

# Setting Our Hearts towards God

by Daniel Schneider

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*This sermon delves into the journey of faith, exploring the challenges and reflections on spiritual growth over time. It emphasizes the need to identify competing factors that distract from a close relationship with God, the reality of life's ups and downs in the Christian walk, and the importance of focusing on the heavenly citizenship and the vision of striving for Christ. The message encourages self-reflection, seeking God's presence, and stimulating one another to love and good works.*

**Scripture:** Philippians 3:20, Hebrews 10:24, 1 Corinthians 14:26, Revelation 2:4, Exodus 34:6, Matthew 13:15, Psalm 63:1, Psalm 40:1, Ecclesiastes 7:8, Psalm 34:1

**Topics:** "Faith Journey", "Spiritual Growth"

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## Description

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## Transcript

Greetings in Jesus name today. Anybody have any prayer requests before we start? Micah Boak and his wife are there too. That's it, I guess we can stand and pray.

Father in heaven, I just want to bless your name today. I pray that you could be exalted. To you belongs all praise, all glory, all thanksgiving.

I just thank you for this fellowship we have today, brothers and sisters gathering, for a place to meet, for shelter, food and clothing. I just ask that you would feed us today with spiritual food, could be nourishing to us. Also, I just want to lift up some requests before you.

To be with Harvey down in Mexico, I just ask that you'd give a special grace to know how to serve you down there. He could be a blessing to Andre Roberto, that you give him wisdom as he searches for places or things to have an outreach down there. Fill him with your spirit.

Pray that you'd be with those that are near the wildfires on the West Coast, those that are unbelievers, that you'd use this situation to draw them closer to you, help them to see just the brevity of life, to be more concerned about the fires of hell, that you would convict them, draw them to you through this. Please be

with brothers that are over there as well, Delmo and Catherine, just give them wisdom, just know what to do, just keep them safe. Please be with Micah Boat, his family, watch over them, keep them safe.

Finally, Lord, I just ask for help. Share the things that I have prepared. Just, you know, I'm unworthy to share these things.

I just ask that you bless what I have here. Please be with those that might comment and share, that your spirit could be in our midst and help us to draw closer to you in this. Just ask this in the name of our Lord Jesus, amen.

I guess I just want to begin this morning with a little bit of transparency or maybe kind of a confession about how just over the last couple years, year or two, I think it kind of started in Bangladesh. I just have been discontent where I'm at spiritually or just how close I feel with God. And I often find myself looking back, maybe back when I had first repented, found the message of repentance and the Kingdom of God and that initial zeal, the love for reading Scripture, the newness that's there when you first come into faith.

And, you know, an excitement or a love for the lost, a love for preaching or the prospects of all the opportunities around the world for missions, things like that. And I guess I question why those things are not in my life now. It's caused me just to examine, is there anything in my life that has changed that would cause this difference or this difference in feeling? Is there something that would cause me to have grown cold in some way? And I recognize that this is one possibility.

Alternatively, it could just be a matter of perspective. That original newness that happens, there's a bigger spike in growth when you first, like the Bible is all new and you have lots to learn. So there's a rapid growth and it could just be this, maybe tapering off.

And another thing I've thought of is, maybe the difference has been coming and living with other brothers, interacting with everyone. You know, maybe it's before my spiritual measuring tape was like witnessing the sinners out on the street, in the bars and clubs, or people, my co-workers at my secular job. I didn't have much to base where I was at spiritually.

Maybe that's what made me feel close to God was I was just surrounded by people that were very far from God. Whatever the case, I'm not sure that there's a straightforward answer. Like I've been pondering this for a while and I don't know that I have just like a solution, but I also don't know that it's even a very healthy thing to dwell on the past like I have been.

I found something that challenged me in Solomon's words in Ecclesiastes. It's chapter seven. I'm just going to read verse eight and 10.

That stood out to me. He says, Better is the end of a thing than its beginning, and the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit. In verse 10, Say not, why were the former days better than these? For it is not from wisdom that you ask this.

You know, wisdom understands that it's not how you begin a race or begin something that matters, but it's how you finish it that merits reward. It seems like maybe it's more wise to look at where we're at now and gauge our spiritual direction and the goal that we have or where we're trying to get to, where we're headed and making necessary adjustments to get there rather than just wishing that things were like they were before. And so where this is leading is I want to look at a few things that, questions we can ask ourselves to get a spiritual gauge on where we're at spiritually.

How close are we striving for God? And I'm not really thinking of whether, like looking at whether we've committed a sin or something like that. I want to think of ways to catch something earlier in this narrow way that we are following Jesus. It's like this narrow path with a gulf on each side.

And if we diverge from the words of Jesus, if we start going or letting things drift, it seems like there should be a little bit of a gradualness before we just drop off the edge. Maybe there's some changes in our life that we allow relaxing in some way. That we can correct earlier on before it becomes something very serious.

And I think of just brothers, like recently we've heard of a brother that fell away into sin. And I wonder if there's things we can ask ourselves to avoid, like to catch our spiritual turning away from God before it turns into a real sin. Are there things that we allow our prayers to slip? We don't read scripture as much or just varying things that maybe we've allowed in our life to allow these things to come into our life, to drift away from God.

Before going through some of these questions that I had, I wanted to read Psalm 63, just to provide like an example of how I see in the Psalms the heart of some of the psalmists, their heart towards God. And this is what I desire to have and I feel that I'm lacking and I want to grow in this. I'm reading from a Septuagint translation, so it might vary just a little bit.

Psalm 63, hear my voice, O God, in my supplication, deliver my soul from fear of the enemy. I'm sorry, because of the Septuagint translation, I started reading the wrong psalm. It's one over.

Sorry, O God, my God, I rise early to be with you. My soul thirsts for you. How often my flesh thirsts for you in a desolate, impassable, and waterless land.

So in the holy place, I appear before you to see your power and your glory. Because your mercy is better than life, my lips shall praise you. Thus I will bless you in my life.

I will lift up my hands in your name. May my soul be satisfied as with marrow and fatness. And my mouth shall sing praise to you with lips filled with rejoicing.

If I remembered you on my bed, I meditated on you at daybreak. For you are my helper, and in the shelter of your wings, I will greatly rejoice. My soul follows close behind you.

Your right hand takes hold of me. But they seek for my soul in vain. They shall go into the lower parts of the earth.

They shall be given over to the edge of the sword. They shall be a portion for foxes. But the king shall be glad in God.

All who swear by him shall be praised. For the mouth that speaks unrighteous things is stopped." I felt like that psalm, many of the things that he says, you can tell this earnest desire just to be in the presence of God and to be finding our joy and hope and who God is, his laws, his character. Anyway, that's maybe the target.

These questions that I'm about to list, the target direction is to have this heart that we see in the psalms. So some questions that we can ask ourselves. And I think I'll also ask if any brothers have some maybe questions that they've asked themselves and I'll maybe ask after that I list these, if any brothers have

additions.

What were my first thoughts this morning? If you just think when you woke up, what was the first thing that I thought about today? How long was it before we thought about God or gave thanks or praise to him? And if other things came first, what are those other things? What things came to a higher priority than giving thanks to God in the morning? Maybe some things we can ask ourselves at the end of each day. What things dominated our thoughts? Throughout the day, was prayer something that was natural and a delight or was it a chore, something we had to remember to do or force ourselves to do? What things dominated our speech? Like Jesus said, out of the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks. Looking back through the day, did you have a desire to read scripture or to read something that would challenge you to seek after God? Throughout the day, did you have a love for people in our interactions with either brothers and sisters? Did we want to encourage them? Just love them, serve them? Or if we met unbelievers, were we thinking about their spiritual state, caring for them? Do we have a love for people and their eternal direction? Like a final question, has God been revealing sins and imperfections in our life? Are we being challenged to make changes and grow in God's likeness and his character? I think all of these things are things I've come up with as ways we can check.

Like, where is our heart still focused towards God or is it beginning to take a shift and getting distracted by something in this world? I guess, if anybody has any immediate thoughts, if any brother would have a question they'd like to share or I could leave it till the end. I have a few other questions. Directions, thoughts as well.

I think maybe I'll just go on and if at the end, hopefully these thoughts are connected in a way that makes sense to everyone. So, if we're asking ourselves these questions and we notice a spiritual decline in our life, I just want to think of, well, what can we do to fix it? What can we do to set our trajectory back towards God and making him our delight? First thought I had was remembering where we came from. Remembering the sinful path that God has pulled us out of.

I think it brings a remembrance of the goodness of God and his work in our life. I just want to read Psalm 40. It's the first six verses.

I waited patiently for the Lord and he heeded me. He heard my supplication and brought me up out of a miserable pit and from miry clay. He established my feet on a rock and kept straight my steps.

He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn to our God. Many will see and be afraid and shall hope in the Lord. Blessed is the man whose hope is in the name of the Lord and who do not look into vanities or false frenzies.

Many, oh Lord, my God, are the wonders you performed and in your thoughts there is no one who shall be likened to you. I declared and said they are multiplied beyond number. So yeah, just keeping that in mind, the miry pit that Christ has delivered us from, brought us out of, I think that can help get us back on track and our priorities straight.

I also think about meditating on the goodness of God and his glory. I won't go there, but I think we're probably familiar with that common phrase that describes God. The Lord is merciful and gracious, abundant in mercy.

And he will not acquit the guilty. And then it goes on, there's more to that, I know. But in Exodus 34, when Moses asked to see the face of God, God allows him to see his back.

He passes before him. It says that he was supposed to see the glory of the Lord, that the glory of the Lord passed before Moses. And then it says those qualities, the character of God, like that is his glory, I guess is the point.

Why I'm bringing that out. God's glory is his character. And I think the more we think on who God is, reflecting on his goodness, his mercies, love and kindness, this can help us grow in love for God and help him be our spiritual focus once again.

I want to read Psalm 34, although it doesn't include that phrase. I also just appreciated the psalm. I will bless the Lord at all times.

His praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul shall be praised in the Lord. Let the gentle hear and be glad.

Oh, magnify the Lord with me. Let us exalt his name together. I sought the Lord and he heard me and he delivered me from all my sojourning.

Come to him and be enlightened and your face shall never be ashamed. This poor man cried and the Lord heard him and saved him from all his afflictions. The angel of the Lord shall encamp around those who fear him and he will deliver them.

Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good. Blessed is the man who hopes in him. Fear the Lord, you his saints, for there is no want to those who fear him.

Rich men turned poor and went hungry, but those who seek the Lord shall not lack any good thing. Come, you children, listen to me. I will teach you the fear of the Lord.

Who is the man who desires life and loves to see good days? Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit. Shun evil and do good. Seek peace and pursue it.

The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous and his ears are open to their supplications. The Lord's face is against those who do evil, so as to destroy their remembrance from the earth. The righteous cried and the Lord heard them.

He delivered them from all their afflictions. The Lord is near those who are brokenhearted and he will save the humble in spirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but he will deliver them from them all.

The Lord shall guard all their bones. Not one of them shall be broken. The death of sinners is evil and those who hate the righteous shall go wrong.

The Lord will redeem the souls of his servants and all who hope in him shall not go wrong. I just appreciate psalms like this. I don't know, some of the character of God is brought out.

One thing I thought of that I really love about God's character is him coming and delivering those that are afflicted, those that are humble and walking in this earth, those that are poor, that he lifts those people up and then puts down those that are well off. Yeah, I guess if any brothers just wanted to share maybe some, if you could call it, favorite qualities or things that draw you to God, his goodness, or just

testimonies, things to share, I might just kind of close with that. If brothers have any thoughts that they'd have about kindling a love for God, maybe if you've experienced what I was trying to share, what I am experiencing or have experienced, and just maybe we could be encouraged in that for others that have been in the faith for a longer time and know that patience is required, steadfastness.

Again, hopefully these thoughts were connected enough to know what I'm saying. Okay, Lord bless you all. Yeah, I appreciate it, brother.

What you shared, I think I followed. I guess it's been a question that has come to my mind often as well. There's, I think when you first mentioned this, there's a truth in that that we recognize.

I just remember before I went to school, I was begging to go to school, and I don't remember how long I went, but after a week or two, I said, I told my mom I didn't want to go every day. And so, and then I looked forward to getting out of school. And finally that day came, and so it was, school time was a long time for me.

For a long time, it seemed like the longest time in my life. Anymore, it's kind of in the past, but it was kind of my whole memory of what I had. And then maybe going to the youth, and again, the point I was going to make is this new thing that we're excited about, and I think it's true.

And then like looking forward to getting older, and then looking forward to be on my own, and then in marriage is another good example of where people have to learn endurance. The excitement of marriage does not, the newness of it has to go away, it cannot stay. The love can be there, the goodness can be there, but I think the newness, it's just not new all the time.

After a while, it's life. And like the first baby, the rest of the babies were different. The first one was new.

And all the new experiences we go through in serving God, I found it that way too, that there's a newness that is exciting, and it's like you're ready to take the world on. And then later when life becomes a continuation, there is that part of having to set our faces toward the goal and keep going, sometimes through thick and sometimes through thin. That I also thought of that man that was leaping around in the Scriptures.

I think, was it the one that the disciples healed, I think? He was just leaping around. I suspect after two years, he wasn't leaping anymore. I suspect a lot quicker.

I doubt if he leaped all that day. But maybe the next day he did again a little bit. But I suspect it became a very normal thing for him to walk.

And I don't think that means it diminishes what happened. I don't think it diminishes a marriage just because it's not new anymore. I don't think it diminishes our walk with God, because, but it feels different.

There's a different perspective, maybe a different perspective, if that's the right thing. And so these questions kind of still go through my mind. Are we doing the things we should? Are we doing the things we could? Or should we be doing something different? And then if we're not careful, we start looking for things and blaming on things, and we end up being destroyed by that very act.

I think I could recognize that as well. The danger of falling away in that way. So it's good to, this is my opinion, I guess, but it's good to be ready to continue on and pressing into his ways at all times.

And I appreciated the different thoughts that Daniel shared. I just noticed here in Matthew 13, 15, it says, for this people's heart has grown dull, and their ears are hard of hearing. They have shut their eyes that they might not look with their eyes, and listen with their ears, and understand with their heart.

Well, there's got to be more to this, I guess. And understand with their heart and turn. And I would heal them.

If we turn our heart to God, will he not heal us? Will he not show us a path? Will he not be there for us? If we turn our hearts to him, and we continue humbling ourselves before him, I feel like that's what I did in the beginning of my walk with God. And my testimony would be that he faithfully led on as fast as he could, maybe, or as fast as was proper. Or I don't understand all the why's about that, but he, from that time on, I just recognized him guiding, leading.

I'm not saying I was perfect at all in all that, for sure not. But if we surrender to God, I'm fully persuaded he will lead us on. And we need to also trust him in that because he is able to, and he's willing to, if we keep our hearts turned to him.

So in this, I'm not sure if this is adding to something that Daniel shared, but I don't like this phrase, if your heart is right, everything's right. But it is true. If we have our heart turned toward God, he will bring things to right, even though that's a process, I think.

It's not something that just happens overnight. It didn't happen overnight in my life. There's bumps, there's hard things, there's joyous things, there's good things.

I guess we all know that life is not just all smooth and sometimes we fall, sometimes brothers help each other up. And this is how life is. So I guess I would, if I put a little emphasis on it, that we turn our hearts to God.

If we don't turn our hearts to God, but we want these nice things that Christianity has, I'm afraid we'll be disappointed. The beauty of truth and the beauty of holiness and the beauty of kindness, meekness, it cannot be. I don't believe we can imitate it.

We can't manufacture it. It has to be real. We might for time deceive some people, but I don't think we can cheat God that way.

Anyway, I've been really blessed and thankful to be here and hope that doesn't confuse anything. May God be with us. Yeah, thank you, Daniel, for that.

And thinking about the real characteristics of God. And one thing that came to mind was his real giving nature. No, God, he's able to give life and he gives it.

And it took me back to the scripture. Now abide these three faith, hope and charity, but the greatest of these is charity. And some different versions say love, which why would you do charitable things? Because you love.

But charity is giving and how the Lord, he gives life. And then he gives faith. He gives wisdom.

And I thought this guy last night, he asked me, I was talking to him. He said, well, what was the main reason, if you don't mind me asking, that brought you to the Lord? And it was the father, you know, because Jesus said, no man will come unto me except the father draws the heart. And God's real giving

nature.

And I could see the Lord, you know, I could see the Lord. He's, oh, I'm going to give him. I'm going to give him this little wisdom or this gift.

Oh, and he's going to be so happy. Oh, but you better be humble about it. You better be humble.

It's like a father that, you know, correction. We see how Jesus, you know, Jesus said, you know, he came to serve. And the real giving nature of the Lord and the correction, the real, the real love of God.

Jesus said in Revelations, those I love, I rebuke and chasten. So that's something to really appreciate is his giving nature. He gives life and he gives the faith.

He gives the courage. And he's the one who changes the heart because he loves. And I think, you know, the Lord, you know, the character, the real characteristics of the Lord, some of the true characteristics.

Yeah. Yeah. I say, amen, Brother Daniel.

I'd say those were good thoughts. And I, I'd say well connected to each other and thought provoking. And I also really appreciate that, that first Psalm that you read.

I, I read that one fairly often too, partly because at least part of it's highlighted in, in my Bible that, that one of the things you said, it's good to ask ourselves is, what was the first thing we thought about this morning? Or what's the first thing we think about in the morning? And then, and then how long, how long did it go or does it go until, till your thoughts are on anything godly or pertaining to God and his, you know, praising him or something. And in that Psalm, I'm not turned to it right away, but it says something like if, if I, if I remembered you on my bed, I meditated on you in the morning, something like that. And that's, that's just often how it goes.

What, what we go to bed with at night in our mind is what we wake up with in the morning. And sure, maybe sometimes there's something real, you know, real heavy that's, that we go to bed with. But, but I'd encourage us to look for patterns in our life.

Like, if the pattern reveals that most often it's whatever, business, jobs, ill thoughts towards someone. If that's the pattern, then we, we do well to recognize it. That's, that is, that is what, what we are and what, what, what we're, what we're consumed with.

I appreciated, I think, I think we can all probably relate to some of the things, what you shared there in the beginning, Daniel, about you wonder, you wonder why, you wonder why, like, things aren't quite like they were in the beginning. What, like, you're afraid, you're afraid something might be wrong and that you don't feel the same way. I appreciated the, the other perspectives that you brought up and what could be in play.

Because I, I just kind of think almost everybody goes through that. And I don't think it's always, like, I think there is a real danger in losing our first love, as, as, as Christ warned the church at Ephesus about. I think there's a real danger in that.

But I also just think that, like, there's just a reality, and you talked about it, Walter talked about it, there's just a reality about that something fresh and something new, that the change is so great. The spike, as you talked about, is so, the spike in growth is so, so great. Like, it's, it is just noticeable.

And then, and then God takes people through this, through this wilderness of testing to figure out, like, can their, can their faith survive when it gets dry, when it gets, when His words are something that we're far more used to, they're more familiar to us. You know, the children of Israel, they got out of Egypt, they got through the Red Sea. Deliverance was right in front of their eyes.

The enemy was floating dead on the waters. And, and they sang praises and were, were, were rejoicing. And, and yet, like, God, part of God's purpose to take them through the wilderness there is to see what they were truly made of.

It's not, it's not so hard to be zealous for God when, when, when the excitement and the freshness and the newness is right in front of your eyes. But then, you know, then, then what about if some of the, some of the things that are way more costly in this commitment start settling in? Or even, remember when they started to get manna. It was fresh.

It was, wow, this is amazing. It's miraculous. But after 40 years of eating that stuff, it was dry.

It was old. They were so used to it. And they shouldn't have complained, like, God was just displeased about their complaining.

But, but I think, I think God purposefully, like, allows this wilderness to happen in us to, to really test us, does our, does our faith have any endurance to it? Does it have any, is there, is there anything there that, that is deeper than an experience? And I think that's, that's what will endure to the end. And I also really appreciated some of the thoughts you had about, about things we can think of to correct things. I, I totally agree with, like, remembering what we had been delivered from.

In fact, I think I see it over and over in Scripture that God wants us to do that. God wanted the children of Israel to set up things so that, so that they won't forget what happened. And that when their children and their grandchildren ask, what is this, what is this pile of stones about? What is this thing about? You say, remember, we were bondmen in Egypt.

Peter, Peter talks about, where he says, add to your, add to your faith, patience, and knowledge, and all the, add to your knowledge, this and this and this. And then at the end, he says, if we lack these things, we, we stumble around and we forget that we've been purged from our former sins. And, and I know, I know we sometimes meet people, and all they want to talk about is how they had a salvation experience 20 years ago.

And, and, and, and you start wondering, like, well, tell me of some kind of a testimony of God in your life today. Well, and, and sometimes we, sometimes we meet people who can only think of that past experience, and you wonder, you wonder about their current situation. But I, but I just think there's a, like, the completeness is, is that we do have a life and a testimony of Christ today, but that we do not forget our, our former sins.

What, what did, what does it say in the Revelation of John? They overcame him by the blood of the lamb and the word of their testimony. One more thought, I, I thought about this, this thing that the Amish preachers would often say, it's not out of scripture, but it's out of some, some old German writing that, that they carried it. I'll just try to translate it as best as I can, kind of quickly.

But they said, like, think often of the four last things. Death, which is nothing more sure. Judgment.

Yeah, judgment in which there is nothing more weighty or final. I can't quite be sure. And heaven, which nothing more joyful.

And hell, which is nothing more terrifying. I think that's, those are, it's good to think often of those four, four last things. Anyway, I just appreciate the thought, thought-provoking opening here.

Amen. Father Daniel, I, I didn't want to interrupt you when you said any comments, because we'd be here for the millennium if I talked, if, if I interrupted. I appreciate, Walter, your testimony.

Brother Darren, your thoughts, and Duane's, and anyone else after me. But yeah, if we don't think like that, the in, in, what do you call it? Take an inventory of searching our hearts. Something is definitely a matter of, the honeymoon is over.

As Brother Duane was talking about, it, it, it goes over, and we have a continual journey in our Christian life. I remember one old German Baptist man, I don't know if he's living anymore, but he used to say, it's just one more chapter of your life is written. And Joe's not here today, but Joey's older than me.

And even when you get older, your body shrinks, and your mind goes. And so I'm looking, I'm looking forward to another chapter. It, we, we start out young, like Elisha and Cephas, and we grow up, we get to be, like, faithful, and then, and then, as you get older, life is a journey.

I appreciate the song you started out with, old to be likely. We want to be conformed to his image. And that's our whole life journey.

And David, who wrote the Psalms, look at all the valleys and roller coasters he went through. All the sins he committed, too. It wasn't one big honeymoon experience.

And then Paul, look at all the punishments or the persecutions. Paul went through. And in the third verse of that song, old to be likely, that was the one I concentrated.

It was concentrating, it was focusing on his sufferings. Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. Okay, when Michael Sattler was, was burned like a, like a little candle there, they had 21 people they brought to, 21 people were brought in, accused of being against the state religion and being heretics and all that.

How many recanted of that 21? 15. Only six remained faithful. Six.

But they were strong enough to be called Anabaptists and Christians at one time. But when it came to suffering, I don't know the man. No, I don't know the man.

Let's press on to that thing, the five churches of Revelation. Someone mentioned that 1 Corinthians 14, 26, it says that, when you come together, I thank you, Atlee, for giving me the 26th translation, because I wanted to prove it. When you come together, every one of you has a psalm, a revelation, a teaching.

Every one, each. There isn't anyone. All, what we should think about all week long is, how am I going to edify my brothers and sisters when we come together? Number one, we have the large supper, which is the greatest meal we'll ever take.

And number two, how can we edify one another? Encourage us. Hebrews 10, let us not, oh, don't forsake the assembly. Let us not forsake this.

But let's continue how to stimulate one another to love and good works. I have Friday and Saturday off next week. I can't wait to go to Branson and Darren with Aaron and Darren.

And I can't wait for that. I can't wait. I don't have to work tomorrow night.

I can't wait for the Bible study. To be with you people. Community.

That's why we moved here. We moved here to be with the brethren. That's why most of us moved here, Tao.

We moved here for each other. We need each other. Our father.

Let us. Let us. It's us.

It's not about one person. It's about our continual service to one another, Brother Rick. It's about us putting others on a higher plane than ourselves.

And nothing generates more enthusiasm than enthusiasm. The other night when we took communion, the Friday night, I told Sarah. I think I told you, Brother Max.

That was probably the most blessed night in my five or seven years here. Two years with healing and five years here. Sister Michelle, you were the only one that wasn't here.

It was a blessing. All of a sudden, Leroy started singing. Joseph started singing.

Out of the heart, we're praising God. It was great. That, to me, was the best service we ever had.

And let's go beyond that. But anyway, I get so excited. Yeah, the lame man leaping and praising God.

But we can get rejuvenated. Forget the early Christians and the Anabaptists. Let's put them to shame.

Let's go stronger. We don't have to just die and say, well, they were my heroes. And that's it.

Let's put them to shame. But let's try to do what we have and redeem the time and learn from our mistakes. Let us.

I'm done. I could keep going on. Brethren, we have so much to be thankful for.

Count our blessings. And the ones who lived in a sinful life like myself and some others, boy, oh boy, it seems that we have a greater debt to pay. Not really, because all have sinned.

But we have someone who bore our sins. We have life beyond this life. I like the book you lent me, Tao.

I read it. He has a lot of good points, a lot of good points. I didn't finish it yet.

But let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good works. And you did it just, you're just doing quiet, Dan. You're just inverting, but they all, we all do it.

So Michael and Molly just got married. The honeymoon will be over in a year. Then they're going to get on to real life.

I mean, say real life, the Christian walk from babes to mature to mature. The Lord be magnified. Oh, I kind of resigned not to say anything, but I just, oh, I just really appreciate the things that Robert was sharing and the rest of you brothers.

I just, I do find myself in some of those same places, Daniel, sometimes. And I think about the things that compete for the time with the Lord. It does seem like when we're hard pressed or even almost at a point of discouragement that it becomes like a sharper intensity to need to seek out God in the scriptures.

Or at least the hunger for it grows. But like, but one thing in particular for me, like I love current events and my appetite for that kind of waxes and wanes. I'm not real hungry for it right now.

I feel like I've had enough, but that doesn't mean that it won't come back in the future and be another competing factor. And I just, I think it's important to identify those things. I think Brother Duane was saying not about the same competing factor, but just about things to identify them and, oh, be aware of them, I guess, and beware of them.

I've been thinking lately a lot about like society and also organized religion. And I think, and this is kind of ironic, you know, like when Lisa and I were first married, we really, we were really looking for this utopian group of Christians that were just like living above the world. And at least, you know, like they're especially in, especially externally looking in, like there are a lot of plain Anabaptist groups that seem to be attaining that.

But it only takes a little while of getting to know some of these people where you see that like they are very good at having a clean exterior. And I'm not saying that they're dirty inside, but they are people who have problems and conflicts and dilemmas just like anywhere else. I don't think it's apathetic to say that I've stopped believing in a utopian existence here on this planet.

I don't think that's being apathetic. I think it's, I think it's realistic that utopia that we desire is something coming, something in the afterlife. What is different like from group to group is the vision, like what it is that we're striving for.

And the irony that I was speaking of, like that's, there's like a utopia, which means like a, almost kind of a heavenly existence. I was reading in Philippians the other day and Paul says, in the King James, it says that our conversation is in heaven, but like, but other translations say that our citizenship is in heaven. And so we ought not to get caught up on things here.

That's where our citizenship is. That's something that I, that I find solace and comfort in, especially that kind of pulls me out of discouragement or point of spiritual low lately is, is that like Jesus was speaking to the, he had for us the antidote to, to the dystopia that's created by organized religion and by the societies of the world. And I keep getting sidetracked, but that, that irony is that like there are organizations that exist to create utopia and they end up creating a dystopia.

Like, like there's, they're rallying around a central point. It could be Jesus. And somehow the focus shifts and it becomes more on the organization.

It becomes more on numbers. It becomes, it becomes, the organization is the end. It, it's not, it's not seeking and striving to be part of Christ and the, and the body of Christ.

Somehow the, so, so there's like this, this toxic social atmosphere that gets created, whether it's society at large, secular society, or whether it is like the, the social construct within organized religion, like it creates a dystopia. And at any way, like I try not to think about Christianity in terms of humanism, but like Jesus at his time was criticizing the dystopia that existed within the Roman empire and also within, within the Jewish religion. He was, he was giving everybody the solution to those things, the things that can, that can give us the right vision and get us closer and on track to attain that utopia.

I know it's all very generic, but I just, those are some of my thoughts and I appreciate the message, Daniel. We're spirits as fresh as the dew on the sun. We turn from the world with its smiles and its scornings.

To cast in our honor the people of God. The master that follows his sons and his fathers, we thank for his blessing and trust in his love. And through the green pastures, beside the still waters, he'll lead us at last to his kingdom of love.

Mighty God, by angels' blessing, may a mortal sing thy name. Lord of men, as well as angels, thou art in every creature's being. Lord of earth, earth, and nation, king of love, eternal King.

Sounded through the wide creation, be thy just and love of praise. For the render of thy nature ran beyond the sterile slough. For created works of power, works for skill and kindness draw.

For thy rich, thy free redemption, wrath of heaven and darkness long. Father's glory and more expression, who can sing thy wondrous song? Brightness, love, the Father's glory, shall thy praise from all through life. Great like dawns, such yielding silence, sing the glory of God.

From the highest crowning glory to the crown of Heaven's world, all who ransomed, killed, and buried, shall be happy, for thy praise forever flows. For to be my King, as a Redeemer, this is my constant longing and prayer. Ready, afforded, all of thy treasure, give us thy purple and thy nice new wear.

Oh, to be my King, oh, to be my King, as a Redeemer, as a Father. Found in thy sweetness, found in thy fullness, and thy knowledge deep from my heart. Oh, to be my King, full of compassion, loving, forgiving, helping, God help us, cheering the faintly, seeking the one great set to find.

Oh, to be my King, oh, to be my King, blessed Redeemer, pure as thou art. Found in thy sweetness, found in thy fullness, and thy knowledge deep from my heart. Holy and harmless, patient and brave, weepy and gnawing, true, holy, precious.

Willing to suffer, promised to save. Oh, to be my King, oh, to be my King, blessed Redeemer, pure as thou art. Found in thy sweetness, found in thy fullness, and thy knowledge deep from my heart.

Oh, to be my King, Lord, I am coming, now to receive you, Lord, you divine. Oh, where I am, where have I been bringing, Lord, from this moment, all shall be thine. Oh, to be my King, oh, to be my King, blessed Redeemer, pure as thou art.

Found in thy sweetness, found in thy fullness, and thy knowledge deep from my heart.

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