

Program Transcripts

January 2025



IN
SEARCH
OF THE LORD'S WAY[®]

SEARCH PROGRAMS

January 2025

Topics subject to change without notice

JANUARY 5 – AUTHORITY

If Jesus is Lord, does that mean He has authority over my life? How does He rule in my life and how do we know what He wants us to be and do? Does it matter whether I serve the Lord Jesus?

JANUARY 12 – BACK TO THE BIBLE

Why should we go back to the Bible? Isn't the Bible an ancient book, and how can it have authority over my faith and life today? Does what the Bible have to say matter? How do we go back to the Bible in the 21st century?

JANUARY 19 – ACCOUNTABLE TO GOD

One day, when your life is over, you must give account to God for how you've lived, how you think, how you treat others, and how you talk. We must realize we are accountable to God for how we live in the present.

JANUARY 26 – OBEDIENCE

What does it mean to obey the Lord, and does the Lord expect us to obey Him strictly? Can I substitute what I like for what God commands? If I follow religious leaders, have I followed God and obeyed His will?

Authority

When we hear the word authority, we may question and want to push back against anyone controlling our lives. We forget that we are created beings and subject to our Creator. We want to recognize Jesus as Lord! If we serve Him as Lord, we'll be rewarded on the last day. We want to hear the Master say at the end of time, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.'

Our reading today comes from the gospel according to Matthew chapter 28 verses 18 to 20. The very end of the book and Jesus is talking to the eleven disciples in Galilee. And He says to them,

“All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

That's a reading from God's holy word. Let's pray together. Father we're thankful that we have You to turn to when we need to know what You will for our lives. Father we're thankful that You have made Your will known to us through the written word. And Father help us to always to turn in the bible to find the truth. This is our prayer in the name of Jesus, Amen.

We must respect the authority of God. The Lord God created us; and we're made in His image. And since He gives us life and provides for all our needs we must respect Him. To act as if we had no obligation to Him or that we're unaccountable to Him is foolish indeed. Romans 14:11 to 12 says: “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.”

Ecclesiastes 11:9 says, “Rejoice, young man, during your childhood, and let your heart be pleasant during the days of young manhood. And follow the impulses of your heart and the desires of your eyes. Yet know that God will bring you to judgment for all these things.”

We may think what we say or do doesn't matter, but God sees us and knows all about us. Morals matter, and our words matter, and our sins matter. Romans 2:6 to 8 reminds us God “will render to each person according to his deeds: to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation.”

We must respect the authority of Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 16:26 to 27, “For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul? 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.” You have a soul that is accountable to the Lord Jesus. He was involved in creating you. Hebrews 1:1 to 2 says that, “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, (and) through whom also He made the world.” You may not realize it, but every person in the world is accountable to Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Paul proclaimed in Colossians 1:16 to 17, “For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead,

so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.” Our Lord Jesus must take first place in our hearts and our lives.

Now Jesus is Lord over all things now and forever. Colossians 2 and verse 10 says, “He is the head over all rule and authority.” Now all means all. All people, all nations, and all things. John 3:35 and 6 says that, “The Father loves the Son and has given all things into His hand. He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.” When you reject and disobey the Lord Jesus, you will not have a home in heaven but will face God's eternal wrath.

The authority of Jesus is revealed in the power of God. Ephesians 1:20 to 21 says that God “raised him (Jesus) from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.” The One who raised up Jesus is the One who has all power, all rule, and all authority.

When Jesus arose from the dead, he told His eleven disciples in Galilee in Matthew 28:18 to 20. The bible says that, “Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “All authority (all authority) has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” The Lord's authority is shown in His command to make disciples. Disciples are people who learn from and imitate the Lord Jesus. He commanded them to baptize. Baptism is when people are immersed in water and united with the Lord Jesus. According to Romans 6:4 to 7.

The commands of the Lord were to last till the end of time, because Jesus will be with us to the end. And we are to obey all that He commanded; we can't pick which we will observe and ignore the others. If we obey only the commandments that we like or agree with, well we haven't really obeyed the Lord at all. We have obeyed our own thinking. Some today believe that they're wiser than the Lord and must edit what He teaches. That's arrogant and it'll lead to destruction. Disciples don't correct their masters; they learn and obey. Jesus is Lord in all things, and we are but servants.

We'll have to face the Lord Jesus at the end of time. 2 Corinthians 5 and verse 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.” You may reject Jesus at this point in time, but you must understand that you have an appointment at the Judgment seat that you cannot escape. You won't face Peter at the gate no; that's a myth. You'll face the Lord before His throne.

We must respect the authority that God exercises through the Holy Spirit. The Lord Jesus promised the apostles in John 14:26, “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.” The Holy Spirit spoke directly to the apostles and taught them what Jesus said. We know what the Holy Spirit said by reading what they wrote. The Lord Jesus promised the apostles in John 16:12 to 13, “I have many more things to say to you, (that is the apostles) but you cannot bear them now. “But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you (apostles) into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.”

Now the Holy Spirit didn't speak on His own initiative or by His own authority. He spoke the words that He heard from God. He ultimately guided the apostles in the first century into "all the truth." I hear people say today the words well, "God told me to do this or that." Did He really? If the Holy Spirit guided the apostles into all the truth in the first century, then they had all the truth at that time. There isn't any new God-given truth being taught today that wasn't taught to them in the first century. If one claims today that God told him something different from what was taught in the first century, then they don't believe Jesus meant what He said. That all the truth doesn't leave room for people to make up new truths today or modern prophets today. Now they knew all the truth. We must respect the authority of the apostles and prophets in the written word. The Lord Jesus promised in Matthew 23:34 to send prophets, wise men, and scribes. Now they spoke and wrote in the first century and delivered the faith once for all. According to Jude 3. The role of the scribe was to write down and copy the words Jesus spoke. They didn't make up new doctrines but spoke all the truth given to the apostles. 2 Peter 1:20 to 21 says, "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." Now these prophets didn't make up their prophecies; they were moved by the Holy Spirit to speak. And when they spoke, they spoke with the authority of God Himself.

We must respect the authority of the written Word of God. Since the written word of God is inspired, it speaks with God's authority. Now one can easily say that what the Bible says, God says. Yes. If we cast aside the Bible, we're casting aside God Himself. Hebrews 12:1 to 3 says, "For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have 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?" You can't ignore Scripture and expect to please God. You can't reject the teaching and expect to have a great salvation. When some people who had spiritual gifts kept insisting on disobeying the apostle Paul, Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 14:37 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." The written word from an apostle ended the matter. They must obey.

The Lord Jesus said in John 12:48 that, "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." Now these words were written down. We wouldn't have known what Jesus said in this verse, or any other, unless the apostle John had written it down. Or one of the others who wrote it down. Now judgment day will have the words of Jesus. Revelation 20 verse 12 it goes even farther: It 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." Yes, the written words will judge us on the last day when we appear before the great white throne of Christ.

The Lord said in John 8:51 "Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he will never see death." You see the Lord expects us to keep His commandments, all of them. He knows when we obey, and He knows if we disobey. Hebrews 4:12 to 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's word is living and active because the Lord Jesus is living and active. He knows what every person is doing. You're an open book to Him! He even knows what you think! We must all give an account to Him!

Now we shouldn't imagine submitting to God's authority by obeying commands is somehow legalism. Legalism takes place when people assume the role of God and make their own human laws or traditions and then bind them on others. People judge over human traditions, now those who do that, are legalists. The Lord Jesus said in John 14:15 that, "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments." He explains in John 15:9 to 10, "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." Keeping God's commandments is clearly how we love Him. And oh, how much we need to love Him from our hearts.

Let's pray together. Heavenly Father we're thankful that You have taught us what You want us to know through Your word. And Father we're thankful that there were those who were scribes who wrote it down so that we might know. Father help us to love You and to keep Your commandments always. We pray You will forgive our weaknesses and sins. And help us Heavenly Father to repent and to do better. This is our prayer in Jesus name, Amen.

Many people think that Jesus won't reject anyone but will save everyone. This is not so. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 7:21 to 23, "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. On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'"

To the five foolish virgins in Matthew 25. You remember they were not prepared for the marriage feast and they called to the Lord to 'open up the door to us, so that we can enter the feast.' But the Lord said in Matthew 25:12, "Truly I say to you, I do not know you." Many people call themselves Christians and friends of God but are not prepared spiritually to enter God's house at the end of time. Wouldn't you hate to hear the Lord say to you, "I don't know you"? Some who think they're close to the Lord will be rejected on Judgment Day because they didn't obey Him or prepare for eternity. Are you prepared?

The Lord Jesus expect us to put our faith and trust firmly in Him and His words. We must love the Lord and turn from our sins to His way. We must confess Jesus Christ is the Son of God and not be ashamed. We must be born again of water and the Spirit, and that happens when we're baptized (or immersed) in water in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of our sins (Acts 2 and verse 38). Now only God can set the terms of our salvation. So don't be fooled by human substitutions or schemes. Submit to the authority of God.

Back to the Bible

Some think going back to the Bible is out of touch with the present, but they misunderstand. The teaching of Jesus found in the New Testament was for all time, including today! The Holy Spirit led the apostles into all the truth, and all the truth means all the truth. The idea that a change in time means a change in the doctrine of Christ is one of the biggest lies ever told.

Just as the Jews needed to go back to the old covenant, so Christians need to return to the new covenant found in the New Testament. Jeremiah 6:16 tells the sad story of Jews turning from God to adopt sinful ways. Jeremiah cried to the people to return; and he said, "Thus says the LORD: 'Stand by the roads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is; and walk in it, and find rest for your souls.' But they said, 'We will not walk in it.' Many today have rejected Scripture. And they say that they will not walk in the teaching of Jesus.

Our reading today comes from the prophet Jeremiah chapter 6 verses 16 to 19. And there Jeremiah as a prophet is very sad because of the direction people are going and rejecting the word of God.

Thus says the LORD, "Stand by the ways and see and ask for the ancient paths, Where the good way is, and walk in it; And you will find rest for your souls. But they said, 'We will not walk in it.' "And I set watchmen over you, saying, 'Listen to the sound of the trumpet!' But they said, 'We will not listen.' "Therefore hear, O nations, And know, O congregation, what is among them. "Hear, O earth: behold, I am bringing disaster on this people, The fruit of their plans, Because they have not listened to My words, And as for My law, they have rejected it also.

Sadly the people of Jerusalem in Jeremiah's day saw their city destroyed and even the temple. Let's pray together. Heavenly Father we pray that we may have ears to hear and hearts that will be listening and obeying to what You teach us. Father help us to go back to those ancient ways and to do what is right. This is our prayer in the name of Jesus, Amen.

While some reject going back to the Bible, there are good reasons for embracing the plea to restore first century Christianity in this twenty-first century. Christians today need to return to the truth found in the New Testament and reject human traditions and unbiblical practices. Here are some important reasons for going back to the Bible.

First of all, we must recognize the eternal nature of the gospel. The gospel was to last until the end of the age. And of course Matthew 28:18 to 20 says that Jesus came to the apostles, "He said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'" The words of Jesus Christ will last beyond this life until heaven and earth pass away. You remember, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words (Jesus said) will not pass away" (Matthew 24:35).

Peter revealed in 1 Peter 1:23 to 25 that the gospel message of the first century that causes us to be born again would remain forever. He wrote: "you have 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 (the gospel) that was preached to you." Now we must take note how people are saved. The Scriptures are clear: people are saved and born again when they obey the gospel truth preached to them.

James 1:18 says, "In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures." For this reason, he later says in verses 21 and 2 of James, "Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves." We must go to the word to find the truth about our salvation. We're saved today the same way people were saved in the first century. Time doesn't change things and it doesn't change the gospel, and men cannot make up new ways of salvation. When they change the gospel, they put their souls and your souls at risk.

Paul wrote in Galatians 1:6 to 8, "I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; which is really not another (there isn't any other); only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed!" I tell you there is only one gospel; you cannot be saved by any change to that gospel.

There is a finality to the gospel preached in the first century by the apostles. The faith, the teaching of Christ, was once for all time delivered to the saints. And what they said in the first century is for all centuries. Jude wrote to the church in Jude 3 "Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints." We must contend for the apostles teaching that came to them by the Holy Spirit. It stands as the whole truth, and it's not optional.

Second, the teaching of Christ demands obedience Jesus said to the Jews who had believed Him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (John 8:31 and 2). Now true disciples will not depart from the words of Jesus. To abide in His words means to make one's home in, continue in, and to dwell in that word. It means one never leaves but remains in His words. The Lord Jesus said in John 12:48, "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." Since we'll be judged by the teaching of Christ on the last day, we are accountable to Him forever.

Jesus 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" Not everyone who claims to be a Christian will be saved; only those who are obedient to the will of God.

As we have seen in Galatians 1, there's no other gospel, no other way to find salvation other than through the one gospel found in Scripture. And those who teach a different gospel will be condemned eternally. The apostle John wrote in 2 John verses 9 to 11 that, "Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God. Whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house or give him any greeting, for whoever greets him takes part in his wicked works." We must not fellowship or support those who teach false doctrines. We don't want to be guilty of their evil deeds.

Third, we must realize that God expects His people to repent of doctrinal error. We should never suppose that all error is moral in nature; one can be in error and honestly believe that what he's doing or believing is correct. John called the false teaching about Christ evil in 2 John 9 to 11. You see the perversion of the gospel was enough for Paul to pronounce an anathema, a curse, on those who teach a different gospel. When people teach doctrinal error, and that error goes unchallenged, people in time may believe that it's the truth. When error doesn't get challenged and shown to be false, people who learn the truth have an obligation to give up the false doctrines and repent of believing them. We cannot be right with God if we hold fast to false doctrines of men.

The Lord Jesus rebuked the church at Pergamum for allowing false teaching to permeate the congregation. And His solution for them was repentance. The Lord said in Revelation 2:14 to 16, "But I have a few things against you: you have some there who hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, so that they might eat food sacrificed to idols and practice sexual immorality. So also you have some who hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans. Therefore repent. If not, I will come to you soon and war against them with the sword of my mouth."

The Lord Jesus also commanded the church at Thyatira to repent of their doctrinal error and toleration of false doctrines. We too should take notice and repent of the false teachings of our time. We must not tolerate false teaching but must turn to the truth. Churches cannot tolerate error and still have God's approval. The Lord Jesus commanded the church at Thyatira to quit tolerating the false teaching of Jezebel. Jesus gave her and her children time to repent and promised to punish her and her children if they didn't repent (Revelation 2:20 to 23).

Paul warned Titus about those who caused quarrels that were dividing the church in Titus 3:9 to 11. He said, "But avoid foolish controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels about the law, for they are unprofitable and worthless. As for a person who stirs up division, after warning him once and then twice, have nothing more to do with him, knowing that such a person is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned." Division in the church is sinful, and those who introduce false doctrines that split churches commit a terrible sin. Because of that, churches must reject one who teaches a heresy that splits the church.

Paul recognized in his own day some who were creating division by teaching false doctrines. He warned the church at Rome in Romans 16:17 to 18, "I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them. For such persons do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites, and by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of the naive." We, too, I tell you today, must mark and turn away from those who cause dissensions, that is splits, and teach deceptive things. Just because someone calls himself a Christian doesn't mean that he is teaching the truth.

God placed elders in the church as shepherds who are to watch after the flock and protect them from error. Paul said to each shepherd in Titus 1:9 to 11, "He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine (sound teaching) and also to rebuke those who contradict it. For there are many who are insubordinate, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision party. They must be silenced, since they are upsetting whole families by teaching for shameful gain what they ought not to teach. Elders have a responsibility to keep the church pure and free from error.

Going back to the Bible means repenting from our doctrinal errors. The Lord Jesus is in the business of saving and purifying. He purifies broken and sinful souls. Yes. But repentance is indeed a gift of God to heal us from the brokenness of sin and falsehoods. The one who supported the lies of the antichrist in 1 and 2 John “participates in his evil deeds” (2 John 11). And true disciples remain in the words of Jesus and His inspired apostles and prophets. When people abide in the words of Jesus, the truth will set them free (John 8:32). And when people repent of doctrinal error, the Lord heals and restores their souls. Now this shows the necessity of coming back to the truth. “My brethren, if any among you strays from the truth and one turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins” (James 5 verses 19 to 20).

Jesus said in Matthew 15:13 and 14 about the Pharisees, who were binding man-made laws that, “Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be rooted up. Let them alone; they are blind guides. And if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a pit.” Why would you put your hopes and salvation in the hands of man-made religion? Jesus declared that human religion and human traditions will not stand before God. God won't recognize churches that follow their human traditions rather than His divine will.

In his Prescription against Heretics, Tertullian in the second century declared that any doctrine not as old as the apostles is thereby condemned by the “silence of Holy Scripture.” He said heresies that arise later than the apostles, “would stand already judged on the mere ground of time, being all the more spurious because they were not even named by the apostles.” So examine the church where you are a member and compare what they teach and practice with the New Testament. If they don't follow the words of Jesus written down by the apostles and prophets of the first century, then they will not stand. If you follow the lead of a blind man, you both will fall. So stand fast with God's word. You won't regret it.

Let's pray together. Heavenly Father we're thankful for Your word which always leads us to the truth and to what is right. Help us to obey Your will always. In Jesus name, Amen.

In our uncertain world, where false teaching and lies abound, we need an anchor of the soul to hold fast to the Lord. The apostle Paul admonished Timothy in 2 Timothy 1:13, “Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.” Now to retain means to hold fast and follow the sound or healthy words that he learned. Paul didn't urge Timothy to follow the world or start his own church the way he likes it. No, he wanted him to hold fast to the pattern already in place. And we too must learn to hold on to what we know is from God and true!

We need to hold fast to the divine pattern of salvation, the pattern of worship, and the pattern of the church. The Lord Jesus has all authority in His church. When we leave the patterns that He set down for His people, we reject His authority. When we fail to take His words seriously, we fail to respect Him. You see without faith, it's impossible to please God (Hebrews 11 and verse 6). And if you don't believe what He says, you don't believe Him.

Accountable to God

In Matthew 25:14 to 30 the Lord Jesus tells the story of how a master dealt with three of his servants. He gave five talents of money to one, two talents to the second, and one talent to the third. The first two servants doubled their money and received the praise and blessing of the Lord, while the third servant hid his money in the ground. You see, he was afraid of his master and thought it would please his master to give back what he had received. But the master rebuked him for being a wicked, lazy slave. Because he did nothing, he was thrown out and punished. And in the same way we are accountable to our Lord for how we've served. Are you a faithful servant of the Lord?

Our reading today comes from Paul's letter to the Romans chapter 2 verses 6 to 11. And there he is talking about God and how God will treat people. God verse 6,

Who WILL RENDER TO EACH PERSON ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS: to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation. There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek, but glory and honor and peace to everyone who does good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For there is no partiality with God.

Yes there is no partiality with God. And each of us will be judged by the things which we think and things which we say and things which we do. Let's pray together. Heavenly Father we pray that we may always come to love You and to count Your will as more important than our own personal desires. Father help us to love what is right and to love serving You. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

The Scripture undeniably teaches that we are accountable to God our creator and our judge. Hebrews 9:27 says, "it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment." The Lord Jesus said in John 12:48 that, "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." 2 Corinthians 5 and verse 10 simply 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." We will indeed give an account for ourselves to God.

By what will we be judged? That might be a question. Well first, we'll be judged by what we say. The Lord said in Matthew 12:36 to 37, "But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned." Our words matter to God. We'll give account for lies, gossip, speaking evil of others, using God's name in vain, and for dirty jokes, yes. Ephesians 5 and verse 4 says, "Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving." We should use our voices to bless others. Ephesians 4:29 says, "Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear." Don't be fooled. You will give an account for your words.

Second, we'll be judged by how we think. The Lord said in Matt. 5:21 to 22, "You have heard that the ancients were told, 'You shall not commit murder' and 'Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.' But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court." Again, the Lord said in Matt. 5:27 to 28, "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not

commit adultery'; but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart." Evil thoughts lead to evil deeds, and what is in your heart matters to God. God said in Jeremiah 17: and verse 10, "I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give to each man according to his ways, According to the results of his deeds." Yes, God knows what's in your heart and He will judge you for ways.

Third, we'll be judged by how we act. Proverbs 15:3 says that, "The eyes of the LORD are in every place, watching the evil and the good." As we've noted from Rom. 2:6 to 11 says God "will render to each person according to his deeds: (now) to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, (they'll have) wrath and indignation. There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek, but glory and honor and peace to everyone who does good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For there is no partiality with God." He treats everybody alike.

Many people think they can live as they please and escape judgment; but what we do affects other people. How we act matters to God. Galatians 6 verses 7 to 8 says, "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life." If you were to take stock of how you act, would you be living to please yourself or living to please God?

Fourth, we'll be judged by our secrets. In Romans 2:16 Paul speaks of "the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus." Now we may be able to hide our actions from others, but we can't hide them from God. God always knows. 1 Corinthians 4 verse 5 says, "Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God." The Lord Jesus said in Mk. 4 verse 22, "For nothing is hidden, except to be revealed; nor has anything been secret, but that it would come to light."

Fifth, we'll be judged for failing to do what is right. James 4 verse 17 says, "Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin." If we fail to believe, we can be lost. The Lord said in John 3:18 that, "Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God." If we fail to repent, and yes repentance is necessary, we can be lost. Again, the Lord said in Luke 13:3, "I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish." The Lord also said in John 3 and verse 5, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of (Heaven) God." Oh this is a reference to baptism. Finally, we must remain devoted and faithful to the Lord. Because Jesus said in Matthew 10:22, "But the one who endures to the end will be saved." You see the Lord expects us to be fully committed to Him for a lifetime!

Sixth, we'll be judged if we leave God's teaching for man's teaching. Paul warned in Colossians 2 and verse 8, "See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ." Paul knew people would not always want the truth but would rather hear a convenient falsehood. He said in 2 Timothy 4:3 to 4, "For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, (healthy

teaching) but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.”

You can't draw close to God unless you're willing to listen and follow Him. You can't expect to be saved if you follow false doctrines. 2 John 9 says that, “Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God. Whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son.” Now preaching a false doctrine leads people to believe a lie and have false hope. I tell you that's cruel and that's wicked.

Some loudly reply well, “Jesus never judged anybody.” Well, Jesus certainly loved sinners. He said in Matthew 7 and verse 1, “Do not judge so that you will not be judged.” But Jesus was in this passage condemning the unfair judging of the Pharisees. The Lord Jesus also said in John 7:24, “Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment.” We all make judgments everyday about many things. We expect people to obey the laws and criticize those that don't. We don't like being deceived and we don't like being cheated. Society judges everything except morality and religion. But we excuse immorality and heresy, because we think God won't judge them. We couldn't be more wrong.

Jesus was full of grace, but He preached repentance. He didn't stone the woman caught in adultery but told her, “Go and sin no more.” The Bible teaches forgiveness but never without calling people to repent. 2 Peter 3 and verse 9 says, “The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.” Now repentance implies that we cease the wrong and do what's right.

Jesus didn't come to earth to leave us where He found us. He came to give us an abundant life and to show us a better life. Repentance is God's way of saying to us that we can and must change to a life of love, of good works, of blessing. Romans 5:6 to 8 says, “For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” Now if the Lord Jesus was willing to die for us, shouldn't we turn from sin.

Jesus didn't come to excuse our sin, or to tell us sin doesn't matter. He wanted something better for us! He bore the sin penalty that we should have borne. Isaiah 53:5 to 6 says, “But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him (on Jesus) the iniquity of us all.” Now Jesus didn't excuse our sins; He knew sin would destroy us. He went to the cross to forgive our sins, so that we could live righteous lives. He wanted us to rise above our sins.

When sin is your enemy, you must take a stand against it. When you do, you're actually showing love toward those in sin. Because Jesus loved sinners, and He spoke against their sin and offered them forgiveness. Jesus spoke against anger, lying, sexual immorality, greed, false doctrines, and laziness. Jesus condemned disbelief, hypocrisy, slander, and betrayal. The Lord who loved us enough to die for us spoke against these things, because He cared for our souls. The Lord Jesus stood so strongly against sin that He said in Matthew 5:29 to 30, “If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be

thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell.” Now if you love the Lord and love people, you’ll warn your friends not to live in sin. You’ll speak about the harmful nature of sin. You’ll not only refuse to participate in sin, you’ll expose sin for what it is—an enemy of God. Yes.

Now God hates sin. And He hates sin because He loves you. I think we need to know that aspect. God’s love for you means that He doesn’t want the things that will hurt you and harm you. And sin is your enemy and it will destroy you. And that’s why He gave us the right direction, why Jesus died on the cross and why we have the opportunity to turn away from the sin. God sent His Son to die for you, to atone for your sins, and mine as well, so you could be washed from sin and live with Him eternally. We owe God so much. And it would be tragic to treat Him as if He didn’t matter at all! When we excuse sin, or act like it doesn’t matter, what we’re saying to God is that we don’t care if sin offends Him or not. And it doesn’t matter to us that Jesus died for us. We need to wake up and see how we’re destroying and condemning ourselves by thinking that sin is obsolete and God won’t judge us for it.

Isaiah 1:18 to 20 says, “Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool. If you’re willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land; but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be eaten by the sword; for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.” Don’t suppose that God will overlook you at the end of time. Get right with God.

Let’s pray together. Heavenly Father we’re thankful that You have taught us Your word so that we might know right from wrong. Help us to have penitent hearts. Father break our spirit and help us to be contrite about our sins so that we’ll turn from what is wrong to what is right. And to love You with all our hearts. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

God isn’t blind or deaf; He sees all our immorality and wickedness. Acts 17:30 to 31 says that, “The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he 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 all by raising him from the dead.” God will hold us accountable for what we do and think and say. Hebrews 10:26 to 27 says, “For if we go on sinning (willfully or) deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries.” My friend, “it is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Hebrews 10 verse 31).

Now we are answerable to God. We’ll face God one day either with or without the help of Christ. Romans 6:23 says that, “the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” If we refuse the grace of Christ, we’ll have to suffer the wages of sin ourselves. If we come humbly, lovingly, and obediently to the Lord, His blood will wash us, make us holy, and justify us. Oh if you are not a Christian, become one. Believe with your heart, repent of all your sins, confess Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. When you’re baptized, the Lord will forgive your sins, cause you to be born again, and make you God’s child. 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.” To be saved, you must be in Christ. And by faith we are baptized into Christ. So get right today.

Obedience

Romans 6:16 says, "Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?" Now our choices determine the direction of our souls. We're either serving God or serving sin. Many are addicted or enslaved to sinful habits and do things that they hate. What they have chosen to do is hurtful to themselves and to those who they love.

It's a sad thing to be captivated by sin, but it's an amazingly joyful thing to serve the Lord. David wrote about God in Psalm 16:11, "You will make known to me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; In Your right hand there are pleasures forever." Serving God is certainly wise. The sinful pleasures of this world bring only temporary happiness and in the end they demand the wages of sin, which is death (Romans 6 verse 23). But following Jesus brings us newness of life (John 3:5), an abundant life (John 10 verse 10), and eternal life. Romans 6:23 says that, "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Our reading today comes from Paul's epistle to Philippi, the Philippians chapter 2 verses 5 to 11. Where he talks about the obedience of Jesus.

Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. For this reason also, 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.

What a tremendous example of obedience Jesus is to all of us. Let's pray. Oh Father help us to obey You just as Jesus obeyed You. To love You just as He loved You. And help us to love Him and to love the truth and to do Your will always. In Jesus name, Amen.

Obedience always begins with listening and respecting the one who speaks. It means paying attention to the words spoken and following them. In life we learn to obey our parents, teachers, police officers, and other officials. We learn that rules matter. One of the great lessons of life is to understand that God means what He says. He doesn't stutter or take back His commandments. He expects people to obey what He said.

The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 11:15 that, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear." He is emphasizing the need to listen carefully to instructions. On the mount of transfiguration when Peter wanted to honor Moses and Elijah, God spoke from heaven in Mark 9 and verse 7, "This is my beloved Son. Listen to Him." This is why Christians follow the instructions of the new covenant found in the New Testament. We don't look to Moses or the old covenant for our relationship with God in Christ.

Listening is not easy; it requires concentrating on what is being said. When people fail to pay attention, they end up doing something other than obeying the Lord. Many folks want to tell God what they want to do rather than listening to what God tells them to do. The first lesson of a first grade teacher is to get their students to pay attention to instructions. In Proverbs 2 verses 1 to 5 a father speaks to his son about listening and being wise. He said, "My son, if you will receive my words And

treasure my commandments within you, Make your ear attentive to wisdom, Incline your heart to understanding; For if you cry for discernment, Lift your voice for understanding; If you seek her as silver And search for her as for hidden treasures; Then you will discern the fear of the LORD And discover the knowledge of God.”

Second, obedience requires that we humble ourselves. The disciples of Jesus all had a longing to be first in the kingdom of God. James and John wanted to sit at the Lord's right and left hand. Matthew 20 verses 25 to 28 says: “But Jesus called them to Himself and He said well, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

Christianity is about humble service not lording it over others. The Lord blesses those who are “poor in spirit” not those who want power over others. God cannot use those who are full of their selfish ambition, because they're not willing to deny themselves, take up their crosses daily, and follow Him. Rather they want their lives for themselves, but in the end they will lose their souls. You must humble yourselves by exalting God in your life. Jesus said, “not My will, but Yours be done.” And we too must have that kind of humility.

Third, the idea of obedience is found in the command “to keep.” Moses told Israel in Deuteronomy 4 verses 5 to 6, “See, I have taught you statutes and judgments just as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should do thus in the land where you are entering to possess it. So keep and do them, for that is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes and say, ‘Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.’” It is wise to keep God's commandments, and foolish to ignore them, and dangerous to break them. To keep something means to guard conscientiously what you are to do. We have no right to edit God's commands to suit our own desires. We must hold fast to His teaching.

Psalms 78 verses 6 to 7 speaks to fathers and encourages them to teach their children about the Lord. “That the generation to come might know, even the children yet to be born, That they may arise and tell them to their children, That they should put their confidence in God And not forget the works of God, But keep His commandments.” The Lord's teaching remains true for all time. And wise Christian parents pass on the faith as it was given, keeping the commandments of Christ, and abiding in His words. Colossians 2:6 to 7 says, “Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude.” We must live our faith, holding fast to the truth.

Fourth, obedience isn't merely hearing; it's doing what one is commanded. James 1:22 reminds us, “But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.” Just because we have heard the truth doesn't mean that we have obeyed it. James 4 verse 17 says, “Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin.” We must not only hear, we must act. The concept of “faith alone” that doesn't act on what is taught isn't taught in Scripture. Faith always acts.

Hebrews chapter 11 verses 6 to 8 says, “By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he

was going. By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise; for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God." God calls us today to become Christians and to follow Him. We must not only hear the gospel, we must obey it. John 3 and verse 36 says that, "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

Now how do we obey the Lord? Well the book of Deuteronomy teaches us how the Lord wishes His commandments to be obeyed. Four things are prominent in this book. First, God desires to be obeyed carefully. Deuteronomy 6:24 to 25 says, "So the LORD commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God for our good always and for our survival, as it is today. "It will be righteousness for us if we are careful to observe all this commandment before the LORD our God, just as He commanded us." To obey carefully means to pay close attention to do exactly what God teaches. The words "careful" and "carefully", those two words, are found 27 times in the book of Deuteronomy in the New American Standard. Being careful shows respect for the Lord.

Second, we are to obey the Lord with love in our hearts. Deuteronomy 5:10 says that God shows "lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments." The first and great commandment is, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might" (Deuteronomy 6 and verse 5). In Deuteronomy 10:12 to 13 Moses asks, "Now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require from you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the LORD'S commandments and His statutes which I am commanding you today for your good?" So love must accompany our obedience.

Third, God expects us to obey all His commandments. Moses cried out in Deuteronomy 5:29, "Oh that they had such a heart in them, that they would fear Me and keep all My commandments always, that it may be well with them and with their sons forever!" In Deuteronomy 8, Moses puts these instructions together. Moses said, "All the commandments that I am commanding you today you shall be careful to do, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the LORD swore to give to your forefathers." You see the Lord Jesus also said to His disciples in Matthew 28 and verse 20, "teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Fourth, the Lord wanted His people to do "just as the Lord commanded," to do exactly as they were taught, not changing the commandments in any way. Moses said in Deuteronomy 5:32, "So you shall observe to do just as the LORD your God has commanded you; you shall not turn aside to the right or to the left." Again, Moses told Israel in Deuteronomy 8 and verse 6, "Therefore, you shall keep the commandments of the LORD your God, to walk in His ways and to fear Him." In Deuteronomy 12:32 says, "Whatever I command you, you shall be careful to do; you shall not add to nor take away from it."

The Lord Jesus understood the need to obey the Father lovingly, carefully, and just as He said. Jesus told the apostles on the night before He was crucified in John 14:31, "But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence." That's the King James Version. The New American Standard says, "But so that the world may

know that I love the Father, I do exactly as the Father commanded Me. Get up, (He says and) let us go from here." As God's Son, Jesus didn't vary from His Father's instructions.

The Lord Jesus is the ultimate example of obedience to the Father in heaven. According to Philippians 2:7 to 8, as we've read, Jesus "emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross." Though Jesus existed in the form of God, He didn't take such strong hold on His position as God's Son that He was unwilling to obey. No, He emptied Himself of all His glory and ability. He humbled Himself and became a bond-servant to the Father. Obedience starts with divesting ourselves of our prestige and recognizing that we're servants of the Father. And we do what He says.

The Lord Jesus was serious about obeying the Father, He was willing to bear the cross. Can you imagine how difficult it was to face scourging and the crucifixion? He endured false charges and mockery. He was spit upon and beaten. Oh He could have called twelve legions of angels to stop His arrest and crucifixion, but Jesus loved the Father and did just as He said. The heart of Jesus prayed, "not My will, but Yours be done." My friend you cannot obey the Father if you hold your desires above His commandments. You cannot obey the Father if you change His commandments to suit your own desires or the times.

False forms of Christianity are never content to listen to the Lord. They add their human creeds and traditions. They blindly go beyond what God says and lead people astray. Paul warned the elders at Ephesus in Acts 20:28 to 32, oh, "I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. "Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears. "And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified." I do the same today. Go to the word.

Let's pray. Father we're thankful that in Your wisdom You gave us Your word so that we might become wise. Help us to be humble and to listen and to be obedient to will. In Jesus name, Amen.

Hebrews 5:8 to 9 says, "Although He 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." Jesus learned obedience by experiencing it. Hebrews 2 and verse 9 says, "But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone." Jesus is able to save us and give us eternal life because He obediently experienced the suffering of death. Our salvation came from His suffering on the cross.

Jesus didn't just talk about doing God's will, He humbled Himself as a servant and did what the Father asked. We too must set aside our wills, our ways, and follow the Lord and His ways. When we desire to do God's will more than follow our own wills, then we have learned to do what it means to obey.