

Program Transcripts

June 2024



IN
SEARCH
OF THE LORD'S WAY®

SEARCH PROGRAMS

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Topics subject to change without notice

JUNE 2 – FEARING THE LORD

Many people no longer care whether there is a God, but is this wise? In this lesson we're exploring what it means to fear the Lord, the values of fearing the Lord, and our need to fear Him.

JUNE 9 – WISDOM

In the Old Testament wisdom describes the practical skills associated with living a successful life pleasing to God. It reveals a willingness to listen to what God says and apply it to our lives, so that we may enjoy the blessing of God.

JUNE 16 – FOOLISHNESS

The fool described in Scripture is one who denies or ignores God and His teaching. He lives for himself and is unwilling to listen to the wise teaching of God. When the fool is rebuked, he hardens his heart against God.

JUNE 23 – THE TRUTH

We sometimes hear people speak about “my truth” and “your truth”; but is there is a truth that is greater than an individual’s conclusion? Can people deceive themselves about life, sin, and the judgment?

JUNE 30 – THE “MUSTS” OF CHRISTIANITY

The little word “must” is often forgotten in today’s religious society, but the New Testament uses the Greek word for “must” nearly one hundred times. Christianity makes demands on us, and there are things we must do.

Fearing the Lord

When we hear the word “fear,” we generally think of being terribly frightened or scared, but there is a different idea behind the godly person who fears the Lord. To him, the fear of God refers to the awe, reverence, and respect shown toward the Divine person. This fear exalts God and it humbles self. Fearing God means taking Him seriously and responding with respect and awe. Solomon wrote in Ecclesiastes 12 and verse 13, “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.”

While the Lord wants us to love Him and to draw close to Him, He also wants us to recognize His power and authority over us. We belong to Him. The Lord Jesus said in Luke 12:4 to 5, “I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that have no more that they can do. But I will warn you whom to fear: fear the One who, after He has killed, has authority to cast into hell; yes, I tell you, fear Him!” I tell you, the Lord matters!

Our scripture reading today comes from the book of Proverbs chapter 3 verses 5 to 8. And there we are encourage to really turn our hearts toward God and to trust in the Lord.

Trust in the LORD with all your heart
And do not lean on your own understanding.
In all your ways acknowledge Him,
And He will make your paths straight.
Do not be wise in your own eyes;
Fear the LORD and turn away from evil.
It will be healing to your body
And refreshment to your bones.

Yes fearing the Lord actually is healing and it helps us. Let's pray together. Father we're thankful that You give us the things that we most need to help ourselves and to draw close to You. And Father we're thankful for the love that You give to us and how often You care for our needs. Help us always to do Your will. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

We live in an age that wants to hear about God's mercy and grace but rarely wants to hear about sin and repentance. Many forget about the change that God wants in our lives. 1 Corinthians 6 and verse 9 says, “Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived.” He says that because many people deceive themselves. You see sin will cause a person to lose his inheritance in the kingdom of God. And the pleasures of sin often dull our senses and harden our hearts to the consequences of sin. Sin can keep us from taking the Lord seriously. Sin keeps us from fearing the Lord.

Some might think fearing the Lord is a negative thing, but the Scriptures speak of the value of fearing the Lord. People often forget the Lord Himself makes a distinction between those who fear Him and those who don't fear Him. Psalm 31:19 says, “How great is Your goodness, Which You have stored up for those who fear You, Which You have wrought for those who take refuge in You, Before the sons of men!”

When the apostle Peter visited the household of Cornelius, he had learned a valuable lesson. Prior to that time, the church spread widely among the Jews but not among the Gentiles. And God showed Peter that Gentiles could become Christians too. And Peter said to Cornelius in Acts 10 verses 34 and 5, “I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality, but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him.” God will bless those who love Him, fear Him, and obey His will.

The Lord's compassion is great for those who love and fear Him. David wrote in Psalm 103:11 to 13, "For as high as the heavens are above the earth, So great is His lovingkindness toward those who fear Him. As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us. Just as a father has compassion on his children, So the LORD has compassion on those who fear Him." Again in Psalm 103:17 to 18 David says, "But the lovingkindness of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him, And His righteousness to children's children, To those who keep His covenant And remember His precepts to do them."

Now the person who fears the Lord will live an upright life and forsake sin. Proverbs 14:2 says that, "He who walks in his uprightness fears the LORD, But he who is devious in his ways despises Him." When a person lives for God, God blesses him. Solomon declared in Proverbs 10 and verse 27 that, "The fear of the LORD prolongs life, But the years of the wicked will be shortened." Again Proverbs 14:26 and 7 explains, "In the fear of the LORD there is strong confidence, And his children will have refuge. The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, That one may avoid the snares of death." When we have confidence in God, we know that He will help us avoid the sinful snares of death.

Psalm 19 verse 9 David says, "The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD are true; they are righteous altogether." Fearing the Lord helps a person stay free from sin, because it keeps him thinking straight. Proverbs 8 verse 13 says, "The fear of the LORD is to hate evil; Pride and arrogance and the evil way And the perverted mouth, (he says) I hate." Christians hate evil but not people. Christians are often misunderstood and called hateful, because they do not approve of sinful behavior. Now Christians don't hate people; they hate the sinful behaviors that hurt and destroy people. Why, I would hate for anything to cause harm to the people I love. When people adopt sinful behaviors that ruin lives and ruin their homes, I will stand opposed to that behavior. Kind people oppose harmful evil behavior, apathetic people don't care how evil corrupts, and malicious people wish evil on others people.

It might surprise you that true Christians hate their own sins just like they hate the sins of others. They hate their own sins, because they know their sin offends God and can separate them from God. Paul wrote in Romans 7:14 to 15, "For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin. For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate." He continues in Romans 12 and verse 9 and he says, "Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; (but) cling to what is good."

Proverbs 1 verse 7 says that, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; Fools despise wisdom and instruction." Proverbs 15:33 expands on this and says that, "The fear of the LORD is the instruction for wisdom, And before honor comes humility." Again Proverbs 16 verses 5 to 6 explains that, "Everyone who is proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD; Assuredly, he will not be unpunished. By lovingkindness and truth iniquity is atoned for, And by the fear of the LORD one keeps away from evil." Now you may think that you can do whatever your heart pleases, but an arrogant person who doesn't take God seriously will not go unpunished.

Ecclesiastes 8:12 to 13 simply says, "Although a sinner does evil a hundred times and may lengthen his life, still I know that it will be well for those who fear God, who fear Him openly. But it will not be well for the evil man and he will not lengthen his days like a shadow, because he does not fear God." Again in Ecclesiastes 11 verse 9 reminds those who are young, "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."

Whether you're young or old, "do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes (that is worldliness and sinfulness makes) himself an enemy of God. Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: this comes from James chapter 4. Yes the bible says that, "He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us?" Where is the Lord in your life? Does He matter to you? We want Him as Savior, but we must also respect Him as our Lord. When we put the world first in our lives we'll made ourselves an enemy of God. We show that we don't care; and there is no fear of God in our hearts. The Lord yearns to maintain a relationship with us and to be our father in heaven.

Now if we're far away from God, it's because we have moved away from Him. He loves us and desires to remain close to us. When we let sin in this world, when we let it into our lives, what happens is that it crowds God out. Yes it moves Him away and soon we have no place for God at all. Hebrews 3:12 to 13 says, "Take care, brethren, (now he's talking to members of the church) that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called 'Today,' so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin." You see, sin will push God out and it harden your heart, so that you may not let Him come back in.

Some people hear the word fear and confuse the right kind of Christian fear that is respect, from the trembling fear of the lost. James 2:19 talks about here James is speaking about the demons, "You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and (they tremble they) shudder." They fear God not because they respect Him but because they know that they will be punished for their wickedness. Revelation 6:15 to 17 refers to the response of kings and great men who recognize that they will be punished for their sins. It says: Then the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong and every slave and free man hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains; and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

My friend if you're living in sin and opposing God, then you should be afraid. Galatians 6:7 to 8 reminds us, "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." Oh, some people mock God by ignoring what He says and continuing to sin and acting like sin doesn't matter. But God knows my friend; God always knows. You can't mock God and act like He doesn't know what you're doing.

When people practice sin and they get hardened into doing it over and over, their love and respect for God begins to vanish. They won't listen to God any more. Proverbs 1:24 to 29 speaks of this problem. There God is speaking to them and He says, "Because I called and you refused, I stretched out my hand and no one paid attention; And you neglected all my counsel And did not want my reproof; I will also laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your dread comes, When your dread comes like a storm And your calamity comes like a whirlwind, When distress and anguish come upon you. Then they will call on me, but I will not answer; They will seek me diligently but they will not find me, (why?) Because they hated knowledge And did not choose the fear of the LORD." By refusing to listen to God, they lost their relationship with Him.

Hebrews 10:26 and 27 is even more specific: it says, "For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a terrifying expectation of judgment and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries." Sadly many

Christians turn away from the Lord back into sin and lose their salvation. And it doesn't have to be that way. If you find that you're continuing in sin, repent and turn to the Lord.

If you've come to the Lord in love, repenting of your ways and obeying the gospel, the blood of Jesus will cleanse you of sin. You do have hope! 1 John 1 and verse 7 says that, "if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin." Yes, walking in the light leads to our being cleansed from sin by the blood of Jesus Christ! 1 John 1:9 also says that, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." I tell ya, God is able to save His own from all sin, from all unrighteousness.

Now when you have Christ in your heart and you have Christ in your life, you can overcome the fear of God's wrath at Judgment. Yes Judgment Day will be wrathful for those who don't believe. And for those who will not obey. 1 John 4:17 to 19 says, "By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the Day of Judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love. We love, because He first loved us." Oh I tell ya, we can find confidence in Christ's blood, when we turn our hearts in love and respect for Him. When we're right with God, we don't have to be afraid. Proverbs 3:7 and 8 reminds us, "Fear the Lord and turn away from evil. It will be healing to your body and refreshment to your bones." Oh turn to the Lord and do it today!

Let's pray together. Oh Heavenly Father help us to take what You teach us, seriously. To believe strongly in what You've taught and to take sin seriously. To put it out of our lives and to draw close to You in every way. This is our prayer in the name of Jesus, Amen.

The one who fears, loves, and obeys God has the promise of being able to live with God eternally. 2 Corinthians 7 and verse 1 says, "Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." The Lord wants us to take Him and His teaching seriously. He wants us to grow more holy as time passes in the fear of God. People who continue in wickedness show they have no fear or respect for God. Many today don't believe in God, don't think you can know whether there is a God, or even care whether God exists. Do you fear God?

We must cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit. It's not merely changing how we act but also how we think and what we value. James 4:7 to 8 says, "Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded." Let's discipline ourselves and strive once again to be God's holy people and turn from sin.

To become a Christian, place your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. He died to free you from sin and rose again to prove that He was indeed the Son of God. Because you love Him, turn from wickedness and strive for holiness. Confess your faith in Him as the Christ, the Son of God; and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, just as Acts 2:38 teaches. Now baptism into Christ is an immersion in water of someone old enough to believe and needing to repent. We have no record of infant sprinkling for baptism in the New Testament. Why not obey the gospel of Christ today? Oh yes.

Wisdom

When Solomon became king over all Israel, he prayed in 1 Kings 3:7 to 9, "Now, O LORD my God, You have made Your servant king in place of my father David, yet I am but a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. Your servant is in the midst of Your people which You have chosen, a great people who are too many to be numbered or counted. So give Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people to discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?" Well this prayer of Solomon pleased the Lord.

And God said to him in verses 11 and 12, "Because you have asked this thing and have not asked for yourself long life, nor have asked riches for yourself, nor have you asked for the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself discernment to understand justice, behold, I have done according to your words. Behold, I have given you a wise and discerning heart, so that there has been no one like you before you, nor shall one like you arise after you." Yes God gave Solomon wisdom, and we also have God's wisdom found in the Word of God! And the more we study God's Holy Word, the wiser we'll become!

Our reading today comes from the book of Proverbs the first chapter the first six verses and really describe what the book is all about.

The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel:

To know wisdom and instruction,
 To discern the sayings of understanding,
 To receive instruction in wise behavior,
 Righteousness, justice and equity;
 To give prudence to the naive,
 To the youth knowledge and discretion,
 A wise man will hear and increase in learning,
 And a man of understanding will acquire wise counsel,
 To understand a proverb and a figure,
 The words of the wise and their riddles.

Yes what a precious book this is. One to teach many young folks the ways of the wise. Let's pray together. Father we're thankful that You have given us so much of Your wisdom and knowledge in Your word. Help us to be faithful students and help us to apply to our lives the things that we know and to do Your will. In Jesus name, Amen.

The book of Proverbs was mostly written and compiled by Solomon although others also joined with him. 1 Kings 4 and verse 32 says that Solomon spoke 3000 proverbs. Now we don't have all of them recorded, but we do have many. The book of Proverbs was written for the purpose of imparting wisdom to those who don't have it. A father is attempting to educate his son in the ways of God that lead to prosperity and life. Proverbs is a treasure trove of wisdom.

Well what is wisdom? Well wisdom in the Old Testament describes the practical skills associated with living a successful life that is pleasing to God. Now these skills show how to deal with difficult circumstances in a creative and godly way. A wise person shows the thoughtfulness required to make choices that are good and to avoid troubles and heartaches. Wisdom is the practical application of what God teaches. Wisdom knows how to apply correctly what God says is right, even when it's demanding.

Well why do we need wisdom? Well the first reason is so that we won't be foolish or make foolish choices. Reading through the book of Proverbs, the fool is repeatedly condemned. Proverbs 9 and verse 6 says, "Forsake the foolish, and live; and go in the way of understanding." Again Proverbs 26:3 states,

"A whip is for the horse, a bridle for the donkey, And a rod for the back of fools." People who think foolish thoughts, say foolish things, and act in foolish ways often bring lots of trouble to themselves and to those around them.

Wise people listen and learn; fools ignore the most basic truths and they suffer for it. Proverbs 22 and verse 3 says that, "The prudent sees the evil and hides himself, But the naive go on, and are punished for it." People who fail to grow in God's wisdom often fall into the traps of evil. Proverbs 1:32 to 33 says, "For the waywardness of the naive will kill them, And the complacency of fools will destroy them. But he who listens to me (that is to wisdom) shall live securely And will be at ease from the dread of evil." Oh it's so much better to prevent a problem through wisdom than to fall to its destructive ways.

Second, we need wisdom to get along with others in this sinful world. This world is filled with all kinds of people. Some are easy to understand and easy to approach, while others are mysteries and hard to deal with. Romans 12:16 to 18 advises us, "Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation. Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men." Now God wisely teaches us how to be patient, humble, understanding, and compassionate. How I wish people who don't know Jesus would follow His ways of love and forgiveness.

Moses said in Psalm 90 and verse 12, "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." I tell you it's wise to remember that we won't live forever on this earth but will one day have to face God and to give an account for how we have lived. We need to be committed to Jesus Christ and try to bring others to Him. I tell you, salvation matters. Colossians 4 verses 5 to 6 says, "Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person."

Now wisdom is personified in Proverbs 8 verses 12 to 21 and it says this, "I, wisdom, dwell with prudence, And I find knowledge and discretion. "The fear of the LORD is to hate evil; Pride and arrogance and the evil way And the perverted mouth, I hate. Counsel is mine and sound wisdom; I am understanding, power is mine. By me kings reign, And rulers decree justice. By me (that is wisdom) princes rule, and nobles, All who judge rightly. I love those who love me; And those who diligently seek me will find me. Riches and honor are with me, Enduring wealth and righteousness. My fruit is better than gold, even pure gold, And my yield better than choicest silver. I walk in the way of righteousness, In the midst of the paths of justice, To endow those who love me with wealth, That I may fill their treasuries."

Third, wisdom should be desired above all earthly things. Proverbs 3:13 to 18 says, "How blessed is the man who finds wisdom And the man who gains understanding. For her profit is better than the profit of silver And her gain better than fine gold. She is more precious than jewels; And nothing you desire compares with her. Long life is in her right hand; In her left hand are riches and honor. Her ways are pleasant ways And all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her, And happy are all who hold her fast." Oh my, what wisdom.

Proverbs 8:10 to 11 agree, "Take my instruction and not silver, And knowledge rather than choicest gold. For wisdom is better than jewels; And all desirable things cannot compare with her." Solomon wanted what was best for his son, so he urged him to listen to his words. He said in Proverbs 4:10 to 13, "Hear, my son, and accept my sayings And the years of your life will be many. I have directed you in the way of wisdom; I have led you in upright paths. When you walk, your steps will not be impeded; And if

you run, you will not stumble. Take hold of instruction; do not let go. Guard her, for she is your life." Yes the wisdom that God gives is life as it is intended.

We must understand that God is the source of all wisdom. Job asked in Job 38:36, "Who has put wisdom in the innermost being Or given understanding to the mind?" These questions are obviously rhetorical and have only one answer and that's God who did those things. The Lord God has given us His inspired Word so that we might know His ways and what He desires from us.

God gave Solomon His wisdom, so Solomon might be a wise king over Israel. And in 1 Kings 4:29 to 30 the bible says, "Now God gave Solomon wisdom and very great discernment and breadth of mind, like the sand that is on the seashore. Solomon's wisdom surpassed the wisdom of all the sons of the east and all the wisdom of Egypt." We too would do well to see the gift that God gave to Solomon. Read the book of Proverbs regularly.

God also gave this inspired wisdom to the apostles. Paul talks about wisdom in 1 Corinthians 2:4 to 5. He said, "and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God." And he explains in 1 Corinthians 2:12 to 13, "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words."

God's inspired words contain the wisdom of God. And that wisdom is for us today as Christians and we need to gain this understanding and then to apply it to our lives. Read the Bible regularly, closely, and slowly. Meditate on its words and then apply them to your life. The greatest source of wisdom we have today is God's inspired word. Many people trust in their feelings or their desires, two habits that can lead to great deception. Someone has well said that, "Feelings come and feelings go, and feelings can be deceiving. I rest my warrant on the Word of God; nothing else is worth believing." I tell ya never sell short the value of God's holy word!

Paul urged Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:14 to 17, "You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. (then he says) All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work." The inspired Word is able to teach, to rebuke, to correct, and to train us in everything that we need to know to be the men and women of God who serve Him.

Peter's last written words remind us in 2 Peter 3:15 to 18, "and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction. You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness, but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen."

I tell you we must grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We must not fall to the distorted views of this world that lead to deception and then to heartache. Wisdom starts with listening to the word of God and following it. Being wise matters both now and in eternity, so be wise!

We ought to be wise in things that are good. Paul told the people at Rome in Romans 16:19 says, "For the report of your obedience has reached to all; therefore I am rejoicing over you, but I want you to be wise in what is good and innocent in what is evil." We need to focus on the good and righteous things and remain free from the evil of this world. Romans 12 and verse 9 tells us again, "Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good." Now we don't hate people, but we do hate the harm that evil causes to people. We see how evil ruins lives, and ruins homes, and ruins communities. Wisdom focuses on what is good and right.

James 3:13 to 18 asks, "Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy. And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace." God's wisdom always blesses everyone, but the wisdom of the world leads people astray.

Solomon pleaded for wisdom in Proverbs 8:32 to 36, "Now therefore, O sons, listen to me, For blessed are they who keep my ways. Heed instruction and be wise, And do not neglect it. Blessed is the man who listens to me, Watching daily at my gates, Waiting at my doorposts. For he who finds me (that is, wisdom) finds life And obtains favor from the LORD. But he who sins against me injures himself; All those who hate me love death." Where is your heart? Do you seek the wisdom of God? I hope and pray you search with me for the Lord's way.

Let's pray together. Heavenly Father we're thankful that You have revealed Your wisdom. Help us to search for what is right and to leave the things that are wrong. And help us always to do Your will. In Jesus name, Amen.

Wisdom is not merely knowing the right things; it's applying what God teaches to our everyday lives. This wise person lives what God has taught him. Wise people are wise because they trust the wisdom of God to lead them in the right way. Proverbs 3:5 to 8 says, "Trust in the LORD with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight. Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and turn away from evil. It will be healing to your body And refreshment to your bones."

Now this isn't merely good advice. It must be a way of life. Trusting God's wisdom and following His teaching is how we please God and build a solid relationship with Him. You can never draw close to God if you don't trust Him or acknowledge Him. God blesses those who are His own. Draw close to God.

To become a Christian, one must believe Jesus Christ and trust Him. He trusts that Jesus' blood can cleanse his sins and that God raised Jesus up from the grave. And that trust leads him to obey the gospel. Obeying the gospel begins with repenting of your sins. Repenting is how God's wisdom changes us so that we can become servants of righteousness. We show love for God when we leave an old way of life of sin and begin to follow Jesus. Now with penitent hearts, we confess our faith and we're baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of our sins. Baptism into Christ means uniting with Him and being freed from sin according to Romans 6:3 to 7.

Foolishness

Foolishness is defined by thoughts, attitudes, behaviors, and choices that don't make sense or show what is appropriate for the situation at the time, it leads people astray. Foolish people don't think before they act but they follow their unhealthy desires. They engage in immoral or dangerous behaviors that may cause difficulties for themselves or other people. Foolish people are often obstinate and unwilling to listen to warnings or to correct their wrongs. Because they lack sound judgment and will not listen to sound reasoning, they face problem after problem in life.

Proverbs 10, verses 8 to 9 says, "The wise of heart will receive commands, But a babbling fool will be ruined." Again Proverbs 14:8 explains that "The wisdom of the sensible is to understand his way, But the foolishness of fools is deceit. Fools mock at sin, But among the upright there is good will." Now a foolish person will believe the lies that he tells himself rather than listen to what's sensible. He'll actually get to the point he despises wisdom and he'll mock sin. He never considers the very thing he embraces will cause his destruction in this life and in the life to come. He'll despise anybody who tells him differently. Proverbs 1 and verse 7 says, that "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; Fools despise wisdom and instruction."

Our reading today comes from Proverbs 4, verses 20-27. And here Solomon is addressing his sons, helping them to learn how to live spiritually successfully.

"My son, give attention to my words; Incline your ear to my sayings. Do not let them depart from your sight; Keep them in the midst of your heart. For they are life to those who find them And health to all their body. Watch over your heart with all diligence, For from it flow the springs of life. Put away from you a deceitful mouth And put devious speech far from you. Let your eyes look directly ahead And let your gaze be fixed straight in front of you. Watch the path of your feet And all your ways will be established. Do not turn to the right nor to the left; Turn your foot from evil."

That's good advice for any young person, and those of us who are older as well.

Let's pray together. "Father, we are grateful for Your love, and we are grateful for the wonderful things You have taught us in Your word. Help us to pay attention, and to follow Your will always. In Jesus name we pray, Amen."

Wise people know there is a God in heaven and they respect Him and His teaching. Foolish people shut God out of their minds and follow their own desires. Foolish people focus only on pleasing themselves in the present rather than remembering they will face the God they ignore in the future. 1 John 2:15 to 17 says, "Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.

Proverbs 12:15 describes the difference between being wise and being foolish, "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, But a wise man is he who listens to counsel." Many think their feelings is the measure of what is right and wrong. They think if they believe something is right, that God must also think like them; but the God who created us and has lived through all eternity determines what is right and wrong. God is not subject to our whims; we are subject to His laws. Proverbs 19 verse 3 says, "The foolishness of man ruins his way, And his heart rages against the LORD." When foolish people find out God disagrees with what they desire, they grow angry at God and they also grow angry at anyone who agrees with God.

Proverbs 15 and verse 5 says that “A fool rejects his father’s discipline, But he who regards reproof is sensible.” When people reject God and His wise counsel, they harden their hearts against the instructions of God. They refuse to listen and they refuse to repent. Proverbs 27:22 says, “Though you pound a fool in a mortar with a pestle along with crushed grain, Yet his foolishness will not depart from him.”

Foolish people would rather believe their own lies than listen to God and change their ways. Jeremiah 17:9 to 11 says, that “The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it? I, the LORD (says), (that I) search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give to each man according to his ways, According to the results of his deeds. And as a partridge that hatches eggs which it has not laid, So is he who makes a fortune, but unjustly; And in the midst of his days it will forsake him, And in the end he will be a fool.” People do reap what they sow; and you know what, that never changes.

We must be careful where we get our counsel. Proverbs 13 and 20 says that “He who walks with wise men will be wise, But the companion of fools will suffer harm.” If I listen to foolish counsel, I will think and act foolishly. If I listen to wise counsel, I will think and act wisely. When the children of Israel rejected God and began following idols, they foolishly set upon a path that would lead to their ruin. They stopped listening to the true prophets and listened to the false prophets who told them what they wanted to hear. Jeremiah 23:16 to 18 explains: Thus says the LORD of hosts, “Do not listen to the words of the prophets who are prophesying to you. They are leading you into futility; They speak a vision of their own imagination, Not from the mouth of the LORD. They keep saying to those who despise Me, ‘The LORD has said, “You will have peace” ’; (And then He says) And as for everyone who walks in the stubbornness of his own heart, They say, ‘Calamity will not come upon you.’ But who has stood in the council of the LORD, That he should see and hear His word? Who has given heed to His word and listened?”

Ultimately, the people of Judah faced Nebuchadnezzar and the powerful Babylonian army destroying their city, killing many people, and taking others captive back to Babylon. You see, their devotion to the pagan gods and forgetting the God of the Bible, the One that created them, led them into destruction. Jeremiah 4:22 says, “For My people are foolish, They know Me not; They are stupid children And have no understanding. They are shrewd to do evil, But to do good they do not know.” When people listen to false prophets, they learn false ways that are futile and destructive.

Foolish people love sin more than they love God. When a person begins to love sin, sin begins to harden their hearts against God and against what is good. Ephesians 4 verse 19 speaks of people who don’t know God “having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness.” The Hebrew writer warns Christians to watch out that this doesn’t happen to them. Hebrews 3:12 to 13 says, “Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called ‘Today,’ so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.”

The love of sin can cause a person to become foolish. Sin can cause people to be insensitive to the consequences of their actions, insensitive toward God, and insensitive toward other people. Fools don’t care if their words hurt others; and they aren’t afraid to lie, to gossip, to slander, or to lead others into sinful ways. Proverbs 10:14 says that “Wise men store up knowledge, But with the mouth of the foolish, ruin is at hand.” Again, Proverbs 18:6 to 7 explains, that “A fool’s lips bring strife, And his mouth calls for blows. A fool’s mouth is his ruin, And his lips are the snare of his soul.”

Fools lack inner strength and self-control. Proverbs 10:23 says that “A prudent man conceals knowledge, But the heart of fools proclaims folly.” Proverbs 12:16 says that “A fool’s anger is known at

once, But a prudent man conceals dishonor." Proverbs 14:16 goes farther, "A wise man is cautious and turns away from evil, But a fool is arrogant and careless." Proverbs 20 verse 3 states, "Keeping away from strife is an honor for a man, But any fool will quarrel." Foolish people find trouble wherever they go, and some are not happy unless they're in a fuss or fight. Proverbs 13:19 says, "Desire realized is sweet to the soul, But it's an abomination to fools to turn away from evil."

Foolish people reject God because they don't like any restrictions on their ways. David observed in Psalm 14 verses 1 to 3, that "The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God.' They are corrupt (he says), they have committed abominable deeds; There is no one who does good. The LORD has looked down from heaven upon the sons of men To see if there are any who understand, Who seek after God. They've all turned aside, together they've become corrupt; And there's no one who does good, not even one." You know, there are atheists who say that their God doesn't exist, but David is speaking more about what some call practical atheists. These are people who don't care whether God exists; they live as their own gods. A great number of people today don't care about God. And this is so sad, because one day they will have to face Him and give an account to Him.

Foolish people often turn to wickedness and forget God. They think they can live above the commandments of God and never face any consequences. Psalm 50 verse 16 to 21 describes this attitude toward God. It says, "But to the wicked God says: 'What right have you to recite my statutes or to take my covenant on your lips? For you hate discipline, and you cast my words behind you. If you see a thief, you're pleased with him, and you keep company with adulterers. You give your mouth free rein for evil, and your tongue frames deceit. You sit and speak against your brother; you slander your own mother's son. These things you have done, and I have been silent (God says); and you thought that I was one like yourself. But now (God says), I rebuke you and lay the charge before you.'" Foolish people who reject God often think they can escape retribution for their sins, but there's always a day when God takes charge of our souls. Don't be deceived.

Psalm 94:3 to 11 asks, "How long shall the wicked, O LORD, How long shall the wicked exult? They pour forth words, they speak arrogantly; And all who do wickedness vaunt themselves. They crush Your people, O LORD, And afflict Your heritage. They slay the widow and the stranger And murder the orphans. They have said, 'The LORD doesn't see, Nor does the God of Jacob pay heed.' Pay heed, you senseless among the people; And when will you understand, stupid ones? He who planted the ear, doesn't He hear? He who formed the eye, doesn't He see? He who chastens the nations, will He not rebuke, Even He who teaches man knowledge? The LORD knows the thoughts of man, That they are a mere breath."

When people foolishly reject what the Lord teaches, they must realize that God sees and knows what they're doing. Proverbs 5:21 to 23 says, "For the ways of a man are before the eyes of the LORD, And He watches all his paths. And His own iniquities will capture the wicked, And he will be held with the cords of his sin. He will die for lack of instruction, And in the greatness of his folly he will go astray." Frequently, foolish people are so concerned with today's pleasure, that they lose sight of their accountability before God in the afterlife. James reminds us in James 4:14, "You do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You're just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away." Life is brief, and you have no promise of tomorrow.

The Lord Jesus told a parable about the foolish farmer who was filled with greed but doesn't understand his life doesn't consist of his possessions. I tell you there is more involved. And so the Lord said in Luke 12:16 to 21, "The land of a rich man was very productive. And he began reasoning to himself, saying, 'Well, what shall I do, since I have no place to store my crops?' And then he said, 'This is what I will do: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I'll store all my grain and my goods. 'And I'll say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take

your ease, eat, drink and be merry.” ’ But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?’ So is the man who stores up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”

The Lord Jesus describes the difference between a wise man and a foolish man in Matthew 7:24 to 27, “Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell—and great was its fall.”

My friend, you’re building a house that will either stand or fall. Are you building it the way God instructs in His word or the way that you desire? Your choice will determine your destiny.

Let’s pray together. “Heavenly Father we’re thankful for Your love, and we’re thankful for all Your blessing. Father help us to make wise choices that follow Your will and show our love for You. This is our prayer in the name of Jesus, Amen.”

Do you remember the five wise and the five foolish virgins who were to meet their master when he returned with his bride for the wedding feast? Five were prepared with oil for their lamps, and five were unprepared. They hadn’t made the necessary preparations for the wedding feast and were locked out. When they cried out to the Lord to open the door for us. The Lord answered, “Truly I say to you, I do not know you.” Now the Lord told this parable to warn us to be prepared for His second coming. He said in Matthew 25:13, “Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour.”

Many people today want to spend an eternity in heaven with the Lord, but they foolishly fail to prepare their souls to meet Him. Many have foolishly imagined that nearly everyone will be saved, but such is not the case, no. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 7:13 to 14, ““Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.” Yes, only a few would find the way that leads to life. Are you one of them? Are you one of them?

To become a Christian, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, that He died for your sins and was resurrected on the third day. Out of love repent of your sins and confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God. Now your confession should lead to being baptized into Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins as Peter said in Acts 2 and verse 38. You see, baptism is an immersion in water and causes you to become a child of God (Galatians 3 and verse 28). Won’t you obey the Lord today?

Truth

George Barna recently said in a release from the Cultural Research Center, "More than two-thirds of Americans say that they are dissatisfied with the way things are going in the country today. Yet few of them pause from their busy schedules long enough to consider the problems that they're seeing are the result of increasing numbers of American adults making decisions based on shifting foundational beliefs and values." When people stop listening to God's teaching and buy into worldly beliefs that deny the truth and morals that God has revealed, they start facing tremendous problems, chaos, and confusion.

More than anything we need truth. We're living in a world where power and commerce have made spin and half-truths an everyday occurrence. When it comes to spiritual truth, we can trust God's Holy Word, the Bible. It has stood the test of time, it has answered the most important questions of life, and it's given us the hope of eternal life. No other book contains such a high moral standard, no other book has such a greater definition of love, nor a more abundant or righteous way of life. There is a big difference between living within God's will and living outside God's will.

Our reading today comes from Roman 1 verses 18 to 25 and discuss how easy it is for people to believe something that isn't true.

"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures. Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen."

Oh I pray that we won't give into the creature rather than the creator.

Let's pray together. "Father, we're thankful that you have left a reason to believe in Your eternal power evident to us all. Help us Father to turn to You, to believe that what You taught is true. In Jesus name, Amen."

Jesus Christ is the highest and best source of spiritual truth. And nothing else compares. John 1:17 says, "For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ." Jesus taught us the marvelous blend of grace and truth. We all stand in need of the grace of God. And without God no one could be saved. Titus 3:3 to 7 reminds us, "For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, no, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

Though we've all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, God's loving gift of eternal life comes through Jesus Christ. He saved us; we couldn't earn our way to heaven. And that salvation by grace comes through "the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit"; that phrase refers to the

new birth of water and the Spirit that takes place when we're baptized into Christ. And that's when we're justified by His grace. The grace of Christ works with the preaching and teaching of the truth. Truth without grace is harsh, and grace without truth deceives. It takes both grace and truth to be right with God.

The Lord Jesus said in John 8:31 to 32, that "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." Now being right with the Lord requires that we continue or stay within His word. We must know what He teaches if we are to be free from sin and from human traditions. When we continue in Christ's words, we follow God. The traditions of men keep us from following the words of our Lord Jesus, and we cease to be true disciples. Now we may call Him "Lord," but if we fail to do the will of the Father, the Lord Jesus will reject us on the last day (Matthew 7:21-23).

The Lord Jesus said in John 14 and verse 6, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; and no one comes to the Father but through Me." You see Jesus identifies Himself with the truth and declares that no one can come to the Father except through Him. The world would like to suggest there are many ways to heaven, but Jesus denies that. Does that surprise you? In our postmodern society, people tend to reject those who claim to have an exclusive hold on the truth; but before you dismiss the Lord Jesus, let me remind you that Jesus is unique in many ways. Who else died for your sins? No one. Who else is the Son of God? No one. Who else did God Himself raise from the dead to die no more? No one.

Jesus is indeed the Way, the truth, and the life. And when He knew that He would leave this world, He promised to send the Holy Spirit to the apostles. John 14 and verse 26 says, "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name (Jesus speaking), He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you." Jesus also promised in John 16:12 to 13, "I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you 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." The Holy Spirit would remind the apostles of all Jesus had said and guide the apostles into "all the truth."

I tell you, we have in the New Testament "all the truth" the Father and the Son intended for us to know. We aren't lacking any spiritual truth. All was revealed in the first century to the apostles. In His prayer the Lord Jesus asked the Father in John 17:17, "To sanctify them (that is His apostles, His disciples) in the truth (sanctify them in the truth); (And He said) Your word is truth." If we wish to know the truth, words that Jesus revealed contain the truth, and they contain all the spiritual truth that we need.

Now before His crucifixion, the Lord Jesus told Pontius Pilate in John 18:37, "For this I've been born, and for this I've come into the world, to testify to the truth. And everyone who is of the truth hears My voice." Now Pilate asked the skeptical question, "What is truth?" Well he didn't know much about Jesus when he asked that. He would later learn that Jesus rose from the dead, fulfilling His prediction. When we realize Jesus truly predicted and truly fulfilled the resurrection on the third day, we know that He spoke the truth. Now since the Lord Jesus told the truth about His death, burial, and resurrection, we can easily trust the other things that He said are true!

Jesus predicted specific things in Matthew 20:18 to 19, He said "Behold, we're going up to Jerusalem; and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn Him to death, and will hand Him over to the Gentiles to mock and scourge and crucify Him, and on the third day He will be raised up." Now His prediction of these things came true. The Jews handed Jesus over to the Gentiles to scourge and crucify, but Jesus was indeed raised up on the third day.

Jesus predicted in Matthew 24 the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. He said of the temple buildings in verse 2, "Do you not see all these things? Truly I say to you, that not one stone here will be left upon another, which will not be torn down." Well in 70 AD, His prediction came to be true just as He said it would. There has been no temple in Jerusalem since that time. And we know that His other predictions of coming again and of judging this world is true, because He has a record that His predictions came to be true.

Paul talked about faith in Christ Jesus to the Stoics and Epicureans and concluded his message in Acts 17:30 to 31 like this, he said "Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, because He's 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." We can have confidence in Christ's promises, because we know His predictions come to be true. And God furnished proof by raising Jesus from the dead, just as Scripture predicts in Psalm 16 verse 10 and just as Jesus Himself predicted in Matthew 20.

In a world that has a Jesus, who tells the truth, are many voices that tell falsehoods. They lie and do great harm by spreading half-truths. They mislead gullible people into believing things that are absurd. John 8 tells of some people who thought God was their Father but who rejected Jesus as God's Son. And Jesus explained to them in John 8:44, that "You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he (that is the devil) speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies."

The devil lied to Adam and Eve in the beginning and led them into sin and death. Through all the ages the devil has been God's enemy and has wanted to lead every human away from God by lying and making false promises. The devil even pretends to be religious, so that he can mislead gullible people with falsehoods.

2 Peter 2 verses 1 to 3 reminds us, "But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves. Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned; and in their greed they will exploit you with false words; their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep." The devil is at work through false teachers who deny the Master and introduce doctrines that divide. The truth and love of the gospel unite, but false doctrines divide.

Romans 1:25 says, "For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen." Have you ever wondered why ancient people had idols, and why people have idols today? If you make an idol, you are the one who tells the idol what you believe and how you will behave; but if you hold fast to the God of heaven, He will tell you what to believe and how to behave. Much of the idolatry of ancient times allowed people to behave immorally, sexually and other ways, rather than to follow the morality found in Scripture. The people wanted to please their flesh rather than serve God. They could do that with idols. It satisfied their desire for sin to serve the creature rather than the Creator.

Our culture has spread many lies. And one lie is that if two people love each other, their sexual behavior is not immoral. Love, however, cannot make sexually immoral behavior outside of marriage acceptable in God's eyes. Two people may love each other, but their sinful behavior doesn't show love toward God. The Lord Jesus said in John 14:15, that "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments."

1 Corinthians 6:9 to 11 the Bible says, "Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. (And then he says) Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God." One cannot justify sin by saying sin is loving, because sin is never loving toward God. God expects people to repent of their sins and to be justified by their obedience to the truth. 1 Corinthians 13 verse 6 says that love "does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth."

So, like the noble Bereans in Acts 17:11, receive "the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so." 2 Timothy 2:15 says, "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth." I fear that many religious people will be ashamed of what they have believed because they didn't study the word of God to find the truth but just accepted what they heard someone say.

Romans 2:6 to 11 reveals that 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, they'll have 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."

Let us pray. "Father we are thankful that You reveal Your will to us in Your word. Help us to follow Your will always, realizing that one day we'll give an account of ourselves to You. Help us to love You and to obey Your commandments. In Jesus name, Amen.

Jeremiah 17:9 says, "The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it?" Many people lie to themselves about their salvation and what they believe. It's tragic to believe a lie and have false hope. We must believe and obey the truth, if we wish to be saved and live eternally with the Lord. Getting right with God includes correcting misbeliefs. It means forsaking the unbiblical lies on one side and the traditions of men on the other. Religious traditions of human origin will not lead to heaven.

The Lord Jesus declared the commandments of men render our worship in vain (Matthew 15 verses 8 to 9). And Jesus spoke of the Pharisees whose human traditions caused them to make void the Word of God in order to follow their traditions. Jesus said in verses 13 and 14 of Matthew 15, "Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be rooted up. Let them alone (speaking of the Pharisees); they are blind guides. And if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a pit." Human beliefs, human creeds, and human traditions will be uprooted; and only what is taught in Scripture will survive. If you follow a blind guide, you'll both fall into a pit.

God wants you to know the truth and be saved, and so do we. We want everyone to obey the truth. To obey the Lord and to become a Christian, do these things, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and trust in the gospel. Repent of your sins and turn to what the Lord Jesus teaches. Deny yourself, take up your cross daily, and follow Him! Confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God and your Lord. And then be baptized in water in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 2 verse 38). Won't you follow the truth today and be baptized?

The "Musts" of Christianity

The Lord God speaks to us today through His written word. The Bible says in John 3:35 to 36 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." Faith alone is insufficient to maintain a right relationship with God. The doctrine of faith alone is not found in Scripture; obedience to God is also necessary. It's a must. The phrase "does not obey" in verse 36 is not the same word as the one that means one does not believe. It translates a word that means one is not persuaded and so will not comply with God's will. When a person will not obey, he faces the wrath of God and cannot have eternal life. This is how important God's teaching is, and why we teach it with love. We want everyone to obey the Lord.

The word "must" is out of step with most people today. Our culture is more inclined to make up their own faith or religion. Many select what commands they wish to obey rather than follow the teaching revealed in the Bible. Most people want choices, and the word "must" means they have no choice. "Must" is a verb that describes an obligation, a requirement, or a moral necessity. "Must" removes every other option. If we want to please God and have eternal life, there are some things we must do. Now, this really isn't strange, because even Jesus had some things that he must do. My friend, so do you.

The reading today comes from the gospel according to Mark chapter 10 verses 42 to 45. And discuss a situation where some of the apostles thought that they were a little better than others and they began to be indignant toward one another. Thinking who was the greatest. And Jesus calls the apostles to Himself. And it says that:

"Calling them to Himself, Jesus said to them, 'You know that those who are recognized as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them; and their great men exercise authority over them. But 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 slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.'"

Yes Jesus came to serve and to give Himself and that was a must. Let's pray together. Father we're thankful that You have loved us enough to send Your son to die for us. Helps us to love You enough to serve You and to do Your will always. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

We generally think God has nothing that He must do, but God's holiness and love for mankind define who God really is. God's love and holiness led Him to send Jesus into this world. Love cannot exist without obligation and commitment. So, Jesus knew He must do His Father's will. Jesus said in John 9 verse 4 "We must work the works of Him who sent Me, as long as it is day; night is coming, when no man can work." While on earth Jesus lived within time constraints, and so must we. We must now do God's will.

Jesus knew He had to die on the cross; and He prophesied His death and resurrection. Matthew 16:21 to 23 says, "From that time Jesus Christ began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day. And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, 'God forbid it, Lord! This shall never happen to You.' But He turned and said to Peter, 'Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's.'" Though Peter didn't want Him to die, Jesus knew that He must die in order to fulfill God's plan of redemption.

When the crowd came to the Garden of Gethsemane to arrest Jesus and bring Him to try Him, you remember Matthew 26:51 to 54 records what happened, "And behold, one of those who were with Jesus reached and drew out his sword, and struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his ear. Then Jesus

said to him, 'Put your sword back into its place; for all those who take up the sword shall perish by the sword. Or do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels? "How then will the Scriptures be fulfilled, which say that it must happen this way?"' The Lord Jesus knew that He must die in order to fulfill the eternal plan of God. He could have stopped it, but it was necessary for Him to fulfill the Scriptures.

Jesus was fully obedient to the Father, even when the Father demanded everything from Him. Jesus took Peter, James and John with Him to the Garden of Gethsemane. And Jesus told them in Matthew 26:38, "My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death; remain here and keep watch with Me." I can only imagine the pain that He felt then. The Lord Jesus fell on his face on the ground. And Luke 22 and verse 44 says, "And being in agony He was praying very fervently; and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground." But the persistent prayer of Jesus found in Matthew 26:42 was, "My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done."

Now this example of Jesus is vital to us. Hebrews 5:7 to 9 says that, "In the days of His flesh, He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His piety. 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." The Father heard His prayer. Many think the prayer of Jesus was to remove the cup, and that is certainly what on one level He wanted. But the ultimate prayer of Jesus was "your will be done," and God heard that prayer. Jesus was perfect in His obedience to the Father, and His obedience opened the way for us. He became the source of eternal salvation to all those who obey Him. And we must believe, but we must also obey!

Some say well, "You don't have to do anything to be saved. God has done it all." Now, I realize that we're saved by grace through faith; and the Scripture clearly says salvation is a gift in Romans 6 and verse 23 and Ephesians 2:8 to 9. But we must also realize that gifts often have conditions or obligations to fulfill. Meeting conditions does not earn the gift, but conditions obligate. For instance, in John chapter nine Jesus healed a blind man by anointing the man's eyes with some mud that He made with his saliva. Jesus told the man, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). So according to verse seven he went and he washed and came back seeing. The Lord Jesus gave that man his sight. Now, no one would suggest that by washing in the pool the man healed himself or earned something so precious as his sight; but he had to meet the condition of washing before he enjoyed the healing! The blind man didn't argue with Jesus; he simply went to the pool and washed.

So while we're saved by grace, God's grace is conditional. The Scriptures plainly teach there are things that we must do to please God; they're not optional. First, we must come to Jesus. Acts 4 and verse 12 says, "And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." If one is to be saved he must come to Jesus; no one else can save him. The Lord Jesus said in John 12:26 that, "If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him." Yes we must follow Jesus.

Second, we must believe in God. Hebrews 11 verse 6 says, "And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him." Faith in God means believing what He says and that He will keep His promises. It is absurd to claim we believe in God, if we are unwilling to believe what He teaches. In a conversation with the Jews about whether Jesus was from God and the Son of God, you remember the Lord Jesus said in John 8:24, "I told you that you would die in your sins, for unless you believe that I am he you will die in your sins." Faith in Christ means believing He is the Christ, the Son of God, and the Lord of all. Believing in

Him means taking what He teaches seriously. The Lord must be heartbroken that some people are Christians in name only. That they profess to believe in Christ but follow the ways of man.

Third, we must repent of our sins. The Lord Jesus said in Luke 13:3 that “unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.” Now repentance is not an option for anyone who wishes to live with God. Romans 6 and verse 11 describes what repentance does. Paul said, “So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.” Repentance means stopping our sinful ways and living for God. Romans 8:12 to 13 makes it even more clear. Paul said, “So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.” To live with God, we must repent.

Fourth, we must be baptized. In John 3, Nicodemus came to Jesus at night. And the Lord Jesus told Nicodemus in John 3:5 to 7, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'” Now this birth of water and the Spirit refers to baptism, just as every early Christian testified. One must be baptized in order to enter God's kingdom. When Saul of Tarsus was blinded on the road to Damascus, the Lord Jesus Himself told Saul in Acts 9 verse 6, “get up and enter the city, and it will be told you what you must do.” Well, Saul entered the city. He prayed and fasted for three days; yet he was not saved. Eventually Ananias came to Saul. Told him in Acts 22:16, “Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name.” Now God didn't wash away Saul's sins until he was baptized into Christ. And we must be baptized.

Fifth, we must worship in spirit and in truth. The Lord Jesus said in John 4:23 to 24, “But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.” Now many have confused worship with various forms of entertainment. But true worship differs from pretense or man-made worship. Jesus defines that difference with two things. Is their worship genuinely from the spirit or heart? And is their worship authentically what God teaches in His Word? If it differs, it isn't true worship. According to Matthew 15:8 to 9, there he told the Pharisees that if their practices come from the traditions of men, that their worship is in vain. Hmm.

Sixth, we must pay close attention to God's teaching. Hebrews 2:1 to 3 says, “For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?” Some think God ought to be satisfied with whatever we offer to Him, but the Scriptures demand that we pay attention and keep His commandments carefully. We must not add to the word of God or subtract from God's teaching. We have no right to rewrite God's teaching to suit ourselves or to satisfy the whims of our culture.

Seventh, we must obey God first. When the apostles appeared before the Sanhedrin the council, the high priest said Acts 5:28, “We gave you strict orders (that is speaking to the apostles) not to continue teaching in this name, and behold, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us.” Well in verse 29 Peter and the apostles answered and said, “We must obey God rather than men.” I tell you we must stand up for our God and our faith above all else. We must never suppose that God is content to be only one voice among many. I tell you God is God, and He demands to be obeyed.

Eighth, we must help the weak. Paul said in Acts 20 and verse 35, “In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that

He Himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" Christians must stand ready to help those who are in need, to provide what they can for those who cannot provide for themselves. Christians are to give of themselves, just as Christ gave to us.

Well why does all this matter? Because there's one more "must." 2 Corinthians 5 and verse 10 says this, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad." On judgment day, and you'll be there; you cannot escape this appointment. On judgement day the Lord will judge righteously, saving His followers and condemning those who don't believe or those who won't obey Him. Now you and I must appear before Him. And my question is will you be ready to face God? Are you right with God?

Let's pray together. Heavenly Father help us to take Your word seriously. To know the things that we must do in order to please You. Because we love You and we know that Your grace is for those who are obedient. Father bless us and help us every day to love You more and more. In Jesus name, Amen.

The Lord tells the parable of the ten virgins in Matthew 25. Five wisely prepared, and the other five foolishly were unprepared to greet the master at the wedding feast. Matthew 25:7 to 11 says, "Then all those virgins rose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the prudent, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' But the prudent answered, saying, 'No, there will not be enough for us and you too; go instead to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.' And while they were going away to make the purchase, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast; and the door was shut. And later the other virgins also came, saying, 'Lord, lord, open up for us.' But he answered and said, 'Truly I say to you, I do not know you.' Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour."

While Jesus offers His gift of salvation to everyone, sadly not everyone is prepared to meet the Master when He comes again. And just as the virgins needed oil, so we must not wait until the Lord comes to get right with God. We don't know the day nor the hour when the Lord will return, so we must be prepared at all times.

Have you met the conditions God demands in order to enjoy His grace? Do you believe? Have you repented? Have you confessed Jesus as the Christ? Have you been baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of your sins? Have you remained watchful and ready to meet Him? Please don't waste another day unprepared. Get right with God today. Accept His offer of grace by doing what He commands. You'll never regret doing what is right, but you'll always regret being unprepared.