

Program Transcripts

September 2022



IN
SEARCH
OF THE LORD'S WAY[®]

SEARCH PROGRAMS

September 2022

Topics subject to change without notice

SEP 4 – I AM ACCOUNTABLE

Accountability is not a topic often discussed in today's culture. But we must realize that each and every one of us will be held accountable to God. Our actions today will have consequences for our eternal future.

SEP 11 – PEACE PERFECT PEACE

Uncertainty, stress, worry, and anxiety have plagued our world since man left the garden. Scripture shows us that the only way to perfect peace is a life within Christ. The peace of God knows no limitations.

SEP 18 – DO YOU KNOW CHRIST

Some think that they know the Lord Jesus Christ, but do they really? Within the Word of God we can see the portrait of Jesus revealed. We should all take time to examine who the Christ is, his plan for salvation, and our willingness to obey Him.

SEP 25 – CHRISTIAN

What does it mean to be a Christian? Who are you, if you call yourself to be a Christian? How does the Bible describe a Christian? The New Testament uses several terms that describe the Christian and help us understand God's will for our lives.

I Am Accountable

We must realize that we're accountable to God. The God who created us will one day hold us accountable for our lives.

God's word is "a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (Psalm 119 verse 105). God helps us understand His ways through the Scriptures. That's why we take them seriously and ask you to pay close attention.

Throughout life, we've been accountable for our attitudes, our words, and our behavior. From our earliest days, we learned that we had to obey our parents, and soon after we learned that we must listen to and obey our teachers. Applying for a driver's license means that we must keep all the traffic laws or be accountable to the court. Getting a job means we must pay taxes or face the IRS. The banks expect us to put more money in our checking accounts than we pay out. Yes, we learn accountability from the very beginning. Why then should it surprise us that we're also accountable to God? Why should we suppose God will not judge our lives? Sadly, some think they have no accountability before God.

But Romans 3:23 says that "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"; and Romans 6:23 reminds us, that "The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Let's take God seriously.

Our reading today comes from a Psalm of David, Psalm 139, verses 1 to 6. And here David expresses the closeness of God and how He knows all about us. "O LORD, You have searched me and known me. You know when I sit down and when I rise up; You understand my thoughts from afar. You scrutinize my path and my lying down, And are intimately acquainted with all my ways. Even before there is a word on my tongue, Behold, O LORD, You know it all. You have enclosed me behind and before, And laid Your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is too high, I cannot attain to it." That's a reading from God's holy word.

Let's pray together. "Father we're thankful that You are so close to us to bless us and to help us in times of need. And Father help us to remember how close You are, and to live holy lives and obey Your will. In Jesus name, Amen."

Ezekiel 18:20 says, "The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not suffer for the iniquity of the father, nor the father suffer for the iniquity of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself." Now you may have a saintly father or mother, but you'll be judged by what you have done. You may have saintly children, but that will not sanctify you. God will judge each one individually on whether he has believed and how he or she has lived.

Hebrews 4:12 to 13 says, "For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him with whom we must give an account." Yes, God sees, hears, and knows all about us. And one day He will hold us accountable for our works.

Now this passage, Hebrews 4, reminds us first of all that God can discern the thoughts and the intentions of our hearts. He knows all about us. Psalm 139:2 says, "You know me when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar." People can't read one another's minds, but our thoughts are not hidden from God. John 2:23 to 25 tells us about the Lord Jesus, "Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing. But Jesus on his part did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people and needed no one to bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man."

The LORD said to Samuel when he was about to anoint one of the sons of Jesse as king of Israel in 1 Samuel 16:7, he said "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected

him. For the LORD sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart." God knew David's heart and made him king. The Lord looks at your heart too.

David once said in Psalm 26 verses 2 to 3, "Prove me, O LORD, and try me; test my heart and my mind. For your steadfast love is before my eyes, and I walk in your faithfulness." Would you ask God to try and test your heart and mind? What would He find in you? God looks at the hearts of all men and seeks those who will follow Him. In 2 Chronicles 16 and verse 9, Hanani the seer told Asa the king of Judah, "For the eyes of the LORD move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His." Does your heart belong to God? We must realize from Hebrews 4:12 to 13 that no one and nothing is hidden from the Lord.

Job 34:21 says, "For his eyes are on the ways of a man, and he sees all his steps." Again, Psalm 11 verse 4 says, "The LORD is in his holy temple; the LORD's throne is in heaven; his eyes see, his eyelids test the children of man." Proverbs 15:3 says that "The eyes of the LORD are in every place, Watching the evil and the good." David could say in Psalm 139:11 to 12, "If I say, 'Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light about me be night,' even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is bright as the day, for darkness is as light with you."

The Lord Jesus said in Luke 12:2 to 3, that "Nothing is covered up that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. Therefore whatever you've said in the dark shall be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in private rooms shall be proclaimed on the housetops."

The apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 4:4 to 5, "For I'm not aware of anything against myself, but I'm not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me. And therefore, do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God."

We shouldn't imagine that God has no care for us. He wants us to enjoy life, but He wants us to enjoy life in righteousness. I hear people justify their sins by saying, "Well God wants me to be happy," but love for God "does not rejoice in unrighteousness" (1 Corinthians 13 verse 6). Rejoicing over sinful behavior never, never pleases God. Solomon wrote in Ecclesiastes 11:9 to 10, "Rejoice, O young man, in your youth, and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth. Walk in the ways of your heart and in the sight of your eyes. But know that for all these things God will bring you into judgment. (And so) Remove vexation from your heart, and put away pain from your body, for youth and the dawn of life are vanity." Later Solomon reminds us in Ecclesiastes 12:13 to 14, that "The end of the matter (here it is); all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil."

Third, from Hebrews 4:12 to 13 we understand that we must give an account of ourselves to the Lord Himself. God wants us to be honest about our lives and the intentions of our hearts. Psalm 51 and verse 6 says, "Behold, you (that is God) you delight in truth (and that truth that takes place) in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart." We can't deceive or hide from God. Romans 2 and verse 16 reveals that on the day of judgement, "according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus."

Romans 14:8 to 12 says, "For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living. And so, why do you pass judgment on your brother? (he says in chapter 14) Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we all will stand before the judgment seat of God; for it is written, 'As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.' So then each of us will give an account of himself to God."

John 12:48 reveals the standard of our judgment, "The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day." People often say they love

Jesus, but they don't agree with Him. Well agree or not, the Lord Jesus will judge us by His words, not by our opinions or desires. Please don't imagine that this passage refers only to the red letters that are found in your New Testament. Now whether you read the four gospel accounts, Acts, the epistles, or the book of Revelation, every word of the New Testament is from the Lord. The apostle Paul by inspiration said in 1 Corinthians 14:37 to 38, that "If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment. But if anyone does not recognize this, he is not recognized."

We must take seriously God's commandments and the Lord's warnings. And I fear that many have the notion that the Lord doesn't really mean what He says. The Lord Jesus, who will judge us on the last day, said in Luke 11:31 to 32, that "The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with the men of this generation and condemn them, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here. The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here."

Many people regard the grace of God as something cheap and easy. Since salvation by grace is a gift, they believe that they can take it for granted and live any way they please. Well when people fail to remain faithful and lack the qualities of Christian virtue, they're "blind and short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins" (2 Peter 1 verse 9). Some would say "well, just as I am" I come that way, sadly stay that way. They don't take up a cross daily or follow the Lord; instead, they continue living just like they did and those who don't even know God.

1 Corinthians 10 reminds us of the Israelites as they were coming out of the land of Egypt on the way to the Promised Land. Verses 6 to 12 says, "Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did. Do not be idolaters as some of them were; as it is written, 'The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.' We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day. We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did and were destroyed by serpents, nor grumble, as some of them did and were destroyed by the Destroyer. Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come. Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall." We too can fall into the ways of sin and lose our souls.

Peter knew what could happen when people fall back into sin. 2 Peter 2:20 to 22 says, "For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, (that is they became Christians) and they are again entangled in them and are overcome, (he says) the last state has become worse for them than the first. For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment handed on to them. It has happened to them according to the true proverb, 'A dog returns to its own vomit,' and, 'A sow, after washing, returns to wallowing in the mire.'" Yes, a Christian who turns to his old sinful ways is in a worse condition than he was before he became a Christian.

Now this matters, my friend. You may have gone back into sin. You may once have been faithful to the Lord, attending worship every Lord's Day but have stopped attending in more recent days. You may have decided to leave the church altogether. Remember, Jesus built His church and purchased it with His precious blood (Acts 20:28). When you quit being part of the Lord's church, you quit the Lord's will for your life. When you quit the church, you show that you no longer value the blood that Jesus poured out to purchase the church and to purchase you.

The Lord God said to Israel in Ezekiel 18:30 to 32, "Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, declares the Lord GOD. Repent and turn from all your transgressions, lest iniquity be your ruin. Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed, and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the

death of anyone, declares the Lord GOD; so turn (that is, repent), and live." Now what God said then to Israel, He's saying to you and me today. Turn back from worldly ways, turn back to the Lord.

Let's pray. "Father we're grateful for Your love, we're grateful for Your grace, we're thankful for all the goodness that You give to us, through our Lord Jesus Christ, and through the blood that He shed. And Father help us to live in such a way that we honor Your name, and glorify You. Help us to love You and to be obedient to Your will every day of our lives. In Jesus name, Amen."

The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 7:21, "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." Hebrews 5:8 to 9 reminds us, that "Although He (that is Jesus) was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation." Now talking faith and living your faith are two different things. While we can't earn our salvation by meritorious works, God does expect us to have an obedient faith. Paul realized that the grace and apostleship he received from the Lord Jesus Christ led him to bring about the obedience of the faith (Romans 1 verse 5).

Now God expects us to have a change of heart that leads to a change in our behavior. Paul told the pagan philosophers in Acts 17:30 to 31, "Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead." Now repentance is not optional for anyone who fixes their hope in Christ. The Lord will judge us on whether we have repented.

You can become a Christian by being united with Christ. So put your faith in Him as the Son of God, repent of your sins, confess Him before others, and be baptized into Christ. Now baptism is when those outside of Christ are united and come into Christ to be forgiven of their sins and to be blessed, and to become children of God. The Lord washes away our sins whenever we're baptized (Acts 22 verse 16). And the Lord unites us with Christ when we're baptized (Romans 6, chapter 6 verses 4 to 5). And that's why we need to be baptized. Why not come to the Lord today!

Peace Perfect Peace

In a world filled with uncertainty, stress, and worry, wouldn't it be wonderful to find peace? Today, we're looking at the way to peace.

God's ways are the right ways to find love, grace, and peace, the peace we all seek. God's wisdom has no limitations; He sees and knows all things. And He knows what's best for humanity in every aspect of life. When people follow His will, they find peace; but when they rebel against His morals and His ways, they find chaos, confusion, and misery. Thanks for taking time with us today. We want to be a part of your life each week.

We live in a world searching for peace, for well-being, and for security. We don't know what the future holds; and if we put our trust in things that are perishing, we could end up in great peril. Ecclesiastes 4:6-8 says, "Better is a handful of quietness than two hands full of toil and a striving after wind. Again, I saw vanity under the sun: one person who has no other, either son or brother, yet there is no end to all his toil, and his eyes are never satisfied with riches, so that he never asks, 'For whom am I toiling and depriving myself of pleasure?' This also is vanity and an unhappy business."

Others think they can find peace through gaining power over others or by withdrawing from everyone. But peace is an inward quality that cannot be escaped except through transforming our lives from the things that defile to the things that are pure and peaceable. Ephesians 2:17 to 19 says, "And He (that is Jesus) came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you're no longer strangers and aliens, but you're fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God." My friend, you can have peace!

Our reading today comes from Philippians chapter 4, verses 4 to 9, and Paul gives the way to Peace. "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! Let your gentle spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ.

Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things. The things you've learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you." That's a reading from God's holy word.

Let's pray together. "Father we're thankful that You show us the way to peace. Help us to put our trust in You, and to focus our minds on the things that are good and to practice Your will. This is our prayer in the name of Jesus. Amen."

The apostle Paul wished the Thessalonians peace in 2 Thessalonians 3 and verse 16, "Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in every way. The Lord be with you all." Our God wishes us to have peace; and everyone wishes to find peace in his life, his home, and his community. Following the Lord Jesus does matter! Romans 2:9 to 11 says, "There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek, but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. For God shows no partiality."

Now if you want peace within, Philippians 4:4 to 9 that we read, presents seven steps to peace that are worth remembering. First, verse four says, "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!" I tell you, counting your blessings in Christ Jesus and remembering all the good He's done for you gives us a great reason to rejoice. Knowing that Jesus has forgiven us and will one day take us home to heaven is a great reason to find joy in this confused world.

Second, "Let your forbearing (or gentle) spirit be known to all men." Don't let things rub you the wrong way. Some let the smallest matters control their spirits. Haman got unreasonably angry because Mordecai wouldn't bow down to him and decided to destroy all the Jewish people. Well, Haman ended up destroying himself and his

ten sons. If you let disappointments, anger, and stress overwhelm you rather than letting things go, you'll rob yourself of peace.

Third, "the Lord is near (or the Lord is at hand)." Our God sees everything we do and everything that happens to us. Let the Lord deal with disappointments and troubles. Trust in the Lord; He's not far away. James 4 and verse 8 says, "Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you."

Fourth, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God." Prayer is the answer to the problems of life. Stop worrying about every little thing and take your requests to God. Be thankful for the answers that God has already given. And have confidence that He will be with you.

Fifth, look for God's protection. "The peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension (all understanding), will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." God protects His people. He sets a guard in Christ Jesus around their hearts and minds. And God will give you a peace that surpasses all understanding.

Sixth, control your thinking. "Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there's any excellence and anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things." Now you can fill your mind with every evil and negative thing or you can fill your mind with the pure and good. It's your choice. Take charge of what you think!

Seventh, "The things you've learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you." You have to put into practice the things that you've learned from God, if you want the peace of God. The apostle Paul was a teacher and an example of what is good and right. If you want the God of peace to live with you, then you must listen to Him and practice what you've learned.

If you wish to have peace with others, the Scriptures will give you the path. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 5 and verse 9, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God." Now peacemakers love peace and love the Prince of Peace. Peacemakers don't pick fights; they quickly apologize when they've done wrong. Peacemakers try to get along with others and are forgiving. Paul reminded Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:24, "And the Lord's bondservant must not be quarrelsome but be kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil." You see, peacemakers are kind to all and willing to endure mistreatment in order to preserve peace.

We find peace with others by following the Lord. Colossians 3:13 to 15 says to Christians that we should be "bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, and whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful."

Paul urged the church at Ephesus in Ephesians 4:1 to 3, "Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Now arrogance, impatience, and pride are stumbling blocks to getting along with anyone. Be humble, gentle, and patient with others. Preserve unity rather than pursuing selfish ends and divisive ways.

Hebrews 12 and verse 14 says, "Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord." Yes, it's better to seek peace than to let conflicts arise that separate us from others and from God. Romans 12:17 to 18 says, "Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all." If everybody demands an eye for an eye, the whole world will be blind in one eye, they'll be angry, and they'll be at war with one another. I tell you, there's a better way.

We all face offenses. People may be thoughtless, mean, and cruel. We can rarely control what thoughtless, selfish people do; but we can control how we react to their selfish ambition, their jealousy, and their hurtful ways. Ephesians 4:26 to 27 says, "Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no

opportunity to the devil.” Don't let anger develop into grudges and the desire to get revenge. Your anger will never let you find peace.

James 3:13 to 18 describes how to act wisely with others, “Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.” Wise people listen to God and put His words into practice.

Evil men are selfish and cause every kind of problem. They can't find peace until they become pure. And so we need to look to God's wisdom, not worldly ways. James 4 and verse 4 reminds us that Christians who want to hang on to the values and the morals of this ungodly world will not find peace with God: he said to them, “You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.” God is not someone you want to make an enemy of. Romans 8 and verse 6 simply says, “For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.” Now you're choosing each day whether you're following the path to death or the path to life and peace.

If you wish to have peace with God, then love and obey Him. Isaiah 26:3 to 4 says, that “God keeps him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on him, because he trusts in him. Trust in the LORD forever, for the LORD GOD is an everlasting rock.” Because of Jesus, who gave Himself for us, we can find peace with God. Romans 5 and verse 1 says, “Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Because of Jesus we can be reconciled to God, can be children of God, and can find life forever with God. Because of Jesus, we're no longer fighting with God but are blessed with God.

Colossians 3:1 to 4 reminds those of us who are Christians, that “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.”

Only God can give us peace; you can't find it by hoarding riches. 1 Timothy 6:6 to 10 says, “But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment. For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content. But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.” If you get everything you want except a trusting relationship with God, you really have nothing that you can keep after this life is over.

Some people put their trust in a man-made religion, thinking they can be right with God by appearing righteous. And they foolishly think they can earn their way to heaven. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 23:25 to 26, “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they're full of greed and self-indulgence. You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and the plate, and the outside also may be clean.” People who fail to repent also fail to find peace with God and peace within.

I tell you it's so much better to follow the Lord Jesus Christ, who is a true moral and spiritual guide. Isaiah 9:6 to 7 prophesies about Him: “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his

kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.”

When Jesus Christ was born, a multitude of heavenly hosts praised God and sang, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!” (Luke 2 verse 14). Jesus came to this world and suffered on the cross to bring us to God (1 Peter 3 and verse 18). God wanted us to have a right relationship with Him. 2 Corinthians 5 and verse 21 says, that “He made Him (that is Jesus) who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” I tell you, Jesus is our peace with God.

And so don't miss out on the peace that God gives, the peace of heart that comes from His love and from forgiveness. You may be at war in your heart with yourself over your sins, but God can forgive you and free you from that sin. You may be at war with someone, but God's forgiveness can open your heart to forgive those who sin against you.

Let's pray together. “Father, we're thankful that You give us the way to peace, help us to love You with a full heart, and to do Your will that we may find peace. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.”

Romans 14:16 to 19 says, “Therefore do not let what is for you a good thing be spoken of as evil; for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. For he who in this way serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men. So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another.” God's way is the way of righteousness and peace and joy. When we live out our faith we become acceptable to God and approved by men. And so we should pursue the things that make for peace with God and man. Christian friend, we should build others up by walking worthy of our faith.

A better world begins with each of us as individuals doing our part to live as God wills. You won't find peace through conflict, through anger, through hatred, or through lies. You find peace when you bring your life into conformity with the will of God. Romans 12 and verse 2 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.”

Now you begin following the will of God by obeying the gospel. The gospel is the story of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. When you believe the gospel and in Jesus Christ, when you repent of your sins, confess Jesus Christ as God's Son, and are baptized into Christ, you're united with Christ in His death, His burial, and His resurrection (Romans 6 verses 3 to 7). God washes away your sins when you're baptized (Acts 22:16) and makes you His child (Galatians 3:26 to 27). So why not, why not obey the gospel today, be saved, and find peace with God?

Do You Know Christ

How well do you know the Jesus Christ revealed in the New Testament? Some think they know Jesus, but do they really?

We're here to search God's word for the Lord's way. And one way to know someone is to pay attention to what he says and does. The Bible reveals the words and the actions of God through history. And we can't know everything about God, because He's infinite, but because of the Scriptures we can know some things that He has revealed. We can know His will, and how to please Him. And pleasing God is our passion. We're delighted that you spend this time with us. And we want to be a part of your life each week.

Today is a good day to evaluate your relationship with Jesus Christ. How well do you really know the Lord? Many know some facts about Jesus. They know He was born in Bethlehem, taught great moral lessons, died on the cross, and was resurrected. Many realize that He's coming again to judge the world. But how well do you know the heart of the Lord Jesus? Do you know His teaching, what He stood for, and what He called sin? Do you know what He valued, and what He loved, and what He despised? Do you call Him your friend? Does He think of you as His friend?

Some people dream up a Christ they want rather than understand the Jesus Christ of the Bible. They want a Christ who is all grace and no repentance. They want a Christ who is like a genie in a bottle but has no expectations of them and no restrictions on them. The Christ they want, however, is not the Christ revealed in the New Testament. Don't you want to know Christ for who He really is? Do you know the Lord Jesus as well as you'd like? How committed are you to a better knowledge of Christ?

Our reading today is from Hebrews 2:1 to 4, and in this passage we have a writer who is addressing a group of people who have become dull of hearing. "For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we've heard, so that we do not drift away from it. For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty, how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard, God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His will." Oh we have an important message given to us and we must pay much closer attention lest we drift away from it.

Let's pray. "Father, help us to be devoted to Your word, to listen and pay attention to the things that You have said lest we drift away. And Father help us always to love You, to love one another, and to love the truth. In Jesus name we pray, Amen."

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, that we may do all the words of this law." God's Word is a marvelous gift to help us understand. It provides God's wisdom, His efforts to save us, and His inexhaustible love for us. The Bible provides an unsurpassed moral law, helping to bring out the very best in us. The Lord Jesus said in John 6:63, that "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life." Jesus came to give us life, and the way we come to know about and enjoy that life is through His words.

God's word is a treasure. It comes as a unique, written revelation from the true and living God. Nothing else compares. The Bible is inspired and inerrant, because God who gave it is Divine and infallible. David wrote in Psalm 19 verses 7 to 11, that "The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; the precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; the rules of the LORD are true, and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb. Moreover, by them is your servant warned; and in keeping them there is great reward."

The more you study the Bible, the more you see God's greatness and wisdom! Romans 11:33 to 36 says, "Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor? Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid? For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen."

Neglecting to study God's Word will cheat you out of a storehouse of wisdom and knowledge. People study what they think is significant. One day the most significant matter will be where our souls spend eternity. And it won't matter what's in the bank, where we live, or what position we have. What will matter is our relationship with the Lord and whether we belong to Him. Now this book, the Bible, opens up the way to eternal life, so we must treasure it up in our hearts.

Now some Christians study a little but never get as deep into the Word as they ought. The writer of the book of Hebrews saw that some Christians were drifting in their faith and lacking commitment—much like they do today. And he said in Hebrews 5:12 to 14, "For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil." Studying the Word gives us the wisdom to know what will bless us and what will hurt us spiritually.

The prophet Jeremiah reveals God's values. Jeremiah 9:23 to 24 says, "Thus says the LORD, 'Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD who exercises lovingkindness, justice, and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things,' declares the LORD."

Knowing Christ was more important to Paul than anything else. Paul defended himself against some Jewish Christians who criticized him by revealing his Jewish background. And he said in Philippians 3:3 to 6, "for we are the true (speaking of the Jews, the true) circumcision (excuse me, not the Jews but the Christians), (we are the true circumcision) who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ, (Christ) Jesus and we put no confidence in the flesh, although I myself might have confidence even in the flesh. If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more: circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless."

Now these were not small matters to a Jew. And being a Hebrew of Hebrews meant he retained his dedication to Law, even though he grew up in a Greek city. He spoke Hebrew and was a student of the great Jewish teacher, Gamaliel. Paul was a Jew to his very core. But Paul, as he, even though he could boast of a deep and spotless Jewish record; this really meant nothing to him. He wanted Christ!

Paul said in Philippians 3:7 to 11, "But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I've suffered the loss of all things and counted them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, no, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead." What are you willing to give up to know Jesus Christ? At the resurrection, you'll wish you had done like the apostle Paul and had given up everything to know Christ.

How can we know Jesus Christ? Well, you won't know Him by simply reasoning on your own. Some think they can know God by observing nature. Oh, I love the great outdoors, the woods, and the lakes. One

can learn a few things about God from nature. Romans 1:18 to 20 says: "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse."

Oh yes, nature teaches us there is an all-knowing, all powerful, all-wise God, who created the universe to bless, but nature cannot teach us what we need to know about Him as a person or how to be saved and have eternal life. 1 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 (the message preached) to save those who believed." God gave us this message by the preaching of the apostles, and he gave it to us to save us. And we must know the Lord's message to know the Lord.

Romans 10:14 to 17 says, "How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they're sent? As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!' But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, 'Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?' So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ (or the word of God)." Now the more you study, the deeper your faith will be and the better you'll know Christ.

John 20:30 to 31 says, "Now Jesus did many other signs (that is miracles) in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." While the Bible does not reveal everything Jesus did or said, it is sufficient to lead us to faith and to eternal life.

Again, 1 John 5:11 to 13 says, "And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; and whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life." The word of God is dependable. It gives us the most important knowledge we'll ever need, the knowledge of how to gain eternal life in heaven.

So, we must learn all we can about the Lord. Luke praised the Bereans in Acts 17 verse 11. Whenever he said, "Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily, to see whether these things were so." They wanted to know the truth about Jesus, so they examined the Scriptures to find the truth. They were not content merely to hear what was said; they checked Paul out. And we too must examine the things that we hear to determine if they are true to God's Word. Now many people just accept what some preacher or their church says. And they don't realize this might lead them into error or give them false hope.

You see, the devil loves to pretend he is religious and he counterfeit's Christianity. Paul dealt with people who claimed to be apostles but were frauds. He explained in 2 Corinthians 11:13 to 15, "For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, they disguised themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it's no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds." Now these false apostles exploited the people, trying to get them to follow their deceitful ways and false teaching. The devil is not your friend, he's never been your friend; and he'll do anything to keep you from knowing the truth of the gospel. Can you distinguish the real Jesus Christ from the fraudulent Satan? What some criticize in religion didn't come from Jesus but came from Satan.

The Lord Jesus exposed the devil in John 8:44. The Lord said "He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own

character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.” The devil tells lies that people buy into and follow. And people who don't study as they ought can easily embrace a half-truth.

Now this explains why Paul urged Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:15 to “Be diligent (King James says to study) to (be diligent to) present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth.” We must know the Word well enough to separate what it says, when and how it speaks, and what is the context. We must handle the truth accurately and not be persuaded by people who don't know what is in the Bible or what applies to Jews in the Old Testament and what applies to Christians in the New.

If we fail to study God's word, we may fall for the devil's lies and be deceived. Now while some say it doesn't matter what you believe, the Bible always, always, always makes what we believe vitally important to our souls. The Lord expects us to search the Scriptures so that we might know the truth. And so I ask you, are you studying God's Word daily? Are you listening to the things that it teaches? Do you know the books of the Bible? Have you really looked into the things in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, to know about the character of Jesus? Have you understood how the church began by studying the book of Acts? Have you read through the epistles of Paul, and the general epistles from Hebrews up through Jude? And have you looked at the book of Revelation? Do you know the word of God, and are you close to Him?

Let's pray together. “Heavenly Father we're thankful for Your love, we're thankful for Your word, that teaches and blesses our lives. And Father we pray that in all things we may come to love You more and more, to serve You freely from a full heart, and to be the kind of people who glorify Your name. May your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. In Jesus name, Amen.”

Some who claim to know Christ don't really know Him. Here is how Scripture determines who knows Christ. 1 John 2 verses 3 to 6 says, “And 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 does not 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. By this we know that we are in Him: the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.”

Now knowing Christ means keeping His commandments. Obeying the Lord shows our love is full-grown. People who worship one day but live sinful lives the next actually cause the shame, cause shame on the name of the Lord. Now loving the Lord means living as a Christian every day. It means turning away from sin and following the Lord with a whole heart.

People who claim they know Christ but live wicked lives will one day hear the Lord say, “I never knew you. Depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.” Now knowing Christ is the only thing that will matter at Judgment Day. If we love and follow Him, He will say He knows us.

To become a Christian, trust in the Lord, repent of your sins, confess Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, and be baptized into Christ. Now baptism is an immersion in water in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 2 verse 38). Now in baptism the Lord will wash away your sins (Acts 22:16) and add you to His church. You'll be baptized into Christ, and you'll be united with Him (Romans 6:3 to 7). And nothing is more important than having that right relationship with Jesus Christ.

Christian

What does it mean to be a Christian? And who are you, if you call yourself a Christian? How does the Bible describe a Christian?

When you mention the word “Christian,” people often identify the word based on their personal experiences. And some of those experiences have been good, some not so good, and some confusing. Some who call themselves Christians fail to walk worthy of the name that they wear, some lose sight of the faith, and some only call themselves Christians because their parents were. Sadly, some have never considered what the Bible teaches about who is a Christian and what it means to wear the name of Jesus Christ. Our task today is to consider what God says about being a Christian. Thanks for taking that time with us today. And we want to be a part of your life each week.

Now wearing a cross is not the same as taking up your cross daily and following the Lord. Sometimes identities can be confusing and difficult, and many are confused about what a Christian is. It shouldn't be this way. We ought to be able to identify what it means to be a disciple of Christ by looking into the New Testament. God's revealed definition of a Christian in the New Testament provides a picture of true Christianity. And God reveals what He wills for His people, how they should live, what they should believe.

The Lord Jesus you remember said in Matthew 7:21, that “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.” You see, the Lord Himself distinguishes between those who follow Him and those who don't. We need to take what God says seriously, since He alone is the Judge of all people. He doesn't judge by opinion polls or by what the current culture thinks. His words will judge us on the last day.

Our reading today comes from 1 Peter chapter 4, verses 14 to 16. This was written at a time in which many of the people didn't understand Christianity, and were very critical of it, and reviles people who called themselves Christians. “If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler; but if anyone suffers as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name.” Yes, the name of Christian glorifies God. Let's pray together. “Father we're thankful that we can wear the name of Your Son, that we can follow after Him, and take up our crosses. We pray Father that You will bless us always as we strive to love You and to serve You. And may Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. In Jesus name, Amen.”

When we call ourselves Christians, we're identifying with Jesus Christ. When we wear a cross, or maybe we have one of those fish symbols that say IXTHUS, that is Jesus Christ, God's Son and Savior, or maybe we put Christian stickers on our cars, we're claiming a relationship with Jesus Christ and naming His name. The term “Christian” is used only three times in the New Testament and refers to one “who belongs to Christ” or “the Christ-people.” Scripture uses it as a noun, not an adjective.

In Acts 14:17 that passage says that “the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.” Now some say “Christian” in this passage was a term of ridicule, but the word “called” here is an unusual one. It's only used to speak of what God names or calls. Isaiah 62 and verse 2 says, “And the nations will see your righteousness, And all the kings your glory; And you will be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD will designate.” For this prophecy speaks of the coming Messiah and His kingdom, the church that wears His name. Colossians 3 and verse 17 says, “And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.”

In Acts 26, Paul was on trial before King Agrippa and reminded the king of Jesus Christ, because the things Jesus did were not done in a corner. Now Paul was confident King Agrippa believed the prophets. And Agrippa replied to Paul, “well now ‘in such a short time would you persuade me to be a Christian?’

And Paul said, 'Whether short or long, I would to God that not only you but also all who hear me this day might become such as I am—except for these chains' (Acts 26:28 to 29).

Now if I'm a "Christian," belonging to Jesus Christ, do people know it? Can they tell by my actions, my speech, my faith, and my deeds? Acts 4:13 says, "When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus." Now, 1 Peter 4:14 to 16 says, as we've read, that "If you're reviled for the name of Christ, you're blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler; but if anyone suffers as a Christian, he's not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name."

Wearing the name of Christ is a great privilege and has many facets. We want to look at what words the New Testament uses to describe a Christian. Christians were first disciples of Christ, and then called Christians. Now, disciples were not only students, they were actually imitators of the master that they followed. Now, if I'm a disciple of Christ, do I really follow Jesus? Do I know His teachings, and do I imitate Him? You see, true disciples continue or abide in Christ's words (John 8 and verse 31). True disciples love one another (John 13:34 to 35). And proven disciples bear fruit that glorifies God (John 15 and verse 8).

Well, children of God are also thought of as Christians. John 1:12 to 13 says, "But to all who did receive him (that is Jesus), who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God." Now if I as a Christian am a child of God, it's because God determined that, not my feelings or assumptions. Now we can read in Scripture who is a child of God. Galatians 3:26 to 27 says, "For in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ." You see, Christians are baptized believers, who have obeyed the gospel and have been buried and raised with Christ in baptism (Romans 6:3 to 7). And if I'm a child of God, do people know that I fear God? 1 Peter 1:17 says, "And if you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each man's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay upon earth."

Christians are brothers and sisters in Christ. In Romans 1:13 and many other places, Paul spoke to the Christians in Rome as brothers and sisters. Now if I'm a brother in Christ, do I have brotherly love? The Lord Jesus said in John 13:34 to 35, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. And by this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." Peter speaks of virtues that all Christians should develop in 2 Peter 1, verses 5 to 8, he said "Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence (that is virtue), knowledge, and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. For (he says) if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."

On another occasion John calls Christians "friends." 3 John 14 says, "The friends greet you. Greet the friends by name." If you are a friend, are you friendly to God? Are you a friend to Jesus? The Lord Jesus said in John 15:13 to 14, "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. And you are My friends if you do what I command you." James 2:23 says that Abraham was "called the friend of God." Now how we live determines our friendships. James 4 and verse 4 says, "Do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God." You can't make friends with worldly, sinful ways and remain friends with God. You see, the "world" as James speaks of it has no room for God in it. Be a friend to God!

Not only that, but Christians are also "saints," all of them. Every person who is a Christian is also thought of in scripture as a saint. Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 1 and verse 2 to the church of God which is at Corinth, "to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling, with all who in every place

call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours.” Now to be sanctified means to be made holy, separated from the unclean and sinful things. And if I am a saint, well do I live a life separate from sin? 2 Corinthians 6, verses 17 to 18 says, “Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.”

More than that, Christians are members of the body of Christ, which according to Ephesians 1 and verse 22 is the church. Being a Christian and a member of the Lord's church revealed in Scripture are synonymous. You can't separate the two. If you call yourself a Christian but have no use for the church, you're actually rebelling against the will of God, yes. On the day of Pentecost the Lord added those who were baptized for the forgiveness of their sins to the believers and apostles (Acts 2 and verse 41). And those who were saved were added to their number, that is the church (Acts 2 and verse 47). Those who were baptized were forgiven and also saved.

Now if I'm a member of the body of Christ, do I recognize Jesus as the head of the church? Do I do my part in the work of the church? Can others count on me? Ephesians 4, verses 15 and 16 says, “But speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, this causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.” Sadly many who call themselves Christians do little or nothing to build up the body or the church of Jesus Christ. They don't grow in faith, or hope, or love. They never think of what they can do to help the church to grow.

More than that, Christians are citizens of the kingdom of God. Ephesians 2:19 to 22 spoke of the pagans in Ephesus who became Christians. And Paul said, “So then you're no longer strangers and aliens, but you're fellow citizens with the saints, and you are of God's household, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.” I tell you there is no greater blessing and no higher calling than to be a citizen in the kingdom of God. Now, if I'm a citizen, do I obey the laws of the kingdom of God, that is the laws in scripture for the church?

Now more than that Christians are heirs of God. Romans 8, verses 16 to 17 says, that “The Spirit Himself testifies (or bears witness) with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.” 1 Peter 1:3 to 4 reminds us, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! And 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.” Christians who remain faithful to the Lord have an inheritance reserved in heaven for them. And nothing could be grander than knowing that we can live with the Lord Jesus forever and ever.

Philippians 3, verses 20 and 21 says, “For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.” One day Jesus Christ will come for His people. And according to 1 Corinthians 15, He'll change their earthly bodies into bodies that are fit for heaven, bodies that are imperishable and immortal. They will be glorified spiritual bodies.

And if I'm an heir of heaven, a fellow-heir with Christ, do I live with eternity in mind and in heart? Do I long to be with the Lord in heaven? 2 Peter 3:10 to 14 says, “But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the

day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! But according to His promise we're looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless."

Oh, it's not enough to call yourself a Christian, you must also follow Christ with your thoughts, your speech, and your life. You must believe what He teaches and walk in His steps. Faithful Christians live their faith, worship with a local church, give of themselves, pray, love people, help the hurting, and share their faith. Faithful Christians spend much time studying the word of God, so that they will not be fooled by deceptions and half-truths. Colossians 1:10 urges us to "walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects." Will God count you worthy of your calling?

Let's pray together. "Heavenly Father help us to serve You from a full heart, to live for You and for Your cause, to love You and to love others. This is our prayer in the name of Jesus, Amen."

2 Timothy 2:19 says that God's firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: "The Lord knows those who are his," and, "Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity." The Christian life is a life of transformation, leaving an old sinful way of life, false teachings, and deceitful ways and turning to righteousness according to God's will. God is gracious to us, but God expects us to change our hearts and our lives.

Titus 2:11 to 14 says, "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds." That, my friend, is how God intended Christianity to be.

And I pray that you'll see the beauty of serving the Lord from a heart of love. Living sensibly, righteously, and godly is the way to hope and peace and eternal life. To become a Christian, put your trust in Jesus Christ, turn your heart and life from sin to righteousness taught in Scripture, and be baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 2 and verse 38). And then God will wash away your sins when you're baptized, immersed in water (Acts 22 verse 16 and Romans 6:3 to 7).

You see true Christianity comes from the Lord Jesus, and it's the Christianity described in the New Testament. And don't settle for anything more or anything less. Don't let the world tell you what it thinks Christianity is; study the New Testament for yourself. There's no substitute for doing the will of God.