishing a bad thing in and of itself? No?

But if I spend so much time fishing time, that my family forgets what I look like, if I'm not taking the time, if the time that I should be leading my family and guiding my family and providing for them, if that time gets eaten up because I'm always fishing, that might be a weight that I need to lay aside.

How about possessions? Is it wrong to have nice things? I would really like to get a nice new boat.

One that's big enough that it wouldn't have to be flat calm for me to get out on Lake Michigan. It has to be flat calm for me to get out there.

But, you know, big enough for that, but yet small enough that I could still get it onto little inland lakes and teach my grandson how to catch bluegills? That's not a bad thing, is it?

[ 25 : 49 ] It's all in how we use things to glorify God, right? I mean, if I get a brand new boat and I use it to spend time with my family or to spend time with friends, you got somebody in a boat, that is a great place to talk about eternal things, right?

What an opportunity. Fishing gives so many good illustrations, right? things to be a man, if I got my big brand new boat and my family never saw me again because I was fishing alone all the time, that would be a weight that I would need to get rid of.

Laying aside every weight and laying aside the sin that clings so closely is not an easy thing to do. It's different for all of us.

It takes a serious and honest inward look at our priorities to see if they're lining up with God's word. We need to keep in mind that the writer of Hebrews here, he's not saying that laying aside the weights that casting off the sin.

He's not saying that they are requirements of salvation. We talked about it earlier, salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.

[ 27 : 27 ] What he's saying is that to live this Christian life well, to live with an eternal perspective, we need to cast off the weights and the sin.

the sin. And the way to do that is to simply obey verse 2, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith.

Or, as the NIV would say it, the NIV says it a little differently, it says it, fixing our eyes on Jesus.

He has to be the number one thing in everything that we do. Because, you think about it, he is simply the cure for everything of this world gold that ails us.

He is the cure. Finishing the verse. Looking to Jesus, fixing our eyes on 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.

[ 29 : 27 ] For the joy set before him, that little phrase just wrecks me.

You know who the joy set before him is? It's you. And it's me. It's all of us.

The joy that the Lord gets from saving us was worth going to the cross for him.

He chose the cross for the joy that saving us would bring him. and I have to admit there are days that I find it hard to believe that saving me could have brought him joy.

When I think about you know things that fly out of my mouth to people that I love, when I think about thoughts that creep into my mind.

[ 30 : 55 ] But the truth is he has seen each of us at our absolute worst and yet he saved us. He went to the cross because of the joy that he gets from saving us.

We need to let that sink in. verse three. Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself so that you may not grow weary or faint hearted.

Or as the NIV would say, so that you don't grow weary or lose heart. we're going to finish up this morning with a couple of more songs.

Band, hopefully you're still in here. Come on up. This next song that we're going to do is all about the founder and perfecter of our faith.

our one and only hope for salvation. And it asks the most important question that any of us will have the privilege of answering.

[ 32 : 20 ] It asks, who is this Jesus? Jesus. Jesus.