

# Hebrews - the Way Forward (3)

by J. Glyn Owen

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*The church is called to live at peace with all men and seek holiness and sanctity without which no man shall see the Lord, and we must be careful not to hinder the church's mission through our own sinful actions.*

**Duration:** 45:30

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, Hebrews 12:14-17

**Topics:** "Hebrews"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the importance of not following the wrong people and staying faithful to God. The main theme is derived from Hebrews 12:14-17, which emphasizes the need to live in peace, be holy, and not miss the grace of God. The preacher warns against sexual immorality and godlessness, using the example of Esau who sold his inheritance rights for a single meal. The sermon concludes by challenging the listeners to prioritize God in their lives and not to trade their relationship with Him for trivial things.

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## Transcript

We continue our studies this morning and our meditation in the passage in the epistle to the Hebrews, chapter 12, the passage that begins with verse 14 and proceeds to verse 17. We have entitled this The Way Forward, and I guess for the benefit to friends who may be visiting us it would be helpful to read that little section at this point, though we shall be concentrating this morning very particularly on verses 16 and 17. Let's read then from verse 14 in Hebrews 12 through to the end of that paragraph.

Make every effort to live in peace with all men, and to be holy. Without holiness no man will see the Lord. See to it that no one misses the grace of God, and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.

And now to our text for this morning. See that no one is sexually immoral, or is godless like Esau, who for a single meal sold his inheritance rights as the oldest son. Afterward, as you know, when he wanted to inherit this blessing he was rejected.

He could bring about no change of mind, though he sought the blessing with tears. Some people are introduced into Holy Scripture in order for successive generations to see the kind and quality of life they lived and to emulate them. In Hebrews 11 that's the principle, why certain people are mentioned by faith so-and-so, by faith so-and-so, and the purpose is, the plan is, that we should see in them the way we

should also live the life of faith.

One person is introduced into Scripture in order that in all things we should copy him, insofar as that is humanly possible, and that is our Lord Jesus Christ. Others are introduced into the sacred narrative for a different purpose. Not because of any good they did, but because of the evil, and because of their potentiality for evil in the circumstances in which they lived.

And so they are introduced very much as a lighthouse is built on a promontory. And each time we meet them in Scripture they tell us, don't come near to us. Don't do as we did.

Don't think as we thought. Don't live as we lived. They tell us, in other words, don't copy us.

Esau was such a person. He was introduced into the sacred scriptures, but truth is told concerning him, in order that having read the Word of God and got the point, we should be very diligent and very careful not to act as Esau did. There's a very interesting and a very challenging point right at this stage.

When the story of your life and mine is written, when the story of this church is written, will it be in order that others should copy us and may happily, profitably follow us? Or will it be that men and women should not so do, but keep away, take another path, move around the route we took? Serious question, isn't it? Your life and mine tells, either for good or for evil. And the Word of God has something to say about this very challenging situation of following the wrong people. Well now, here is our text today.

The first thing I would like us to consider is the elaboration of the preceding point. What we have this morning in verses 16 and 17 is really a continuation of the main theme, as you saw from the passage we read. See to it that no one misses the grace of God, that is what goes before, and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.

And then it goes on to today's Word. See to it that no one is sexually immoral or godless as Esau. It's a continuation of the same theme as we had last time.

Now, what was the preceding point? The preceding point is this. Put in a nutshell, here it is. The church is called to a twofold task, to live at peace with all men.

But the kind and quality of peace, that means that at the same time we are seeking after holiness and sanctity without which no man shall see the Lord. In other words, we are not seeking peace at the price of principle, moral principle. At the price of sanctity, at the price of holiness, we are not to seek peace at any price.

We are to seek peace built on the principle of sanctity and righteousness. That's our calling. To this end we are to evangelize.

To this end we are to encourage one another. To this end we are to teach the Word of God. To this end we are to do every other thing that we should be able to bring peace into the situations of this world and holiness without which no man shall see the Lord.

But now, many things can hinder us there. The first thing mentioned was this, that Christian people fail to imbibe, fail to take in the grace of God. We can only seek peace with men, we can only become holy by the grace of God.

And if you come to church and you don't receive the grace of God, and if you go through your own personal devotions and you don't receive the grace of God, you will not be able to live at peace with people, and you will not be able to grow in sanctity. It is necessary, absolutely necessary, that every Christian man and woman receive the grace of God. Everything is in vain unless we receive grace from God.

Grace as the capacity to obey Him, the enabling to do His will. That's one thing. But then the other thing is this, there can emerge in some of our hearts a root of bitterness.

A terrifying thing. We can become embittered toward God or toward one another, and we can thus, you see, cut the very nerve of our calling. We cannot live at peace with anybody if we're bitter against them, and we cannot be sanctified and holy as God is holy.

On the contrary, we become defiled and we become in process a defiling people. Hideous thought, that your influence and mine in the world and in our own families can be defiling. Rather than sanctifying and pacify.

Now, the continuation of that theme today. The ensuing elaboration. Here are two other things mentioned that can equally hinder the church in her two-fold mission mentioned here.

The first is sexual immorality. The second is the godlessness that was practiced by Esau. Look at the first.

Sexual immorality can also result in the church's defilement. See that no one is sexually immoral. Now, in an age such as ours, this is a very, very challenging thing.

When from early days, fellows and girls believe that promiscuity is the right thing. Indeed, they're almost encouraged to be promiscuous in matters sexual. And parents are afraid to say much about it.

It is so contrary to the ethos, to the atmosphere in the world and in the schools. Now, the word of God tells us that if you are practicing any kind of sexual immorality, you frustrate the church's mission. You cannot live at peace with men in the sense in which the word peace emerges here in a Hebraic context.

Peace means seeking the very highest and the best for people and bringing it about as best we can. It's virtually like agape. It's wanting the highest and the best and doing my all to bring it about.

Shallow means nothing less than that. And I cannot do it if at the same time, I am willing to express my own passions and my own lusts at the expense of some fellow, some girl, some man, some woman, some marriage. Now, I'm not going to say much about this this morning, please.

Not because it is unimportant. I think that we are aware of the importance of this and the danger of it. We've heard a lot about it.

And my friends, it is important. There is grace for this. There is forgiveness to the penitent in this realm as in other realms.

But do not let us practice anything of this kind in a church. Anybody in charge of a Sunday school class, any counselor going to a camp who is questionable morally, anybody who has anything to do with the work of God and who is morally at sea here is a menace to the church in the fulfillment of its God-appointed mission. You cannot raise men morally and spiritually to a higher plane than you are yourself.

Neither can I. None of us can. Therefore, says the writer of this epistle, see that no one is sexually immoral. And the word covers any kind of sexual immorality.

I know the word was used in classical Greek for a particular kind of pervert, for a male prostitute particularly. But in the New Testament, it has come to envisage every kind, any kind of immorality, any kind of sexual aberration. I move to the next.

See to it also, says the writer, that there shall be no one. See to it that no one is godless like Esau. Now, the Greek word translated a godless person is not easy really to translate or to get out.

The King James Version, you remember, speaks here of a profane person. And it's probably very near the point. We have an illustration of what it means, so we can't go wrong.

But to just translate the Greek word into English is not all that easy. Interestingly, if you trace its history, I think it becomes reasonably clear too. In classical Greek, the word meant accessible to everyone.

Accessible to everyone. What do you mean? Well, this. The person who is accessible to everyone is generally the kind of person who has no standards, no scruples.

He'll never upset you whatever you say. He'll never say no to any suggestion you make. He's just a happy-go-lucky kind of person.

And of course, you enjoy the company. We all enjoy the company of men and women like that. They'll never say no.

They'll never raise a question about anything. Good sports, you know. They'll sit and drink with you.

They'll talk smut with you. If you talk smut, they can talk about anything. You move.

You go anywhere. You talk about anything. You say they'll not raise any qualms.

Accessible to everyone. Now this is in contradistinction, you see, to the meaning of holiness, which is this. Dedicated to be the Lord.

This is the exact antithesis of holiness. If you and I catch on the atmosphere and the attitude and the absence of principles in the world around us, represented by Tom, Dick, Harry, the candlestick maker, or anybody else. If you and I are on anybody's wavelength and can fit in anywhere and can have everybody think well and speak well of us, listen, my friend.

It means that at that point you are not holy. You are not dedicated to the Lord. You cannot serve God and money.

You cannot serve God and unholiness and unsanctity. You cannot be on the side of a God of principle and apparently give your blessing and get involved in unprincipled talk any more than in unprincipled behavior. The point is this.

Being accessible to everybody and open to influence from any quarter, good, bad, or indifferent, you see, the profane man like Esau, he doesn't have any way of putting the right value tag on anything. And this is the disaster. We shall come to that a little later on.

This is the value. He doesn't know the value of the sanctities of life. Life in this world and the life which is to come.

The value of things holy has never crossed his mind. And so, you see, he gives in. He agrees.

He's a lovely fellow. Everybody's talking well about him. Esau was a man like that.

You see, the tragedy with so many of us is this. This is what we want. We want everybody to speak well of us.

And our grief is that people don't speak better of us. We want everybody to smile. We want everybody to be kind to us.

But you cannot have it in a fallen world and serve a holy God. It is not possible. You have to die a death to self in order to live for a holy God in an unholy world.

Now, Esau is a perfect example of this. He'd come to the point where he didn't know the difference between sacred and profane. He couldn't see a difference between having a meal and recognizing the value of his God-given birthright.

He sold it for one solitary meal. We'll come to that in a moment. Put simply, the implication here is that a person does not have to be positively vulgar, blasphemous, or immoral to frustrate the mission of the church.

Now, I hope that there is no one among our membership here in Knox who's vulgar, who takes the name of the Lord in vain, whose language is not pure, who knows nothing about having your speech seasoned with salt. I hope not. But listen, you don't need to be vulgar.

You don't need to be blasphemous to hinder the work of God. You can just be a man like Esau, who doesn't know what's holy and what's profane. You've become so accustomed to the profane that really you will treat a God-given birthright of this immensity as of no more value than the satisfaction of one whim at one moment in time.

And what the writer of this letter is saying, that man can assuredly hinder the church in its onward march in the will of God as the immoral man. Now, this is humbling. This is humbling.

Now, let's come to the illustration of the peril envisaged by these. See that no one is sexually immoral or is godless like Esau. There's a difficulty here, and I'm going to gloss over it, but I must refer to it in case you think that we don't see it.

And I want you to know that we're aware of it. It's a grammatical difficulty. Does the writer mean to say that Esau illustrates immorality as well as profanity? Linguistically, grammatically, it could be one or the other.

Now, I'm going to take Esau this morning merely as an illustration of profanity. I'll tell you why. Now, in the scriptures, I do not think we have sufficient evidence to prove that Esau was immoral as such.

True, he did marry girls that his mother and father didn't like. That doesn't necessarily say that he was immoral. And I don't see any evidence in the Old Testament or the New which proves to me that Esau was immoral.

I know that in post-biblical literature the Jews thought of him as a grossly immoral man. I know that. But the scriptures don't say so.

Therefore, as far as I'm concerned, every man is innocent until he's proved guilty. And I don't take him as an illustration of immorality as such, but I'm taking him this morning simply as an illustration of this awful, this hideous kind of profanity. See then that no one is godless or profane like Esau, who for a single meal sold his inheritance rights as the oldest son.

Now, the first thing we have to ask is this. What did this inheritance right include? What was it? We are suggesting that it was important, that he shouldn't have sold it. He shouldn't have so easily got out of it, and just for a meal of one solitary meal.

What really did it include? Well, the content of the inheritance rights of the firstborn was considerable, especially seen in its context. Now, you've got to go back over the years into the context of the day and the culture. The firstborn son assumed a particular role in ancient society.

First of all, there were material aspects to this inheritance. On his father's death, the firstborn son inherited a double share of the estate. It was a fundamental rule that sons alone had the right of inheritance.

The law later forbade any favoritism by the father, but at this point in time there was no such law. The ancestral home would go into the hands of the firstborn, and so he would perpetuate the tradition of the home, speaking generally. He would live there, and everything would become his, and the rest of the family would probably fall in alongside of him.

There were domestic and social implications beyond this. During his father's lifetime, the eldest son would take precedence over all his brothers and sisters. On the father's death, however, he would become the head of the family, the head of the family, and thus he would represent the family in all the affairs with the clan, with the tribe, with society generally.

He would be virtually what the father was up until now. His right of primogeniture could be confiscated, as is the interestingly enough the case of Reuben, who lost his on account of an act of incest. Yes, incest.

Anyway, don't let's go after that. There were domestic and social implications to being the firstborn in an ancient Jewish family, and there were spiritual involvements. The firstborn child and beast in Israel, as you will remember, were the possession of the Lord.

Every firstborn beast was offered to God immediately. Firstborn animals were all sacrificed to him, whereas firstborn sons were redeemed by the payment of the appropriate sacrifice. Now, that gave the firstborn a kind of spiritual certificate, qualifying him for something akin to being the priest of the family.

He was redeemed, you see, from death, and he was the one who succeeded the father. He became the head of the household, and he became thereby the kind of priest, the man who stood between the family and God, who prayed for the family, if there was any prayer to be offered, who stood between God and the family. Now, in Esau's case, there was one other factor.

He was unaware of it. But the firstborn in this case, in the case of this family, the one who received the firstborn blessing, this one was to be a link between Abraham and Isaac, in whom the promise of the Messiah was to be fulfilled, and the Jesus that was to be born of the Virgin Mary. The rights of the firstborn in this context, therefore, were most significant.

You add these several ingredients together, and they certainly come to something quite significant. Now, recognizing this, as Esau did, he knew what it involved. The next point is this.

It's to evaluate this. What's asked of me in order to become all this, in order to assume this responsibility? It's the challenge of taking in what is involved, the benefits, the blessings of it, and then the corresponding responsibilities, and coming to this conclusion. Am I prepared to act responsibly in order to be this kind of person? I've no doubt that Prince Charles has more than once had a couple of hours to think whether really it's all worth it to be the prospective heir to the British crown, and to pay the incalculable price required of such a person, to live a circumscribed life, to have the cameras on you all the time.

And I'm quite sure that Lady Diana has thought something similar. We're told that in the press, aren't we, whether they're not always right. But is it worth it? Now, the calamitous attitude of Esau is this.

He saw what was offered, he saw what providence was offering him, but he weighed it up, and he came to the conclusion on one occasion that it wasn't worth one meal. It was more important for him to have one good meal at a time when he came in from the fields, hungry, and he saw his twin brother, who was a little bit of a cook, and he had some red stew ready on the table. Oh, he says, give me that red, that red, red stew quickly.

I'm dying. He wasn't dying, of course. It's all exaggeration.

The point is, he was not self-controlled. He was really no one, he was not in charge of himself. He was a man who was out of control, and he made a bargain.

You know, his brother Jacob was pretty cunning, and Jacob said, all right, he says, I'll let you have some of this, but wait a moment, he says, you'll have to pay for it. Well, what's the price? Oh, says Jacob, sell me your birthright. Oh, says Esau, well, what's the value of the birthright to me anyway? I'm about to die.

He'd only lost a meal or, say, two at the most during that day. I'm about to die, he says. Everything is exaggerated, you see.

Nothing is seen in proportion. Everything's out of proportion, and it is sheer exaggeration. He says, I'm about to die anyway, so just give me, just give me that.

Yes, you can have my birthright. No, wait a moment, says Jacob, swear to me. Now, this taking an oath in the Old Testament era meant something infinitely more than the kind of oath men generally take today.

It's more akin to that which takes place in the police, in a law court. It was serious. Swear to me, he says.

And you know, the man swore to his twin brother, he says, yes, he says, you can have my birthright. Take it all, he says, just give me this meal. I can't live without it.

And he gulped it out, up, and he went out. And the passage, as you heard from our reading this morning, ended by saying, thus did Esau despise his birthright. Here is the man who was to stand between God and his family and his heirs.

And what he's saying is this, as far as I'm concerned, let God be God. I don't want his blessing. It need not come through me.

I, if he's going to bless any of my family, it'll be despite me. I want my food. Now, that's profanity.

It's the inability to recognize the importance of spiritual things and to treat them as trivial. And in that attitude of mind and heart, to sell that which is eternally significant for something that is just of momentary value. Now, that spirit and that attitude towards God and the things of God can as effectively frustrate a Christian congregation's quest for peace and for holiness and as tragically defile the church as can a root of bitterness or immorality or anything else.

If there are men and women whose names are on our church records who call themselves members of the body of Christ and worship with us, who treat the sanctities of God as of less important than momentary pleasure of any kind, I say to you, that man, that woman is hindering this church or any other church doing the will of God. Now, you may be a very lovable character. You may be as popular as he so was, but I tell you, you are standing in the way of the church's onward march.

You are alongside the immoral. You are alongside the person who has a flaming hatred, a root of bitterness against everybody. We're all in the same category if we've got this spirit.

Will you face yourself this morning? God knows your heart. God knows mine. Am I guilty of this? Do you see any signs of it in me? Tell me.

The consequent blessing as well as birthright which Esau denied. You notice what happens here. Look at verse 17.

I must hurry to close. Afterward, as you know, when he wanted to inherit this blessing, he was rejected. He could bring about no change of mind, though he sought the blessing with tears.

Now the writer of the epistle brings two things together. One is in chapter five and the other is in chapter 27. You have to read chapter 27 for yourself.

It's the time when you see Rebecca overheard the old man Isaac say that he was about to die and he wanted to give his last fatherly blessing to the firstborn and the firstborn was Esau. But she loved Jacob. And so Esau as we read chapter 27, the villains of the piece are, of course, Rebecca and Jacob.

We see Jacob cheating at the suggestion of his mother, of course, and he becomes a liar and he masquerades as Esau when really he's Jacob. And he pulls the curtains over the eyes of the old man who didn't have very good eyesight anyway. And he says, I am Esau.

And he presents what the old man expected from Esau, venison, you remember. And the dear old man in his blindness blessed the wrong boy. Now the culprits there are essentially Rebecca and Jacob.

And unfortunately we can get so wrapped up with that that we don't see the wood for the trees. Now I don't want to justify Rebecca and Jacob for one moment. They were both radically wrong.

They were sinners before God, but there is one thing they had. And it was the one thing for which Esau was damned and lost any right to the inheritance. But what did they have? I'll tell you.

They recognized the value of the birthright and the blessing. They saw the value of things spiritual. They were prepared to cheat to get it.

Rebecca would go to any lengths to get Jacob to receive it, you see. And Jacob would obey Rebecca. And so they go through all this palaver.

Oh God, have mercy on them. It's all wrong. I'm not justifying that.

But I want you to see behind it. You see, they have this redeeming feature. They recognize the value of it.

This is worth having. This is worth possessing. This is something to say to posterity.

The man who receives this and acts accordingly is a man who will stand somewhere in the history of our nation and in the will of God. And we must get it for Jacob. The Bible tells us that when Esau came in and discovered what had happened, he tried to persuade his father to change his mind and to bless him.

And by this man, it would seem that the old man, Isaac, had really realized that God was in this. See, he wasn't willing. He wasn't willing to do what God had said at the birth of the children.

The younger shall serve. The old elder shall serve the younger. But by this time, he's beginning to see that with all the bungling and all the sin may be the hand of the God of Abraham and of Isaac is in this.

And when Esau comes to plead to him and say, Lord, Father, he says, haven't you got any blessing for me? Oh, he says, I have blessed it and he will be blessed. I have blessed it, blessed him. And I cannot withdraw what I've given to my son, Jacob.

I've given him the blessing. But there is a word in the epistle to the Hebrews, which says that Esau had been disqualified. He had disqualified himself.

His profanity with regards the birthright had disqualified him from anything else that was spiritual from God. Brothers and sisters, I find this very, very challenging. You can disqualify yourself from the blessings of God by a profanity.

Of the Esau type, you can treat things spiritually so as meaning so little. As demanding so little from you, as worthy of so little from you that virtually you and I disqualify ourselves from any anything from God. If he comes to us, then it will be of his own will and out of sheer unexpected grace, grace that cannot be expected by us.

God did have something for Esau and for his, and this is the evidence of the fact that he is a God of grace. But you see, as far as Esau was concerned, he had no claim upon it. If you're within the covenant of God and if you are bound to him in covenant, then let's say it reverently and humbly, but God has given us a claim upon him.

God has given us a claim upon him because he's given us a promise, and he's gone into covenant, and he sealed his covenant with blood, and he sent his son, and he sent his spirit, and he's given us his word. He's written it down, and he signed and sealed it, and he's gone on, he's gone, he's gone on oath, you see. So God, God says, you have a claim upon me if you bring my promises back and plead them before me.

And this is the whole essence of prayer. This is the whole essence of our hope. By God's infinite grace, we have a claim upon him because he's a God of covenant.

But Esau cut the nerve. He was outside the covenant promises, yet God blessed even Esau. Not that Esau had any claim upon him, but God's grace is even greater than his promises.

Now I must close. Now what's the point of all this in the context? Well, you see, this was being written because the writer, God-fearing, godly man, pastor that he was, he could see that the recipients of this letter were in danger of doing in principle exactly what Esau had done. Jesus has been preached to them as the one who made one sacrifice for all forever on the cross of Calvary to take away our sins.

And having heard it, and in some measure profited from it, they were seriously considering turning around and going back from him, the sacrifice of the son of God, to express their worship in terms of the sacrifice of beasts, of bullocks, and of sheep. They're turning from the great sanctities to the profanities in comparison. I'm only speaking comparatively.

They would forsake the word that God has spoken through his son and go back to the prophets and the law. And in comparison, they're leaving the greater, they're leaving the substance for the shadow. Let me put it to you like this.

In the writer of this epistle, the author has been telling us how we in the Christian dispensation are able to enter into the very holiest by the blood of Jesus. To come to the God whom we cannot see, seated on his throne in the heaven with his glorious son at his right hand, you and I are able to come to God through Christ by the Holy Spirit and commune with him in his heaven. They were going back from that to the religion that surrounded an earthly tabernacle or an earthly temple, which was purely symbolic of the reality.

Now, says the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews, to do this is an awful thing. It's to sell your birthright for a mess of pottage. How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the son of God underfoot, who was threatened, who was treated as an unholy thing, the blood of the covenant that sprinkled him and who was insulted the spirit of grace.

This is profanity. Can I come closer as I close? What applies to the Hebrew Christians of yesterday may equally well apply to us today. With our even greater privileges arising out of 2,000 years of Christian history, what price tag do you put on walking with God? How important is God in your life? God's will, God's word, God's day, God's purpose, God's people.

How important are the things of God to you? Will you sell the rest of this day for something trivial? And you'll find a television program more interesting than the worship of the triune God. Will you? Can you do that? Can you do that? No, no, no, I'm not preaching legalism. That's not what I'm after.

What I'm asking is this. Do you love God? And do you think so much of him that you want a whole day, one in seven, to be with him and to express your love and to dance at his feet and to receive his word and to be in fellowship with him? Do you love him to that extent? Do you think that much of him? Or are you in danger of selling him and become an Esau? Don't you tell me the word of God isn't relevant. It's far too relevant for my comfort.

Don't be like Esau. Oh, brothers and sisters, you know, I have a strange sort of sensation this morning. I don't want to hurt you, but neither do I want to displease my Lord.

His glory is at stake here. That's the only reason that I can make these things so plain. I know they hurt.

But the glory of our God and the future of this church and every other church is in the balances. I say to you, the only secret of the church of the New Testament's growth lies in two things. Knowing the will and the provisions of God, and doing his will and receiving his provisions.

Esau, it is not by the wise and the cunning that the church marches down the century into Roman, Greek, and other territories. It is not because it had wise men and clever. It is because the men and women of the early church, with all their faults and all their failings, had this.

Oh, they put God first. They saw that God was God, and they received the power of the Spirit, and they trusted in the fullness of the Lord Jesus Christ. They believed God, and they went out like that.

And they belong to God. The way forward. Seek peace and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.

How? See that no one misses the grace of God. No one. Are you receiving grace this morning? Oh, I hope you are.

Even though it be the grace of chastisement, the potter fashioning you, putting the pressure of his finger upon you because there's a resistance somewhere. That's the grace of God in chastisement. See that there be no bitter roots bringing up trouble you and defile many.

See that no one be sexually immoral. See that no one be like Esau, profane, selling his birthright for one miserable meal. May the Lord help us.

May the Lord lead us. May the Lord be magnified in us and through us to this end. Let us pray.

Oh, Father, hear our innermost cry, which is first and foremost for the cleansing and the forgiveness of sin. We have put the wrong price tags on almost everything because we put the wrong value tag on yourself and the sanctities that relate to you. Oh God, forgive us.

And our priorities are unworthy of consideration in public. Do not only forgive us, but renew us. Turn us around and help us to build upon the firm foundation of that which you have revealed in your word to the glory of your name and the good of your people and the gathering of the lost that Jesus may see of the travel of his soul in us and through us.

For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

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