

Christ in Your Body

by Aaron Rock

This sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding the holistic redemption offered by the gospel, focusing on the redemption of both the material and immaterial aspects of humanity. It challenges the misconception of Christian dualism and highlights the biblical truth that God is interested in saving and redeeming both our bodies and souls. The sermon encourages believers to steward their bodies and emotions in a way that honors and glorifies God, recognizing that the gospel's ultimate goal is the restoration of both the physical and spiritual realms.

Scripture: 1 Timothy 4:8, 1 Samuel 16:7, Romans 12:15, Philippians 4:6, Joshua 1:9, 1 Corinthians 15:12

Topics: "Holistic Redemption", "Stewardship of Body and Soul"

Description

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Transcript

So today we're going to spend some time in the Word of God. This is part of a sermon series called Nation Builders, a Christian vision for Western civilization. And I want to begin just by telling you a little bit about some of the things I was taught as a child, a teenager, a young adult that I now realize is not fully accurate.

So when I was a child and growing up in church and even in my early years of Bible college, I was taught that the gospel of Jesus Christ was really only about getting to heaven. I'm a sinner. I need a savior.

If I put my faith and trust in Jesus, then I can be saved and I'm assured of eternal life in heaven. And that essentially was the sum total of the gospel message. To be spiritual then, to be a Christ follower, meant focusing almost exclusively on eternity, sort of waiting to get off this corrupt planet, and having as little as possible to do with earthly things.

I mean, even the word sounds hideous, earthly things. Little did I know that I was being taught the falsehood of Christian dualism, which has its roots in ancient Gnosticism, I believe. And part of dualistic

thinking is that a human is both material and immaterial, which is true, that's accurate, but that the material is entirely insignificant.

It's sort of a—even your body is sort of a prison that your soul, the part of you that really matters to God, has been locked up in. And our singular purpose is to redeem the immaterial, our soul, our spirit, and to get as far away as possible from the material. Now, it is true that human beings are material and we are immaterial, but guess what? They're inextricably linked in biblical theology.

You are not just your soul and spirit, you are also your body. You're both, and both are important to God. God is actually interested in saving both your body and your soul.

You know that, right? How do we know that? Well, we know he's interested in saving our souls because we have the doctrine of regeneration taught in Scripture, that we need to be born again, that we need to be—we're dead in our trespasses and sins, that we need to be revived spiritually, that we need to be restored of our sin, and the ultimate expression of that is going to take place in heaven when we're fully redeemed. But we also have another doctrine called the doctrine of the resurrection, and the doctrine of the resurrection teaches us that God is also interested in redeeming our material selves, our material selves. So, the gospel is not just about getting to heaven, the gospel is not just about having your spirit and soul redeemed, the gospel is also about your body, the material world.

In fact, in the eternal kingdom, we're not going to spend eternity in heaven. If you've been taught that, you've been taught a falsehood. We're going to spend eternity on the new heavens and the new earth.

You can actually walk on it. Did you ever see those little depictions when you're a kid of you in heaven with a white robe on and a halo plucking on a harp on a fluffy cloud, and you're like, please, Lord, no. That doesn't sound very exciting.

It sounds almost anti-human because we are created in a natural physical environment. That's what we're used to relating to. So, the eternal vision is not just to save your soul, it's to also save and redeem your body, and to actually redeem the physical world, the physical world as part of God's eternal kingdom.

So, we have, in the gospel, the mission of God being revealed, whereby he will save our souls, and he will save our bodies, too. In salvation, both are then offered in service—think about this carefully—both our body, soul, spirit are offered in service to God and stewardship to Christ. That's the eternal vision.

Body, soul, and spirit serving and worshipping Christ for all of eternity. So, in the here and now, while we are not yet fully redeemed, we're saved, but there's an aspect of our salvation we've not yet experienced—glorification—we are offering our body, soul, spirit as living sacrifices to God. Most biblical instruction focuses on immaterial sanctification.

So, how can you be more loving, more gentle, more gracious, a better thinker, preach to the immaterial, the immaterial, the immaterial, help you to have a heart for Christ? But how often do we talk about using our bodies as living sacrifices for Christ, as an expression of our worship, and as an expression of our stewardship? The scriptures teach us in passages like Romans 12.1, we're to offer our bodies, not just our souls, our hearts, but our bodies as a living sacrifice to the Lord. So, rather than having an escapist view of Christianity, which is the inevitable result of dualism—it's like, I just want to get out of this world, I want to get on to heaven—this world is terrible in its material aspect. Well, it's terrible in its immaterial aspect, too.

So, we live in a broken world. The material and the immaterial are broken. They're affected by sin.

Christ is redeeming both, and the eternal vision is sort of a back-to-Eden experience, where we will both be made pure and holy, materially and immaterially. So, rather than trying to escape, we must steward our whole humanity until Christ returns. You might have heard people say, Jesus wants your heart.

He does. He also wants your mind, and he wants your body, too. So, if you don't steward your body, for example, you're not fully obedient to Christ, because he wants you to steward all of you, every single aspect, constituent part of who you are, for his honor and for his glory.

We will be eternal worshippers—body, soul, and spirit—not disembodied angels or harp players in heaven. This is good news. So, why does this matter? It's like, okay, yeah, whatever.

Why does this matter? Well, if the gospel isn't about holistic redemption of both the material and the immaterial, what will happen—and we've seen this for many generations, especially in evangelical churches—when we go out into the world and we see bad things happening in the physical realm, we'll be like, whatever. We're just going to go pray more. The world's going to hell in a handbasket.

Why engage? Why not just preach the gospel, and if the gospel is always just about your soul getting saved, then we're not going to be—why would we speak out against abortion? God's going to take care of it in the end anyway. Why are we going to speak out against unjust war? Who cares? The world's going downhill anyway. Why speak to abuse of power? Why speak to the destruction of economies? Why not just preach the gospel? And what people mean by that is, just get people saved.

Who cares about the world around us? I have heard this said to me directly time after time after time after time in the last two years. Pastor, stay in your lane. Just preach the gospel, and I know what they mean.

Just preach to the immaterial concerns, because that's all that really matters. Who cares if the world is burning? It's just about the immaterial that matters. We will also fail to preach Christ's lordship over the material world.

If we think that the material world doesn't matter, who cares who's lord of this world? We're just—when we talk about the Lord Jesus Christ, what most people think about that is they just think, well, he's the spiritual Lord, but he's not actually the Lord of the earth within which we live. Well, he is. He's the creator of it.

He's the king of kings and the Lord of lords. We will also fail to exercise stewardship over our bodies. When we're prioritizing where we're going to spend our time being sanctified, we're like, this thing's wearing out anyway.

Why bother with my physical health, my emotional health, as long as my soul is good with Jesus? That's all that really matters. And again, this is because, even if you've never heard the word, it's because of the false teaching of Christian dualism. Well, if we're going to rebuild our nation for the glory of God, rebuild our civilization to be a blessing to those around us in this physical world, we need to take a strong interest in the lordship of Christ over all of life as a reflection of the eternal vision of the gospel.

What I mean by that, if the eternal, the end result of the gospel is the restoration of the material and the immaterial, why would we not act in such a way as Christians that we're bringing the gospel now to bear on the material and the immaterial aspects of who we are and the world within which we live? That's what we're gunning for. This series is to help us think through how to bring gospel values to bear on the world now, right now. So, every sermon has addressed an aspect of that, and today I want to focus specifically on our bodies and demonstrate from scripture that the creator God claims control over your material and

immaterial self, and he expects you to he expects you to steward it all for his honor and glory.

So, the way you treat your body, use your body, can honor or dishonor Christ. So, we'll just break this down. I had a lot of things in mind that I could say today, but I figured you weren't in the mood for a three-hour sermon, but I want to touch down on a couple things.

So, how to exercise stewardship over our bodies. First of all, let's talk about material stewardship over our bodies. Material stewardship over our bodies matters to God.

So, in terms of priorities, we do know that godliness—loving God, body, soul, mind, spirit—is superior to your physical health, because through no fault of your own or fault of your own, your body may not be in great shape, because your body necessarily will decline with age. Your spirituality should increase with age. So, this is true.

In 1 Timothy, we're warned in chapter 4, verse 8, for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come. So, that's true. We must never fall, therefore, into the trap of judging or prioritizing some people over others based upon their physical appearance.

When God was directing Samuel to find a king for Israel, a theocratic king, a king who would rule on God's behalf, he warned Samuel in 1 Samuel 16.7, but the Lord said to Samuel, do not look at his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the Lord sees not as man sees. Man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.

So, I want to be real clear at the beginning here. What we don't want to suggest is that your physicality, your appearance, your health, the length of years within which you live, is somehow the greatest priority. So, if you're a mom and dad, be very careful about how you and how frequently you compliment, for example, your children's physical appearance, because if every time daddy looks at his daughter, he says, oh, you're so beautiful, you're so beautiful, you're so pretty, you're so wonderful, your hair looks great, and he never compliments godly virtue, what kind of a woman do you think she's going to grow up to be? That doesn't mean you never compliment her physical appearance.

I think that's a really good idea, especially for fathers to their daughters. Boys, it doesn't matter. You can call them ugly all day long, and they'll love it, but be careful what you compliment, because that will set in their minds, knowingly or unknowingly, what they consider to be your priorities for them.

If you're single, you're looking to get hitched, and you're interacting with potential mates, be careful that you don't place an excessive emphasis on their appearance. I just like the super hot dudes, I just like the super hot girls, but do they love the lord? Are they people with character and principle? So, it doesn't mean that appearance doesn't matter, but it's not our priority. If we're Christians in our churches, we need to be careful about fashionable Christianity.

We only let people in our church that look this way, or fit into this particular fashion mold. No, we create space for all people, regardless of their physical appearance, and yet, and yet, with that warning in mind, physical health is important. If it wasn't, why was Jesus going around healing people physically? Why would he have just said, I know you're lame, I know you're blind, I know you lost some body parts, but do you love Jesus? No, he actually helped them overcome their physical ailments.

He healed them publicly, he took a concern in reducing suffering in the world. In Acts 28, the Bible reads, this is verse 8, it happened that the father of Publius, do you know who he is by the way? You don't know who he is in biblical history? Neither do I. Jesus didn't just heal people that were important to biblical history. This is just some obscure person, I don't even know who he is.

And it happened that the father of Publius lay sick with fever and dysentery, and Paul visited him and prayed and just said, hey bro, just as long as you love Jesus, that's all that matters. No, he said, and putting his hands on him, healed him. So Christ and the apostles are concerned about physical healing in Matthew 25, verses 35 to 40.

For I was hungry, this is Jesus speaking sort of of the people that other people had healed and helped and met the needs of. For I was hungry and you gave me food. I was thirsty and you gave me drink.

I was a stranger and you welcomed me. I was naked and you clothed me. I was sick and you visited me.

I was in prison and you came to me. So Jesus is basically saying, when you've done all these things for other people, you're actually honoring me. I'm honored when you meet physical needs, when you meet tangible needs, that honors me.

You're doing it for my honor and glory. Now at the same time, we don't have control over our physical well-being entirely. You can't change your genetics.

You can't change your age. You can't necessarily avoid accidents, injuries, disease. We don't have influence and control over all of these things.

You could die any moment, but the Bible also says in 1 Corinthians 6 20, for you are bought with a price, so glorify God in your body. We have a responsibility to glorify God with our physicality, with the material aspect of our humanity. 1 Corinthians 3 verses 16 to 17, do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's spirit dwells in you? If someone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him, for God's temple is holy and you are that temple.

We're indwelt with the spirit of God. God has granted us the gift of a body, and we can glorify or dishonor God the way we use our bodies. Everything from fornication to addictions, to substance abuse, to laziness, your body deteriorates because you're lazy, to suicide.

These are all sins that dishonor the Lord, because it's an improper use of the gift of our bodies. We've even heard some Christians kill themselves in order to get to heaven quicker because life's too difficult. How horrifying is that? You're going to destroy your body that was purchased with the precious blood of Jesus Christ because life's too difficult? No, that's a sin.

In Proverbs 23.2, it speaks to the issue of gluttony. Pretty harsh language actually, it says, and put a knife to your throat if you are given to appetite. Cutting up that steak and you're like, so God is concerned about the way we use our bodies.

If you want to study biblical dietary laws in Leviticus 11, and yes you've studied them out, they make a lot of sense in the context within which they're written. Certain foods were banned because the foods that were banned were generally the ones more susceptible to give you bacteria, especially in ancient times when they didn't understand microbiology and how to cook. So it made sense, certain animals were more likely or less likely to parasites or bacteria than other animals, depending on what they ate and how they

functioned.

And so when you looked at an animal, you're like, is it something that scoots around the bottom of dirty rivers and eats dead things? Or is it something that's out in the plains eating fresh green grass every day, which is more likely to hurt you? So there were dietary laws in place. So the Bible's clear in terms of our humanity, in terms of our physicality, that we have a responsibility to steward our bodies as an expression of our thankfulness that God has redeemed and is continuing to redeem us and will ultimately redeem us when our bodies are resurrected and we have our glorified bodies for all of eternity to honor and glorify him. So what are some of the roadblocks to body stewardship? Well, as I've mentioned already, dualism is a big one because it impedes our stewardship and increases sin as we care less and less about our physicality and just try to focus on our spirituality.

Another roadblock to body stewardship is culture. We live in a culture full of foodies. We overeat, we throw out leftovers, we have very little appreciation for the amount of food that God has given to us, especially in this culture, to the that we overeat and then we go to the gym to burn the calories that we paid for by buying too much food.

It's kind of like, you know, you fill up your car with gas, it's expensive, food is expensive, gas is expensive, and then we discard a lot of our food or we overeat and just burn it off. It's like, I'm going to the gas station, I'm filling up, but I'm not comfortable with it being on full, so I'm going to bomb around the block a few times. I like to waste fuel.

I always like to fill it, but I prefer to burn a quarter of a tank needlessly every week or every few days just because. It doesn't make sense. It's great to go to the gym if you actually want to improve your body condition, but people, there's many people that overeat knowingly and then pay more money to go to a gym to throw away the calories they just paid for.

It's a strange culture. I think if ancient culture showed up today, they'd be like, what a bunch of weirdos. We don't get this at all.

It doesn't even make sense. Statism, that's another roadblock. Coercive medicine, the idea that the state knows what's best for you and they will make the decisions that they want for you and you will not push back.

It's a violation of Romans 14. Romans 14.23. Speaking of meat in this context offered unto idols and food that was offered to idols, but same principle applies. Folks, there's certain things that you're going to feel comfortable doing that I won't, and there's certain things that I will feel comfortable doing that some of you won't.

Not everything is black or white. There are certain things that affect us differently. If there's a certain kind of food or drink that's especially tempting to you and distracting from your walk with Christ, best you avoid it, but a different personality may not be affected by that.

This was true in the early church and it's true today. So, when it comes to what we take into our bodies, what medical treatment we allow to be given to us, here's the advice of God in Romans 14.23, for whoever has doubts is condemned if he eats because he's not eating from faith. There's an if in there, if he eats because he's not eating from faith.

In other words, in my spirit, I don't feel comfortable drinking that. I don't feel comfortable eating that. I don't feel comfortable having that injected.

I don't feel comfortable with this surgery. I don't feel comfortable with this treatment. I'm just not comfortable with it.

So, if you violate your conscience and you take it or eat it or drink it anyway, you are sinning against God. But another person could eat or drink or take that same treatment and they're not sitting against God because their conscience is clear. If it does not come from faith, it's a sin.

For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin. We often think, Lord, I got a decision to make. Is it right or is it wrong? Well, there's lots of scriptures.

This is right and this is wrong, but there's also circumstances that call for us to ask the question, well, what do I know about myself? For example, if I used to be a drunk and my brothers are drunks and my cousins are drunks and my dad was a drunk and my grandpa was a drunk, maybe not wise for you to drink, right? But other people could, and it doesn't affect their spirituality. But what do we want in churches? We want rules for all that equally apply to everyone. Well, there's some rules that apply, plenty of them.

But there also is a call for discretion and seeking the will of the Lord for your life in some of these what the Bible would call disputable issues. So your conscience must guide your stewardship of your physical health. And then we also need to think about our emotional health.

The Bible says something about our emotional stewardship. Emotional stewardship matters. How often have you met people that are just kind of emotionally dead? Just emotionally dead.

Or on the other hand, emotionally out of control. These are the two extremes we want to avoid. I don't feel anything.

I don't really love anything. I'm just all cerebral or all kinesthetic. I just do stuff, but I don't think much about emotions.

Or on the broken humanity, the first baby ever born on planet Earth got so angry and jealous he killed his brother Abel. The first one. He wasn't watching slasher movies.

They didn't exist. But he killed his own brother. And people on these extremes tend to struggle to grow in Christ or maintain meaningful relationships or ever really be at peace with life.

Well, we love the Bible and all the truth it contains, but biblical truth does more, doesn't do less, but it does more than stabilize your mind or inform and direct your thinking. It also stabilizes, informs, and directs your emotions. God's concerned about your emotions.

We are emotional beings. We should recognize that. We shouldn't deny that.

But your emotions can be overused or underused, just like your mind can be overused or underused. We're emotional beings, and we need to learn to harness our emotions to glorify God and control emotions that are sinful. And we're all gonna have different emotions.

We're different. We're not clones of one another. We all have different personalities.

That's fine. But we need to harness our emotions to glorify God and control emotions that are sinful. And there are many emotions that are discussed in Scripture, but I want to just focus in on a few that I think are especially relevant, given our circumstances, and I think have a special impact upon the way we live our lives.

So one is sorrow. How do we handle lament, sorrow, the challenges of life, the pain of life? Do we just pretend they don't exist? Nope. Stiff upper lip.

I'm emotionally unaffected by pain. Is that what we should be doing? Or over the other side, should we just be triggered by everything, just freaking out, losing our cool, getting stressed out, anxious every time there's a challenge we experience that is tough? No. The Bible frames lament, the proper and godly expression of sorrow, as a godly thing.

In Romans 12, 15, it says, rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep. It's okay to cry. It's okay to cry.

It's okay to be upset. You're not an ungodly person because you're upset with the challenges of life. In fact, in John 11, 35, we're told Jesus wept.

The perfect eternal savior of the world wept. Now in English, that is the shortest verse in the Bible, but it's not the shortest verse in the Greek New Testament. This is just a sidebar for fun because I know many of you like Bible trivia.

It's actually three Greek words there that are translated as Jesus wept, and then we have in 1 Thessalonians 5, 16, and 17, rejoice always and pray increasingly. Those are two words as well, but there's more letters to them, so Jesus wept is still the shortest in English, but those actually are composed of two Greek words. So next time you're wanting to trip someone up, just say, hey, what's the shortest verse in the Bible? And then they say, oh, Jesus wept.

Actually, it's not. There's two verses that are longer in English but shorter in Greek. Nevertheless, we have Jesus saying he wept.

It didn't mean that he cried at everything, and his weeping was connected to righteousness and godliness. He wept at the brokenness and struggles that he saw in the world. He didn't just weep at everything.

Oh, it's too cold today. I didn't get that raise I hoped for. He didn't weep at everything, but he wept for important things as an expression of his full humanity.

So we are given the green light in Scripture to weep, to cry, to be upset with life, but we're not given the green light to let it dominate us to the point we don't have peace. We can't function. We can't meaningfully conduct ourselves in relationships because we're so concerned about being hurt.

Newsflash, being human, being in relationship, means you are necessarily and inevitably putting yourself in the place of being hurt. Sometimes people leave church like, I left church because I was hurt. You didn't think you would be? If you're in relationships, you're going to be hurt.

I've hurt my wife. She's hurt me, and we love each other dearly. I've hurt some of you, and some of you have hurt me, but we learn from it.

We forgive, and we move on. You can't insulate yourself from all pain. It's impossible.

The second major emotion that often trips people up is anxiety. Anxiety is not godly. In Philippians 4, you need to memorize this one if you especially struggle with anxiety, verses 6 and 7 says, do not be anxious about anything.

You know what that means? Do not be anxious about anything. That's what it means. Anything is inclusive of everything.

Do not be anxious about anything. So what do we do then when we're presented with something that tempts us to be anxious? But in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God, and God will just fix them all instantaneously with his magic wand. Not necessarily, because God sanctifies us through suffering, but it does say this is what God does promise.

When we denounce anxiety, and we choose to put our faith in Christ and call out to him in prayer, it says, and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, meaning from a human perspective, sometimes it doesn't make sense, will guard your hearts, your emotions, and your mind, your thinking, in Christ Jesus. So what then is anxiety? Anxiety stems from faithlessness in God. If you trace it back, like why am I so anxious, and you follow the trail of breadcrumbs, somewhere along the trail, I got it.

I'm not trusting in God. That's my problem. It will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, and it squelches, anxiety that is, squelches supernatural empowerment that is available to you when you consult the Lord.

So the only way, unless God is a liar, which he's not, that you're going to not have that peace that surpasses all human understanding, is if you are not trusting the Lord, then you're actually crushing the gift that he wants to offer you, the supernatural empowerment, this peace that surpasses all understanding. Your counselor can't give you that. Your pastor can't give you that.

Your best buddy can't give you that. That's a gift from God that comes when we just say, you know what, I just maybe need a little reality check. Oh yeah, I forgot, you're God, I'm not.

I live in a broken world. All things work together for the good of those that love you. So I'm going to just trust in him and just see what awesomeness he does through the challenges that lay before us.

It also, unfortunately, leads to an unstable mind and an unstable heart. So one of the ways that people who have anxiety continue to damage themselves is they fail to trust in the Lord and the heart continues to deteriorate, becomes erratic like an irregular heartbeat, and your mind becomes confused and you become dysfunctional because you're not trusting in Christ. And you can put all the therapy language you want on it, it's a sin.

And do yourself a favor and recognize it and label it for what it is. It will only bless you. And then we have anger.

This is another big emotion. Now anger, we know, can be godly. If it's like, I'm so furious at the unrighteousness in the world, the sin, the refusal to acknowledge the lordship of Christ, blasphemy, whatever it might be.

Or it can be godly. It can be ungodly. In Proverbs 29 11 it says, a fool gives full vent to his spirit.

You're a fool. But a wise man quietly holds it back. He's thoughtful, he's reflective.

In Proverbs 16 32, whoever is slow to anger is better than the mighty. So there again, it's not saying all anger is bad, but you're slow to anger, like it's a thoughtful, biblically based kind of anger. Whoever is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city.

So you could be a conquering king, look at me, I just conquered a nation or a city. But better is the person that's thoughtful and precise in his use of anger. We should be angry at the things that God is angry about.

Jesus flipped over tables when people were abusing the temple. The apostles rebuked false teachers. How would you like to be one of those guys? Your name is eternally written in the bible as a false teacher.

Alexander the coppersmith, Demetrius, or Diotrephes. They rebuked false teachers, they rebuked legalists, they rebuked blasphemers, they rebuked religious hypocrites. Sometimes Christians are more angry because someone said no to a date than they are with the things that makes God angry.

They're more angry when their kid was overlooked in sports than they are with what makes God angry. They're more angry that someone gave them a dirty look or forgot their name than they are at abortion in our world. They're more angry at some minor offense than entire governments usurping the authority of Christ and destroying people's lives.

That's selfish anger, it's anger that benefits us and we need to be careful about that. And by the way, again speaking to parents and mentors and those that wield influence over younger folks, one of the ways you shape the consciences of the next generation is through your display of what makes you angry or not. So if you're like, oh man, the leaf's lost, but then there's rampant injustice in the world, you're like, I think I'm gonna go to bed.

And what does that communicate to your children over 10, 20 years? It communicates lack of priorities, what we should be angry about, what we shouldn't be angry about, it's all thrown off. A final emotion that I think is worth touching upon is fear and courage. Fear is ungodly, courage is godly.

In Joshua 1.9, as the people are about to enter into the promised land and do battle with the Canaanites, I'm sure there was a lot of guys shaking in their sandals because they'd never gone to war for 500 years or so, and their physical height mattered a lot in old style, old-fashioned combat. Now it's like, who's got the best weaponry? Back then you step onto a battlefield, you're five foot two and you're looking at a seven foot two giant. Yeah, that's intimidating.

But here's God's advice, have I not commanded you, so this is a rule, be strong and courageous, do not be frightened and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go. Fear, when God says go and you're like, I'm kind of scared, when God says don't go and you're like, I'm kind of scared if I don't go, when God says say that or don't say that and you're scared at his direct commands, what it is, is it's a denial of divine sovereignty. And frankly, it's also useless.

Fear carries no advantage in matters of faith. I mean, it's kind of helpful if you're being charged by a grizzly bear. But when it comes to the assignments that God has given to you, there's nothing redemptive about it.

What's the point of even being afraid when it takes you nowhere, because people are persecuting you or attacking you or God has given you a spiritual assignment, a ministry assignment, and you're like, I don't know if I'm up to that. It doesn't even accomplish anything. It's frankly, it's just distracting.

So we need to renounce, denounce fear and be courageous. And when we talk about courage, it's not a self-induced like, I'm going to oxygenate my blood more so I can be more courageous. It's gifted to you by God.

When God commands you to do something, he will give you all the necessary resourcing to get the job done. So we can be courageous instead of fearful. One final passage I want to read to you, just to sum this up, is in 1 Corinthians 15 verses 12 to 16.

I've often used this as a text when I've done funerals and it speaks about the hope that we have, but there's also something else in here that sometimes is overlooked. This passage, I'm just going to read a part of it, 1 Corinthians 15, 12 to 16, but the whole chapter is wonderful. I would commend you to read it this week with all this in mind.

The idea here is that spiritual salvation without material salvation is actually considered a hopeless gospel. If God's just saving the soul but he's not redeeming the body, that's a hopeless gospel. Verse 12, now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? This is part of like the early dualistic Gnostic heresies that were sweeping through the Greco-Roman world.

Oh, everything that's immaterial is good. Everything that's material is corrupt and bad. That was the idea.

13, but if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised, and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and our faith is in vain. So part of true faith is belief in a resurrection, a redemption of the physical realm created by God. Not just a redemption of the spiritual, but a redemption of the physical realm is part of the ultimate goal and purposes of the gospel.

Verse 15, we are even found to be misrepresenting God because we testified about God that he raised Christ whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. The gospel conquers sin's effect on the immaterial and on the material world.

Praise God for that. The lordship of Christ and the gospel of Christ will ultimately redeem all of creation, that which you can see and that which you can't see. Your body and your soul, your spirit will be redeemed by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ in the eternal kingdom.

So based upon God's promises of redemption and restoration of our spiritual self and our material self, the immaterial and the material, we have a responsibility now as our salvation is increasingly moving in the direction of its fullness, glorification, to steward our bodies and our soul spirits as an expression of the gospel in the here and now and as a means of honoring and glorifying God. So now this is true in recognition of God's grace through which our souls will one day be made perfect and our bodies will one day be made new, we will honor, seek to honor and glorify God, body soul and spirit and in doing so put the fullness of the gospel on display and also be a blessing to one other and a blessing to the world around us.

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