

Program Transcripts

December 2021



IN
SEARCH
OF THE LORD'S WAY®

SEARCH PROGRAMS

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Topics subject to change without notice

DECEMBER 5 – THY WILL BE DONE

At the hardest moment of His life in the Garden of Gethsemane, the Lord Jesus said, “Thy will be done.” We want to be able to say “Thy will be done” in our own lives. That means putting ourselves aside.

DECEMBER 12 – GOD HAS SPOKEN

When Jesus spoke in the first century, scribes took down His words. These words are in the New Testament and remain as authoritative as the day He first spoke them. God now speaks through His Son, and we must listen.

DECEMBER 19 – THE GREATEST GIFT

The greatest gift anyone can receive comes at the greatest price anyone can imagine. We are blessed because He bore a curse. We can have eternal life, because He gave up His life. By His stripes we are healed.

DECEMBER 26 – THE SECOND COMING

Jesus has promised to come again for His people. What will happen on that day? Will the dead come to life? Will we see Him in the air? Will the earth be destroyed? Will we be judged on that day?

Thy Will Be Done

At the hardest moment of His life, the Lord Jesus said, "Thy Will Be Done." We want to say "Thy Will Be Done" in our lives too. We're here to search God's Word for the Lord's Way to salvation and to live the Christian life. God's Word always gives us the light that we need to know the truth and to draw close to God.

One lesson we must learn is that God is God, and we are human. God rules our lives, and we should live according to His will. When the Lord Jesus came into this world He understood He was here to do the will of His Father in heaven. We too must do His will. Every facet of our lives belongs to God our Father. Troubles and evils arise when people ignore His will. We must learn to pray and to live a life that proclaims, "Thy will be done."

When Jesus taught His disciples to pray in the Sermon on the Mount, He said, "Pray, then, in this way: 'Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven'" (Matthew 6:9-10). What if the will of God were done on earth like it is in heaven? What if people were willing to set their sins aside and give their lives to the will of God? What if we all stopped setting our hearts on evil and started setting our hearts on righteousness?

Struggles and problems come at the expense of people doing their own will and ignoring the will of the Father. The selfishness, the greed, the lust, and the arrogant pride of our time cause our lives, our homes, and our society untold pain and ruin. We desperately need God's will in our lives. "Thy will be done" is not only a prayer; it's a way of life.

Our reading today comes from the Gospel According to Mark 14:32-36, and Jesus is on His way to the cross, but first He goes to the Garden of Gethsemane, to spend hours in prayer.

They came to a place named Gethsemane; and He said to His disciples, "Sit here until I have prayed." And He took with Him Peter and James and John, and began to be very distressed and troubled. And He said to them, "My soul is deeply grieved to the point of death; remain here and keep watch." And He went a little beyond them, and fell to the ground and began to pray that if it were possible, the hour might pass Him by. And He was saying, "Abba! Father! All things are possible for You; remove this cup from Me; yet not what I will, but what You will."

And that needs to be our prayer as well.

Let's pray together. "Heavenly Father, we pray that we may do Your will always, that whatever the cost we may be willing to give up ourselves and to follow You, to take up our cross. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen."

"Thy will be done." Jesus must have found it both difficult and yet fulfilling to pray that the Father's will be done. While Jesus hated the thought of a scourging and an agonizing death, He knew that it was necessary to fulfill His purpose in life. While He hated the thought of bearing the punishment for the sins of the world, He loved the world and wanted it to be saved from sin.

The Bible presents a number of paradoxes about the Lord on the cross. A paradox is a situation that seems to be absurd or contradictory, in yet it is in fact true. For instance, the Bible says, "For our sake he made him [that is, Jesus] to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Corinthians 5:21). Or 1 Peter 2:24, which says "He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree [the cross], that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. For by his wounds you have been healed." The holy Lord Jesus bore our sins at the cross so that we could become holy.

Hebrews 12:2 says that the Lord Jesus "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." Yes, He despised the pain and the shame but

He loved the outcome of what He did on the cross. He looked to the joy set before Him, the joy of people finding forgiveness in His sacrifice. He didn't want to die, but His desire for our eternal salvation was greater than His desire to live in the flesh. He rejoiced in the eternal not the temporary, and He was glad to do the Father's will.

Doing the Father's will was not a new concept or behavior to Jesus. From the time He was born, He realized that He had come into this world to do the Father's will. At age 12, Jesus was in the Temple doing His Father's business. Later on, when the devil tempted Him at age 30, Jesus said, "Be gone, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve'" (Matthew 4:10)

In John, chapter 4, Jesus passed through Samaria. Stopping at a well near the town of Sychar, Jesus sent his disciples into town for some food while He rested. At the well Jesus had a remarkable conversation with a woman who had been married five times and was living with a man. When she learned Jesus was the Messiah, she ran into town and told all the men of the town and the disciples returned with the food.

Then John 4:31-34 says: "Meanwhile the disciples were urging Him, saying, 'Rabbi, eat.' But He said to them, 'I have food to eat that you don't know about.' So the disciples were saying to one another, 'No one brought Him anything to eat, did he?' And Jesus said to them, 'My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work.'" The Lord Jesus lived to do the will of His Father in heaven.

In John 5:30, Jesus explained, "I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me." Jesus regarded the will of the Father as the perfect standard of right and wrong. He didn't want to vary from His Father's will in any way, so He listened to the Father. He made judgments of right and wrong only as the will of the Father instructed. He didn't act on His own initiative.

In Jesus' heart and mind, keeping the will of the Father, was how He remained in a right relationship with His Father. The Lord said to His disciples on the night before He died, "Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love" (John 15:9-10). Abiding in the Father's will was an act of love and devotion. Keeping the Lord's commandments is how we demonstrate our love to the Lord and remain in His love.

First John 2:3-5 says, "By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. The one who says, 'I've come to know Him,' and doesn't keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected." Our love for God moves us to be obedient to His will and to keep His commandments.

When Jesus was told that family was outside and had come to speak to Him, the Lord Jesus asked, "'Who is My mother and who are My brothers?' And stretching out His hand toward His disciples, He said, 'Behold My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother'" (Matthew 12:48-50). Jesus claimed a close kinship to anyone who does the will of His Father in heaven, and He wants to be close to us.

On the other hand, Jesus finished the Sermon on the Mount with these words, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you who practice lawlessness'" (Matthew 7:21-23).

The Lord knew people would claim to have a relationship with Him, while they lived lawlessly. They wanted the blessing of Christianity but they didn't surrender to the will of the Father in heaven. The Lord

Jesus never knew them. He never had a relationship with them. They never belonged to Him, because they lived life on their own lawless terms and would not obey the will of the Father. You can't live by your own will and expect to please the Lord.

You can't draw close to God while you turn your back on what the Father teaches. You obey God by obeying what He teaches, not by saying you love Him while living the way that you desire. A person who lives in lawlessness says to the Lord, "Not Your will be done but mine." He lives by his own rules and ignores God's law. He hasn't set his mind on the Father's will but on pleasing himself.

A person who plays by his own will thinks he is the exception. He thinks his sins aren't as bad as other people's sins. He does as he pleases and presumes the Lord will still consider that as obedience. He counts on his own works, not God's will, to assure him a place in heaven. The Lord's rejection is going to surprise him.

We should strive to follow the will of the Lord. It will not only bless us, it will also bless everyone around us. The Bible says, "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect" (Romans 12:2). Doing God's will shows everyone the value of the Lord's way! It is good and acceptable and perfect.

Jesus taught us to pray, "Thy will be done." Have you thought about how radically different and better our world would be if people truly did the will of God? God's will for our lives is no small matter. If people did God's will, crime would disappear, the moral climate of this country would drastically change, and people would be more loving and less selfish. We'd keep the golden rule. The Lord Jesus taught that "In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets" (Matthew 7:12).

If we did God's will on earth, as it is in heaven, God's Word would have a place of priority in our lives and decisions. We'd be asking the question, "What does God's Word have to say about this matter or that?" We'd realize that the God who created us knows us better than we know ourselves and teaches us what is best. We'd make our life choices and think of right and wrong on the basis of God's teaching not our opinions or our culture.

If we did God's will on earth, we'd begin to pray as a people again. We'd realize that nothing good can happen without God's blessing and favor. We'd seek His face. What does that mean, "seek His face"? It means we'd look to God for help and for the answers of life. When Solomon became king, he asked God for wisdom to know how to lead the people of Israel. He worried about what might happen if Israel forsook the Lord and faced famine and were defeated in battle. Solomon asked God to be willing to forgive His people.

The Lord God answered Solomon's prayer with this promise found in 2 Chronicles 7:13-14, "If ... My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and will heal their land." God wants to draw close to His people, when they pray to Him with humble hearts, turning from wickedness, and then God will hear and heal them.

If God's will were truly done on earth, we'd stop hearing God's name being taken in vain and in filthy talk. Ephesians 4:29 says, "Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear." Words are important; and our speech would be gracious, seasoned with salt, as we ought to speak.

If God's will were done on earth, we'd set our hearts on things that bless rather than concentrate on things that corrupt. The Bible says, "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there's

anything worthy of praise, think about these things” (Philippians 4:8). What we think about shapes our attitudes. When our minds concentrate on the good, we see good all around us; and we become better people. The Bible says, “Do not be deceived: ‘Bad company ruins good morals’” (1 Corinthians 15:33). When what is bad fills our minds, evil fills our lives.

If God's will were done on earth, we'd think more about the Lord and about heaven. The Bible says, “If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory” (Colossians 3:1-4).

Where are you going with your life? Does your life show that the will of God is good and acceptable and perfect? Are you doing the will of the Father? Are you living in such a way that by your words, by your deeds, by your attitudes, you are a blessing. Or are you a hurt to those who are around you? Doing the will of God is not simply something that we do to please God, it also makes this world so much better. Oh, we ought to all say, “Thy will be done.”

Let us pray. “Father, we're thankful for the example of Jesus who did Your will, by dying upon the cross for our sines. Help us Father to deny ourselves, to take up our crosses and to follow You. This is our prayer in the name of Jesus, Amen.”

The Lord Jesus told Nicodemus unless he was born of water and the Spirit, he could not enter the kingdom of God (John 3:5). Jesus was emphatic and said in verse seven, “Do not be amazed that I said to you, ‘that you must be born again.’” Some think the will of God is flexible and doesn't matter, but nothing could be farther from the truth.

John wrote, “Jesus came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:11-13). You can't be saved by substituting some human plan for God's will. God is God, and we are human. We can't edit or overrule the will of God. If we are saved by God's grace, it will only be by His will. To know His will we must read and study the New Testament.

What does God will for us to do to be saved? Upon hearing the gospel of Jesus, we must believe Jesus is the Christ the Son of the living God. We must repent of our sins and turn to righteousness. We must be willing to confess our faith in Christ Jesus and to be baptized. Baptism is that new birth in water and the Spirit. The Bible teaches that we must be born again. Baptism is an immersion in water in the name of Jesus Christ so that our sins will be forgiven. When we are baptized, God washes away our sins (Acts 22:16). I pray that you, today, will do the will of God.

We do ask that you focus your heart on God by worshiping at church. Everyone needs a church family. There's probably a church of Christ that's near you. If you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we'll gladly help you find one.

God Has Spoken

When Jesus spoke in the first century, scribes took down His words, and these words are in the New Testament. We search the Scriptures because they come from God. No other book contains the wisdom, the prophecies, and the righteous commandments found in the Holy Bible. The Bible is the only book in the world that offers objective evidence to be the Word of God. Only the Bible gives real proof of its divine inspiration through its fulfillment of prophecy. No other book can give us the truth about the beginning of time or the end of time. The Scriptures introduce us to Jesus Christ, providing testimony from witnesses of His death, burial, and resurrection. The more you study the Bible, the clearer your knowledge of God will become.

Hugo McCord explained the concept of inspiration. He said: "The Bible was given by inspiration of God as the Holy Spirit worked within select men, revealing to them the thoughts of God and enabling them to use the appropriate words to communicate divine truth without error. God put the Holy Spirit into the writers of the Bible and, through Him, guided them in the writing of the Bible. Thus 'inspiration' may be defined as the process by which God breathed His Spirit into men, enabling them to receive and communicate divine truth without error. The Bible is God speaking!

"The writers of the Bible wrote about both facts that they knew and facts they didn't know without inspiration. The known facts that they wrote about came either from personal observation, existing documents, or oral tradition. Much of what was written by these men came to their knowledge for the first time through revelation from God. Whether they were writing known facts or revelation, inspiration guided them in making known only truth, without error in communication."

Our reading today comes from 2 Peter 1:16-21. Peter is describing how prophetic utterances, the Scriptures, came about through inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, such an utterance as this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory, "This is My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased"— and we ourselves heard this utterance made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. So we have the prophetic word *made* more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts. But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is *a matter* of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

That's how Scripture came about.

Have you considered the power of God's Words? God speaks and things happen. "Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light" (Genesis 1:3). Each time God speaks in this chapter we see the unfolding of God's creation. God spoke creation into existence. Psalm 33:6 says, "By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, And by the breath of His mouth all their host." Verse 9 says, "For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast." If God could speak creation into existence, then He has far greater power than we can imagine or understand.

The Words of Jesus are likewise powerful and authoritative. Colossians 1:16-17 reminds us,

“For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.” When Jesus spoke, miracles happened.

Jesus taught with authority in the synagogue in Capernaum. “And immediately there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit. And he cried out, ‘What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God.’ But Jesus rebuked him, saying, ‘Be silent, and come out of him!’ And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying out with a loud voice, came out of him. And they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, ‘What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him!’” (Mark 1:23-27).

Jesus not only had authority over unclean spirits, He also had authority over nature. This power is shown frequently in the New Testament. Matthew 8:23-27 says, “When He got into the boat, His disciples followed Him. And behold, there arose a great storm on the sea, so that the boat was being covered with the waves; but Jesus Himself was asleep. And they came to Him and woke Him, saying, ‘Save us, Lord; we are perishing!’ He said to them, ‘Why are you afraid, you men of little faith?’ Then He got up and rebuked the winds and the sea, and it became perfectly calm. The men were amazed, and said, ‘What kind of a man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?’”

God speaks with great power and authority, and all of nature and the universe respond. Man is the only creature that can hear what God says and ignore or disobey Him. When people disobey the Word of the Lord they face great consequences. Some people don't take God seriously, but God has shown through time that He means what He says. Some think God will not condemn anyone no matter what that person does.

When you hear the words of the Lord Jesus, remember that He created you and sustains your existence. Without His power over creation, you couldn't exist. He deserves to be heard! One day the words that He has spoken will be the standard for your judgment. The Lord Jesus said, “He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day” (John 12:48). Since the words of Jesus will judge you, you should know what He said and take it seriously. The words of Jesus will not disappear, and Jesus will not forget what He said. What Jesus said is just as binding today as it was in the first century. Changes in time and culture do not change what the Lord said. No one can ignore the words of Jesus on the Day of Judgment. The Lord said, “Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away” (Matthew 24:35).

The Lord Jesus said, “For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when He comes in His glory, and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels” (Luke 9:26). Many people regard Jesus as a great moral teacher, but then they feel free to disagree with Him or ignore Him. What Jesus says about moral issues embarrasses some Christians. They imagine that Jesus doesn't care whether they live righteously or not. They listen to what He says about salvation, but ignore what He says about repentance. They want Jesus as their Savior, but not as their Lord and Master. They want all of His promises, but they dismiss His commandments.

How we respond to the Lord matters, and what we teach and practice will affect how the Lord judges us. Second Peter 2:3 speaks about some disobedient false teachers. The apostle Peter said, “and in their greed they will exploit you with false words; their judgment from long

ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.” The Lord is not asleep or idle; He sees and knows what the righteous and the wicked are doing. He will judge us all.

Peter explains, “For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment; and did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly; and if He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by reducing them to ashes, having made them an example to those who would live ungodly lives thereafter; and if He rescued righteous Lot, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men (for by what he saw and heard that righteous man, while living among them, felt his righteous soul tormented day after day by their lawless deeds), then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment” (2 Peter 2:4-9). Since the Lord has a record of how He deals with sin, we should take Him seriously.

When we become Christians, we recognize Jesus as Lord. Jesus built the church and purchased it with His own blood (Acts 20:28). When we were forgiven, He redeemed us with His precious blood and added us to the church. The word Lord describes Jesus as divine, as the One who created us. Philippians 2:9-11 says, “God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” Because He is Lord, everyone will be subject to His authority. He is our Lord and Master, and there is no other. As Lord, He has complete authority over our lives on earth and in the hereafter. Second Corinthians 5:10 says, “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.”

Because Jesus is Lord, His Words will judge our souls and determine our destiny in the hereafter. Hebrews 4:12-13 says, “For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.” God knows all about you and me; He knows the good and the bad. He knows our thought and our intentions. We cannot hide anything from the Lord; He already knows all our secrets. We ought to listen to the Lord!

I'm thankful the Lord Jesus spoke because He not only teaches right and wrong but also gives us the words of eternal life. He gives us great and precious promises. Paul said, “For God, who said, ‘Light shall shine out of darkness,’ is the One who has shown in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ” (2 Corinthians 4:6).

Without the Scriptures, without the Bible, we would not know many things. We wouldn't know about where we came from, why we're here, or what will happen to us after this life is over. The Scriptures give us hope of eternal life with our Creator, who loves us and wants to bless us eternally.

The Scriptures teach us about God's grace and forgiveness. When we realize the extent to which God has gone to forgive our sins, we love Him more and more. We are all sinners saved by the grace of God through the gospel message by the blood of Jesus Christ when we obey Him. The message of that salvation is found in Scripture and it's crucial. Paul wrote, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to

the Jew first and also to the Greek” (Romans 1:16). God powerfully uses His Word to reach into our hearts with the gospel. First Corinthians 1:21 says, “For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.” God saves people today through that message preached.

Jesus said, “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day. It is written in the prophets, ‘And they shall all be taught of God.’ Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father, comes to Me” (John 6:44-45). God works in and through the preaching and teaching of the word to convict men of sin and to bring about faith. Romans 10:17 says, “So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.” When we study God’s Word, we come to believe in Jesus Christ and in His teaching. This is why James says, “Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls” (James 1:21).

The Word of God, inspired by the Holy Spirit, causes us to be born again. First Peter 1:23-25 says, “for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God. For, ‘All flesh is like grass, and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls off, but the word of the Lord endures forever.’ And this is the word which was preached to you.” When a person hears the preaching of the gospel and obeys it, God causes him to be born again. The gospel story is filled with God’s love for mankind and His willingness to send Jesus to atone for our sins and grant us forgiveness. This true story comes from God and has all of His qualities. His goodness and kindness lead us to repent. His love causes us to love Him!

Because the gospel is good news, it brings about a joy unspeakable! Sin is bad news, but forgiveness from sin that condemns us, is good news! Hope for eternal life is good news! The Lord Jesus preparing a home for us in heaven is good news! God has spoken through His Son Jesus and in the gospel message. What a blessing!

Peter, James, and John were on the holy mountain with Jesus when He was transfigured. Moses and Elijah were there as well. Matthew 17:4-5 says Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah.” He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.” God, the Father, was well pleased with Jesus His Son, so He distinguished Him from Moses, the great lawgiver, and Elijah, the prophet. God said, “listen to Him.”

Hebrews 1:1-2 says, “God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.” God is now speaking to us through Jesus Christ. If we want to know God’s will, we must go to the words of Jesus and His apostles and prophets that He commissioned to speak for Him. That’s found in the New Testament. Jesus is Lord, and there is no other!

If you wish to obey the Lord, then listen to Him. Hear what He says and believe Him. Hebrews 11:6 says, “And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.” Repent of your sins and turn to righteousness. Confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Be baptized into Christ, immersed in water, for the forgiveness of your sins. God has spoken; let’s hear what He says and obey Him. Nothing is so important!

The Greatest Gift

Today, we're discussing the greatest gift to the greatest number at the greatest price for the greatest benefit. Today, we're looking at the gift of Jesus Christ. We want to focus on the one thing on which we can depend, the written Word of God. The Scriptures have stood the test of time as God's holy and true message. It contains God's truth, God's love, God's commandments, God's promises, and God's warnings. We can get what God desires and what He's doing by looking into His Word. This is why we continually go to the Scriptures. We want to hear what God has to say.

We may receive many gifts, but we have no gift as great as the gift of Jesus Christ Himself. Everything He is and did profoundly affects us all. Because of Him, our lives are more blessed, richer, purer, and kinder. From Him we have faith, hope, and love. Jesus was indeed unique and gave to us what no one else could give. He opened the door to forgiveness, to the church, and to hope beyond the grave. The Lord gave us God's Word, paid for our sins with His blood, rose from the dead, and built His church kingdom.

Second Corinthians 8:9 says, "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich." Because of His sacrifice, we're spiritually rich indeed. Every spiritual gift in the heavenly places can be found in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 1:3). Where would be without Jesus? We'd be immeasurably poorer spiritually and any other way. No one has impacted this world with greater morals and values than the Son of God, Christ Jesus. This world cannot do without Him, and you cannot do without Him either.

Our reading today comes from the Gospel According to John 3:16-21. It points to one of the most well known verses of all time, but there's more from the lips of Jesus than is just found in this one verse.

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he's not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God.

That's a reading from God's Holy Word.

Let's pray together. "Father, we're thankful that Jesus has given Himself as a gift to us. And Father, we're thankful that You have been willing to sacrifice Him for our sins. Father, help us to believe in Him, and to give ourselves fully and truly to You, and to do Your will. In Jesus' name, Amen."

I love beautiful hymns sung with hearts filled with love and praise. I'm grateful to the church at Edmond for decades of singing lovely hymns that encourage our souls.

Jesus Christ challenges us to deny ourselves, to take up our crosses daily and follow Him. We realize this is a great, and life-changing commitment. Christ wants you to change your heart and change your life. The blessings He offers to those who follow Him, however, is greater than we can ask or imagine. Yes, we must count the cost of following Christ; but we must also look to the prize of our high calling. Why should we follow Jesus? Let's examine these reasons.

First, we should follow Him because of His great love. Though you and I have been loved by family and friends, we can't find a greater love than the love shown to us by the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself

for our sins on the cruel cross. No one else has died for our sins, and no one else could. He showed us the love of God and how we should love God. First Peter 3:18 says, "For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God." Our sins separated us from God, but the love of Christ opened the door for us to be reunited with God, so that we could live with Him forever.

Though we were once in sin, He lovingly and sacrificially made it possible for us to be at peace with God through the blood of the cross. Colossians 1:21-22 describes what He did: "And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him." Through love and sacrifice, He brought us to God holy and blameless.

Second, we should follow Him because He brought us the truth. John 1:17 says that "grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ." Jesus described the blessing of the truth in John 8:32, "and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." The truth gives us the standard by which we can judge what is right and wrong, what is moral and immoral, what is good and evil. We need this standard to know what we should be and what we should do rather than to fall for lies and wickedness. The Lord Jesus told Pilate, "You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I've come into the world, to testify to the truth. And everyone who is of the truth hears My voice" (John 18:37). Are you listening to the voice of Jesus?

Peter explains how the truth purifies us and causes us to be born again, "Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, since you've been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God; for 'All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord remains forever.' And this word is the good news that was preached to you" (1 Peter 1:23-25). If we want to know the truth, then we must listen to the words of Jesus found in Scripture.

Third, He is the One who can give us the forgiveness of sins. Few things in life are as troublesome as a guilty conscience. A guilty conscience punishes us and pierces our hearts. It shames us to know that we've done something evil. We regret what we've done, we feel dirty inside, and we long for a clear conscience. First Peter 2:24 says "He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed." The wounds of Christ heal our souls and spirits through forgiveness. Forgiveness means God no longer counts our sins against us; that we're free from the guilt and consequences of our sins.

When God through Christ forgives us, God no longer sees us as we once were. Before our forgiveness we couldn't inherit the kingdom of God or live in heaven with God. In forgiveness, however, "you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Corinthians 6:11). Through Christ God washed us and made us clean; God sanctified us and made us holy; God justified us and declared us righteous. Second Corinthians 5:21 says, "For our sake he [that is, God] made him [that is, Christ] to be sin who knew no sin [Christ knew no sin], so that in him [in Christ] we might become the righteousness of God." What a blessing it is to be forgiven! What a blessing to be free from sin!

Fourth, He opened the door to the church, the family of God. Jesus built the church (Matthew 16:18); He purchased it with His own blood (Acts 20:28). Paul described the church as "the household of God" and "the pillar and support of the truth" (1 Timothy 3:15). While the church is made up of fallible humans, it is perfectly and infallibly designed by the wisdom of God. It is God's household or family. As God's family, it's filled with people who love God and want to live holy and loving lives. I've seen lives changed, hearts softened, and great sacrifices from those who call themselves Christians. They love, because Christ loved

them. They give, because Christ gave to them. They serve, because Christ served them. There's no greater privilege than to live in the family of God.

Sadly, not everyone who calls himself a Christian lives the way a Christian should live. Some never learned to love, or to forgive, or to serve as Christ did. Some fall victim to every kind of temptation. Yes, some lust after the flesh, lust after the eye, and fall to the pride of life. If we see only the weaknesses in the church however, we'll miss the good, the service, and the love found in so many others. If you call yourself a Christian and then act like you never knew Christ, you need to examine yourself and repent.

Fifth, Christ has given us a righteous way of life that is filled with purpose. First Peter 2:21-23 says, "For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he didn't revile in return; when he suffered, he didn't threaten, but he continued entrusting himself to him who judges righteously." As Christians, we are called to follow in the steps of Jesus Christ. Jesus never sinned and never deceived others.

While we can't be perfectly sinless as He was, we should strive to live godly lives and to speak the truth. We must keep our eyes focused on Jesus and doing the will of God. Hebrews 12:1-2 says, "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, 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." Jesus led the way in doing the will of God, and we must not allow circumstances and sin to keep us from running with endurance in our journey to do the will of God.

Sixth, we should follow Him because He is the Way to eternal life. The Lord Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. And no one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6). The Lord Jesus told the Samaritan woman at the well of the great blessing of eternal life. He said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life" (John 4:13-14). If we wish to have eternal life, then we must not only believe in but also obey the Lord Jesus Christ. John 3:36 clearly says, "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; and whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him." John 5:12 says, "Whoever has the Son has life; and whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life."

What does it mean to have eternal life? It means that there will be life beyond that will last forever and ever. The words of Jesus are the words of eternal life, and this is why we must believe in Him and in what He says. Jesus said, "And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent" (John 17:3). Eternal life means we have a relationship with the only true God and His Son Jesus. He is our Father in heaven, and we become His children.

Seventh, He promised us a place in the heavenly Father's house. The Lord Jesus encouraged the apostles on the night before His death, "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, I would have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. And you know the way to where I'm going" (John 14:1-3).

The Lord Jesus is now in heaven preparing a place for those who believe in Him, who love Him, and who follow Him. That place is in the Father's house. We've been kept in His heart, and now we can live in His house forever. He prepared a place for each one who believes in Him. Peter described that place, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he's caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is

imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Peter 1:3-5). Just think of it, a place prepared for us and kept in heaven that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading! What a blessing!

This great gift is yours, if you'll take hold of Jesus Christ. This gift is free, but it isn't cheap. It's not a gift to be taken lightly, to be forgotten, or to be forsaken. God won't bargain with you; He offers life according to His own terms. He's God, and we aren't. He gives His gift as He wills, and we can't expect to receive it by following our own will and ignoring His teaching and commandments. We can't substitute our way of salvation for His way. We must be wise to hear Him and act according to His words.

Let's pray together. "O Father, we're thankful for the marvelous gift of Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in so many different ways and given us so much. Father, help us to give ourselves to You freely and fully with love and faith. And help us Father to be obedient to Your will. In Jesus' name, Amen."

God is the greatest giver; Jesus Christ is the greatest gift; that gift is offered to all, the greatest number; and eternal life is the greatest blessing for the greatest amount of time. No gift can compare. Amazingly, God offers this gift for free. Romans 6:23 says "the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Revelation 22:17 calls us to take hold: "The Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come.' And let the one who hears say, 'Come.' And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires to take the water of life without price." Jesus Christ paid the great cost of salvation from sin, so He could offer it to you freely.

Will you accept it? Why wouldn't you choose eternal life? I've known some who thought sinful pleasure was a great gift, but the flesh doesn't last. I've known some who thought riches were the greatest prize, but you can't take your money with you when you die. I've known some who were so proud of the life they had, they wouldn't think of following Jesus. They won't deny themselves, take up their crosses daily, or follow Him.

If you wish to follow Him, then trust in Him and believe what He teaches. Stop trusting in your own ways and turn to the truth. Turn from your sins and from selfishness. Out of love confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God and be baptized into Christ. When you are baptized, God cleanses you and sets you free. He makes you His child and adds you to His church. When you meet God's conditions, trusting what God instructs, God blesses you with salvation. Won't you put your trust in Him and let Him bless you? God is looking to bless you and give you eternal life.

So focus your heart on God by worshiping at church. Everyone needs a church family. And there's probably a church of Christ near you. If you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we'll gladly help you find one.

The Second Coming

Many think of the first coming of Jesus, but what about His second coming? Today, we're exploring what will happen when Jesus comes again. There's much confusion about the second coming, and that's why we turn to the Scriptures for answers.

Though some are skeptical, we need not doubt that Jesus will come again. We have God's assurance! Acts 17:31 says that God "has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to us by raising him from the dead." The resurrection of Jesus Christ assures us of the appointed time when Jesus will judge us all.

The Scriptures promise a second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus promised, "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to myself, that where I am you may be also" (John 14:3). The angels said to the disciples who were watching Jesus ascend, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11). First Thessalonians 4:16 assures us, "For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God." Hebrews 9:28 agrees: "Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him."

Yes, the Lord Jesus Christ will appear again in the clouds. Our task is to be ready for Him. We don't want to be caught unaware and spiritually unprepared. On that day He will come with all authority and will judge us all. Are you prepared?

Our reading today is from the Acts of the Apostles 1:9-11. Jesus has arisen from the dead, He has spoken to His apostles, and now He is ascending up into the cloud.

And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was going, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them. They also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven."

Yes, that's the promise that we have from God.

Let's pray together. "Father we're thankful that Jesus Christ came, and Father we are grateful that He will come again. Help us to be prepared for that coming. This is our prayer in the name of Jesus our Lord. Amen."

Since the Lord is coming again, it's only right to ask what will happen and how will He return. The Scriptures clearly teach Jesus will come openly, and everyone will know it. He won't be concealed, secret, or invisible. As we've read, Jesus will come again visibly in the clouds (Acts 1:9-11). Just as He was visible and rose up in the clouds, He will come again visibly in the clouds.

When Jesus appears, He will not come alone. Matthew 16:27 says, "For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done." Matthew 25:31-32 explains, "But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them one from another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats." Not only will Jesus bring angels with Him, He'll also bring back the dead in Christ. First Thessalonians 4:14 says, "For if we believe that Jesus

died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus." He's bringing these departed spirits back so that He can raise them from the dead.

When Jesus appears, He'll come in flaming fire. Second Thessalonians 1:7-9 says, "the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power."

When Jesus appears, everyone will see Him. Revelation 1:7 says, "Behold, he's coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even so. Amen." When those who have rejected Jesus see Him, they will wail and mourn. But the Christian who believes and loves Him has a great promise. First John 3:2-3 says, "Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears that we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. And everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself as he is pure."

When Jesus appears, His coming will be unmistakable. First Thessalonians 4:16-17 says, "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. And then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, so we shall always be with the Lord." Yes, we'll hear the voice and the trumpet of God. Each of these will call our attention to what is happening. Did you notice that we will be caught up into the air to meet the Lord? The Lord Jesus won't set foot on the earth. Instead, He'll be in the clouds; and we will meet Him there. When He comes again, we have to leave this earth for a very good reason.

We do need to know, however, that this audible warning of His appearance will come suddenly and unexpectedly. The Scriptures teach that the Lord's coming will be "like a thief in the night" (1 Thessalonians 5:2 and we simply don't know when Jesus will come again; we know that He will come but not when (2 Peter 3:10). God has not revealed the time. Deuteronomy 29:29 says, "The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever." The Lord Jesus Himself reveals that the day of His second coming at the end of the world is a secret. Only the Father knows when He will come again.

The Lord said, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man" (Matthew 24:35-39). Sadly, some today deny what the Lord said and imagine they know exactly when this second coming will happen. They imagine they know more than Jesus. Many have predicted a specific time and deceived others in the matter; and when the time passes unchanged, they show themselves to be false prophets, they simply don't know.

Many people apply things found earlier in Matthew 24 to the second coming. People frequently speak of things that actually apply to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD, and that includes the destruction of the temple. The passage, Matthew 24, clearly speaks of what is to happen to Jerusalem and in Jerusalem, and not what's to happen worldwide. Jesus prior to verse 35 reveals numerous things to happen to people that were alive at that time and the need to escape Jerusalem. On the other hand verse 36, speaking of the destruction of the heavens and earth begins with the word "but," and is followed by an uncertainty of time. The destruction of Jerusalem is not the destruction of the world.

Three things will happen when Jesus comes again. First, Jesus will resurrect every person, good or evil, from the grave. John 5:28-29 says, "Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment." The resurrection mattered to Paul, and he spoke of its importance before the governor Felix. He said, "But this I admit to you, that according to the Way which they (that is, the Jews) call a sect I do serve the God of our fathers, believing everything that is in accordance with the Law and that is written in the Prophets; having a hope in God, which these men (that is, the Pharisees) cherish themselves, that there shall certainly be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked. In view of this, I also do my best to maintain always a blameless conscience both before God and before men" (Acts 24:14-16). Paul wanted to be right with God at the resurrection.

Death is the separation of the body from the spirit (James 2:26), but resurrection is when the Lord will raise the dead, after which He will give them a new body. First Corinthians 15:50-52 explains, "I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed." At the resurrection, we'll receive bodies designed for eternity.

Second, when Jesus comes again, the earth and its works will be burned up. We will leave this earth, because God has decided to destroy it. Second Peter 3:7 says, "But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly." Again in verse 12 Peter notes, "the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat!" As we noted from 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9, Jesus will come in flaming fire, taking vengeance on those that do not know God and those who do not obey the gospel. Revelation 21:1 speaks of John's vision, "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more." All that we know of the present heaven and earth will have vanished, destroyed by fire and intense heat.

Third, when Jesus comes again, He will make a final judgment on all people, the good and the bad. Second Corinthians 5:10 says, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he's done, whether good or bad." The Lord Jesus Himself taught, "When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He'll sit on His glorious throne. And all the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; and He'll put the sheep on His right, and the goats on His left" (Matthew 25:31-32). In verse 46 he clearly shows their eternal destiny: "These (goats who failed to serve the Lord) will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

The Lord Jesus proclaimed, "He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day" (John 12:48). You and I won't be judged by our culture, by the creeds of men, or by human traditions. We will be judged by the words of Jesus found in the New Testament. Some think the words of Jesus only appear in red letters, but we can consider all the words of the New Testament as God's teaching. Paul said, "If anyone thinks he's a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment" (1 Corinthians 14:37). The written word will be found at the Judgment. Revelation 20:12 says, "And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds."

If our final destiny will be decided at the second coming, shouldn't we get ready for that day? Shouldn't we think about the destruction of the world and of our eternal destiny? Second Peter 3:11 says, "Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and

godliness?" Do you look forward to the coming of Jesus or would you mourn at his coming? Revelation 1:7 says, "Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen." People who don't know Him, people who don't believe in Him, and people who don't love Him will mourn at His coming.

I would rather be like Paul who said, "For I am already being poured out (that is, he is close to the time when he would die) as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I've fought the good fight (have you), I've finished the course (have you), I've kept the faith (have you); in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing" (2 Timothy 4:6-8). Will you love His appearing? Will you receive that crown?

Let's pray together. "Father, we're thankful for the promise of the second coming and Father we know that You are coming for Your own people to be glorified in them and for them to glorify You, but we also know that the second coming will be a time of wrath against those who are disobedient. Father, help us to be prepared, help us to love You and to serve You always, and to stand fast in our faith. In Jesus' name, Amen."

First John 2:28 says, "Now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming." The Lord Jesus said, "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when He comes in His glory, and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels" (Luke 9:26). If we wish to enter the kingdom of heaven we cannot be ashamed of Him or of His words. We must love Him, obey Him, and abide in Him.

There is a difference between being "in" Christ and "out of" Christ. Many people have rejected or quit believing in Christ Jesus. Others have bought into a false gospel and failed to follow the Scriptures. Such people will be surprised on judgment day when they won't be allowed to enter heaven. The wise hear the words of Jesus and do them; the foolish hear the words of Jesus but fail to do them. The wise will stand, but the foolish will fall (Matthew 7:24-27).

So be wise and prepare for the second coming of Christ. You must be holy and blameless at His coming. By God's grace through the blood of Jesus Christ you can be right with God. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, repent of your sins, confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and be baptized into Christ Jesus. Galatians 3:26-27 says, "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ." To be children of God we must be baptized into Christ, immersed in water for the forgiveness of our sins. Then we must be faithful to the Lord till the end. If you've quit the Lord, or maybe you've quit His church, it's time to come back, to return.

Focus your heart on God by worshiping at church. Everyone needs a church family. There's probably a church of Christ near you. If you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we'll be glad to help you find one.