

Evidences of Eternal Life - Part 4

by Paris Reidhead

To know eternal life, we must keep God's commandments and make a commitment to seek His highest good.

Duration: 55:35

Scripture: Romans 2:14

Topics: "Eternal Life"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of aligning one's heart and desires with God's will. He highlights three clear texts from the Bible that reveal the true nature of a person's heart. The first text, found in 1 John 2:3-6, states that those who claim to know God must keep His commandments. The second text, in 1 John 3:8-10, declares that those who continue to sin are of the devil, while the purpose of Jesus' manifestation was to save us. The third text, in 1 John 2:15-17, warns against loving the world and its desires, as it is contrary to the love of the Father. The preacher encourages self-reflection and challenges listeners to examine their hearts and determine whom they truly love and seek to please.

Transcript

We put a number 2 after chapter 2, verse 3. Off to the left of verse 3, you write a 2. But you also check verses 4 and 5. These are the second evidences of eternal life. Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar.

And the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected. Hereby know we that we are in him.

I think we agree that we live in a day that could be termed antinomian, anti, against, nomos, the law. There's a movement afoot that is teaching that anything negative is not of the Lord. Anything that doesn't just contribute to man's joy, pleasure, freedom and license is not to be accepted.

I do not know what such preachers do with this text. In a very real way, this text is very positive. But there's a negative element to it that we can't escape.

Hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. And therefore we have to understand that the purpose of Christ in coming into the world was not to save us from the law, as some have implied, but to save us from sin, which is a transgression of the law. It's interesting that John Wesley understood this so well.

In one place he said, the commandment to the sinner, thou shalt not, becomes the promise to the saint, thou shalt not. It all depends upon how it's stated. The rebel feels that the law is an infringement of his rights, and interferes with his pleasure.

The child of God recognizes that the law is the expression of the mind and the will of God, and Christ did not come to make us lawless, but to put into our hearts, to give to us a new nature, and that nature is one wherein we say with the Lord Jesus, I delight to do thy will, O God. The will of God is expressed in the law of God. If you read carefully the Ten Commandments, you'll discover that they were intended to ensure the happiness and the well-being and blessedness of all men, everyone.

The one who finds them a restriction is the one who wants to take that which belongs to another, make it his, without the proper procedure in so doing. There is a way by which I can obtain from you that which I may want, that you no longer want as much as I do, and we talk about a price or a barter or an exchange, but you are getting worth and value for it. However, when I see what you have that I want, and I deprive you of your right to it, and take it from you, that is stealing.

And the God said thou shalt not steal. Therefore, the person who claims to have been born of God but is so indifferent to the rights of others and the will of God as to take from another that which belongs to them, be it their property or their reputation or their name or anything else, it's considered to be stealing. And the word is clear, thou shalt not steal.

Thou shalt not bear false witness. We're talking about the Ten Commandments, all of them, that is part of what we have here. And anyone who says, oh, yes, I know him, but I'm so glad I no longer have to keep the law.

Christ kept it for me, and because he kept it for me, it's no longer necessary for me to keep it. Such a one is abusing the grace of God, misunderstanding the purpose of God in grace, and is a liar. He that sayeth, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar.

Well, that's pretty explicit, wouldn't you say? Well, here you are at the kitchen table, at the desk in the office, across a table in a booth in a cafe, and you've got your testament out, and this fellow says, I'm not sure, I'm a child of God, has just read I John 2, 3, 4, and 5. And you turn to him and say, now let me ask you, what is your attitude toward the law? What is your attitude toward the law, toward the commandments? Do you, with the Lord Jesus, say, I delight to do thy will, I love thy law, it's my meditation day and night? Do you want to please God in everything, and you understand his will to be revealed in his law? Now, we're talking not about the ceremonial law, we're talking about the rites and rituals that he established that were pictures to point to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. We're talking about the moral law. We're talking about that which he has written upon the heart.

He's written it upon the heart of all men everywhere. I told you last night about the experience we had in dealing with people who'd never seen a missionary, never heard the name of Jesus, never seen a Bible, first contact with the scripture, and I discovered that they knew the equivalent of the Ten Commandments. Not in that order, but in that substance.

And at first I was astonished until I realized that that's precisely what God says in Romans, the second chapter, when he said, The Gentiles which have not the law do by nature the things contained in the law. These having not the law are a law themselves, which show the work of the law written in their hearts. God put it there.

And only one who has perverted the grace of God and twisted the teaching of the word could ever convince one that had been pardoned from past sins that they were now given a license to continue to live in sin. Here it is. Hereby we know we know him if we keep his commandments.

He that saith I know him and keepeth not his commandments is a liar and the truth isn't any friend. What's your attitude toward the law? Do you love it? Do you delight in it? Do you want to please God? Or do you find it irksome and restrictive in your life? You can understand what's going to happen now. That person sitting there is going to have to examine their heart.

You may want to take him back and have them read the Ten Commandments. You may take him elsewhere in the New Testament because remember everything in the imperative mood is the commandment of the Holy Ghost. Not just the tables of stone but wherever God speaks in the imperative mood becomes a commandment of the Holy Ghost and these are binding upon the children of God.

What's your attitude toward the law? It's extremely important for us to understand this. Now in one of Finney's great sermons in the book Gospel Themes he talks about the right use of the law. I think I have a tape of that in one of the series, the right use of the law.

The law is basically to the unconverted, the schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. By the law is the knowledge of sin. And Finney saw it this way, that the law written on the heart is the lower millstone, the law written in the word is the upper millstone.

Before the word is brought to bear, the person sort of has the law, it's upon the heart, but he's just riding around, you know, it's just like a merry-go-round. Just one millstone, you don't grind anything with one millstone. But Finney declared that when we preach the law of God and when we proclaim the truth of God, it comes down upon the human spirit riding on the lower millstone.

The law of God going one way, the law written upon the heart the other, and the human spirit caught in between and is ground exceeding small and prepared for grace. The tragedy of the 20th century is that we have failed to properly teach and preach the righteousness of God and the holiness of God. If I had my way, and again I just repeat, it's probably good I don't, but if I did, I know the first thing I would do would be to proclaim a total moratorium on the public preaching of the plan of salvation for 24 months or at least 12 months.

And I would demand that all preachers become preachers of righteousness, proclaiming the righteousness of God and the holiness of God and the law of God until men were prepared for grace and gave their own invitation, like the Philippian jailer, what must I do to be saved? And then lest I should spoil what was happening in some other heart, I'd take that one off in a corner where no one could hear and whisper the gospel to them. Because my purpose would be to see people stripped of their self-righteousness, crushed by the revelation of their monstrous crimes against God and brought to the place with the public and at the gate of the temple where he cries, God, be merciful to me, a sinner. But what we have done is to gospel-harden a generation of sinners by telling them how to be saved before they've ever discovered why they need to be saved or from what they're to be saved.

And consequently, people accept the plan of salvation and assume from the acceptance that they're children of God and they've never passed from death to life. They've just had an intellectual ascent to a plan instead of an encounter with God that transformed their life. So we're going to find that there are a great many people that will have reason to come and say, I'm not sure I'm a child of God.

And when you bring them to this text, you can expect the spirit of God to pierce using the sword of the Spirit, the Word, dividing soul and spirit and showing that perhaps they have never changed their attitude. They still want to do what they want to do. I have found this text to have a profound effect on people that are of a name to live but are still dead in their trespasses and sins.

It cuts because God is certainly explicit. Listen. He that saith, I know him and keepeth not his commandments is a liar and the truth is not in him.

Now that's getting right frank. That's coming clear to the point without any mealy mouth about that. That's right down straight, as straight as you can get.

He's a liar and the truth is not in him. You can expect the spirit of God to use that in hearts. Now, we've got two options.

One option is to ignore it. Just do as most preachers are doing today who are teaching and preaching an easy believism as I did for years saying, well, I know 1 John has some things but they're very difficult to be understood and we won't worry about them now. Well, boy, you better worry about them now or you're going to have a lot more to worry about later.

And finally, I had to come to a place where I said, Lord, what about this? Well, there it is. Do you see the effect now? Here this chap is reading this. He says, God really gets the point, doesn't he? He sure doesn't mince words.

And if I don't keep his commandments, I'm a liar when I say I know him? Boy, that's getting real personal, getting right down there. Well, that's exactly what the word says and that's what the text is for. Now, number three.

Number three I put after verse 15 in the second chapter. Number three. Love not, and then I check verses 16 and 17.

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof. But he that doeth the will of God abideth forever. You cannot love God and love the world at the same time.

The first and great commandment is, thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and mind and soul and strength, and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. We could have dealt with this under the commandments because that's exactly where it belongs. I elected to put it here in contrast to loving the world.

To love God means that I have made a commitment to seek the highest good and blessedness and happiness and joy and satisfaction of God with me. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God. I say a commitment of the will because I see that in that there is commandment.

And you cannot command your emotions. Loving God is therefore not an expression of emotion, but it is a choice. Loving the world is not an expression of emotion, it is a choice.

First, to love God with all one's heart and mind and soul and strength. What means it? Again I repeat, it is the choice, the committal of the will to the principle and the practice of pleasing God in everything, seeking His joy, His satisfaction with us, fulfilling all that He expects and desires of us for His glory and for His pleasure. Whom we love, we seek to please.

We are committed to please. Now, let me illustrate why love in the scripture is not an emotion, but is a choice. I'm going to do it this way.

On the count of three, I want all of you to be angry. Oh, very angry. I'm giving you a fair warning.

On three. I want you to be angry. Alright? One, two, three.

Be angry. You see? It's absurd, isn't it? Why? Because your emotions are not under the control of your will. If I want you to be angry, I think I know how to do it.

It's to get you to think about that which will make you angry, not to command you to be angry. I remember years ago when I was first pastoral, I was 18 years old in a little country church, no screens, and a forsythia blooming in the churchyard and the bees out after the pollen. And we could hear the hum of the bees and the hum of the flies and windows were open, a little breeze going through, but it was hot.

One of those unusually hot early spring days. Well, we had Armstrong air conditioning. You know what that is? That was the fans given to us by the local mortician.

And they were there. They brought them out. We put them in the pews.

So this day, all the fans were going at high speed. And I'm trying to preach at that going on. And I figure they were blowing the truth away, much less getting breeze on their face.

And so I remembered an illustration I'd heard about a fellow that was out on the river and some wolves took after him. He was skating. And these wolves were running on the ice and he was skating and then he'd turn quick and they'd slid and come after him and they'd slide and then he would get up and he'd turn and he was keeping away from them, but he got out too far and there was a block of ice that when he hit it his weight broke off big enough to float him.

Well he was away from the wolves but down a little ways was the falls and he couldn't skate now and he was perspiring and the wind was blowing and the snow was blowing and in that perspiration he was beginning to be chilled and he got colder and colder as it floated down toward the falls and just about the time the guy got stiff with freezing every fan had stopped. Not one fan was moving. All of them were still.

They'd all been so cold empathizing with this fellow on the ice floe that they couldn't remember what they held in their hand or what it was used for. Just sat there. Well if I wanted you to be angry that's what I'd do.

I'd get you to think about something that has the effect of making you angry. But God said thou shalt love. That's in the imperative mood.

That's a commandment. Therefore it can't be an emotion. He didn't say thou shalt feel all warm and soft and cuddly about God.

That wasn't what he was talking about. He was talking about something virile and strong and volitional. Thou shalt commit thyself to seek the highest good and joy and blessedness and happiness and

well-being and satisfaction of God in contrast to what it had been before when you had committed your will to seek your own pleasure and joy and satisfaction and happiness without respect for God or man.

Now he's talking about loving God. A commitment of the will to seek the joy and blessedness and satisfaction and happiness of God. Now when you have made a commitment of that sort to seek the happiness and joy and blessedness and well-being of God with your total personality, heart, your mind, your soul, your strength, you cannot make the same commitment to the world because to love the world is a commitment to seek your joy and satisfaction and well-being from the world.

You can't make a commitment to seek God's joy and blessedness and happiness and satisfaction with you and a commitment to seek your joy and satisfaction and happiness from the world. Utterly impossible. One or the other but not both.

So he said, love not the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. You can't have both.

Do you see that? You can't have both. In the same heart, in the same life. Impossible.

When you have repented of your sin which is to renounce the world and all that's in it, pleasing yourself, governing and choosing how to be happy, committed yourself to seek God's highest good, blessedness, happiness and satisfaction and well-being with you. When you've done that, I say, it's impossible for you to turn around and do the same thing with the world. Can't do it.

You can do one or the other but you can't do both. So said he. Don't love the world because if any person does love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

For all that's in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and pride of life is not of the Father but is of the world. The lust of the flesh, I pointed out that that corresponds to the worship of Ashtaroth or Juno, Diana of the Ephesians, selfish and licensed for sexual indulgence. The lust of the eyes is equivalent to Baal worship, obtaining things from the owner of the soil who gives things in response to sacrifice.

The pride of life is equivalent to the worship of Moloch, Satan himself, who honors those who petition him and satisfy him by a promotion in worldly affairs. Therefore, said the text, all that's in the world is of Satan. The lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life.

Now, we have an appetite for food, an appetite for sex and an appetite for pleasure and joy. All those things that we saw yesterday are not bad. The lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life are the satanic licenses given to satisfy those appetites contrary to the will of God.

But there's an interesting thing. The world passeth away and the lust thereof, the desire thereof, have you noticed that there are people who will sacrifice or abandon or reject what they could not lose for that which they cannot keep? For a person to make a deal where they're going to sacrifice their relationship to God for the world is the craziest kind of moral insanity because the text tells us that the desire is going to pass away. Someone was telling me that one of the rock and roll stars had said, after you've had so much sex till you're satiated and so many things that you can't think of anything else in the world you want to get, only one thing that remains and that is power.

Power over people. And that's precisely what's happening. You see, one will sacrifice their soul for immorality or sex.

We've seen that happen in the world that we live in. And after a certain point, the desire passes away, it's satiated. Desire things and sacrifice to get things but after they've gotten so many things it turns to sawdust in their hearts.

The lust passes away, the desire passes away. How foolish, what folly to give up what you could never lose in exchange for that which you can never keep. But that's what this text tells us.

it says a person is to bring himself up against this truth. Whom do you love? Whom do you seek to please? If you love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. The commitment of the will in response to the great commandment, that thou shalt love the Lord thy God means the focus of the entire being to please God.

Whom do you seek to please? God or the world? From whom do you get your joy, your satisfaction, your fulfillment? People that love the world have to wear the latest fashions, have to do the in thing, have to have the latest ways, whatever they may be, have to go to the chic places because their joy and their happiness and their well-being, their sense of satisfaction and fulfillment comes from the world. The person that's been born of God and is a child of God has made a commitment to seek God's greatest joy and blessedness and happiness and well-being and his fulfillment is in having God pleased with him. Very simple.

Very explicit. Now you've had that person come up against three clear texts. You didn't say it.

God said it. You didn't tell the person that they do not love God but they love the world, if that's the case. God told them.

Do you understand what I'm saying? Do you see how the word works? It's the x-ray machine showing the person what's in their heart. We put a four down here in chapter three, verse eight and then we check verses nine and 10. This is number four.

He that commiteth sin is of the devil for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested that he might save us from hell and take us to heaven when we die. Is that what you read? I must be reading from the reversed vision, wouldn't you think? I mean the revised or some revised version.

For this purpose the Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin for his seed remaineth in him and he cannot sin because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest and the children of the devil.

There is one thing that you have to understand from the text and that is the strength and time factor of the verbs. He that commiteth, he that keeps on practicing sin is of the devil for the devil has kept on practicing sin from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil.

Whosoever is born of God doth not keep on practicing sin for his seed remaineth in him and he cannot practice sin because he is born of God. You see I put that tense in there first because I believe it belongs there and secondly because I have to distinguish between when we were talking about walking between practicing sin and being overtaken in a fault and falling into sin. I believe that the scripture teaches that there is no state of grace to which any can attain where they will be immune to temptation.

I do not find it in the word. In fact if there was a state of grace wherein one was incapable of being tempted that one would be holier than was the Lord Jesus of whom it was said he was tempted in all points like as we are yet without sin. Temptation is not sin.

Temptation is the proposition presented to the intellect to satisfy a good appetite in a bad way. Sin is the decision to satisfy a good appetite in a forbidden or bad way. There is no state of grace to which any child of God will ever come where he is incapable of being tempted.

Lot of people are looking for that. There are many people who when tempted are plunged into great despair because they feel that in being tempted they have sinned. But temptation is not sin.

Sin is the decision of the will to gratify a good appetite in a bad or forbidden way. It's a choice. Now there is no state of grace where a person cannot, if they so choose, decide to yield to temptation.

What God's Word teaches us is that there is no temptation overtaken us but such is common to man but God is faithful who will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able but will with the temptation make a way of escape that we may be able to bear it. There is victory. There is heart cleansing where in response to the desire of our hearts to please God the blood of Christ is applied to the conscience, to the memory, to the spirit and causes us to have an eye singled to His glory and a purpose to please God in everything.

I believe that God has a two-fold work that He does in our hearts. One is to bring us out of death into life of pardon and forgiveness and secondly to bring us to that place where in our utter and total abandonment to Him He cleanses the heart from all purposes save to please Him basing it on that deeper application of the Spirit of God for that which was our purpose in repentance to please God and in response to that in the total surrender and abandonment of all that we are and have to Him He brings us into that place of the fullness of Christ where Christ takes up His lasting dwelling place in our hearts and we're filled with the fullness of God. I believe this is normal and this is the biblical relationship that He desires us to have.

So when we come to this text we are talking about the very thing that it says He that keeps on practicing sin is of the devil. It's clear. It's explicit.

Can't be misunderstood. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil and whosoever is born of God doth not keep on practicing sin for his seed remaineth in him and he cannot continue to practice sin because he is born of God. Does this mean that a child of God cannot fall into sin be overtaken into fault? No.

It didn't say that. It talks about practicing walking one step after the other. Is it possible for a child of God born into the family of God to be overtaken into fault and fall into sin? I go back to the first chapter.

If we say that we have not sinned in the past we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we say we have not sinned we make Him a liar and His word is not in us. By the same token if we say that it is impossible for us to sin we make God a liar.

It is possible because we have still the power of choice the ability to choose. Now a child of God can be tempted and yield to temptation but when he does if he's been born of God he's doing something he doesn't want to do. Let aside by appetite making a choice, yes.

But he's doing something he doesn't want to do because his purpose has been firmly fixed to please God but now overtaken by lust by appetite, by desire he's done something he hates. You say, is that possible? Yes, that has happened. But when the child of God falls into temptation and yields to it into sin he cannot make peace with it.

He has to judge it. He has to forsake it. He has to confess it.

Know the cleansing of the pleasure spot. He cannot deny it, he can't hide it. When accused you have to say yes.

If he's wise he isn't going to wait until he's accused. He's going to deal with the matter at once as God has prescribed. He's going to judge it.

Judge yourself, said Paul to the church at Corinth. That you be not judged. For if you are judged you shall be chastened to the Lord that you should not be condemned with the world.

Judge yourself, that's the first step. Whatever a child of God by attitude, by action, by choice by whatever he does, it grieves God. Judge it instantly.

Then Isaiah said, let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man and his thoughts and let him return unto our God and he'll have mercy and he'll abundantly pardon. Forsake it. Immediately.

Judge it, forsake it and then here in 1 John if we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. To confess. I was at Houghton College for their fall meetings some years ago now.

Many years ago. And God visited us with the nearest thing that I've seen as a college revival. The young people were so moved of God that by their own choice they would come and stand on the platform and wait sometimes for as long as an hour when the line was long.

To just stand there fulfilling that word that says let the redeemed of the Lord say so whom he's redeemed from the hand of the enemy. And they would tell as much as they could and should of that God had shown them what was in their life and they'd forsaken it. They'd confessed it.

He'd cleansed them. I gave the invitation. I said if you're here and God's been dealing with your heart won't you come here on these front benches front pews.

And then they continued to come. They stayed. The meeting was dismissed but it wasn't over.

Once or twice we went as late as one or two in the morning. This particular time all had gone but there was one young woman down at the end. And I went down to her finally and I said how can I help you? And she then told me of what had happened the summer before when she'd been at a certain place in a certain job and something had taken place.

And she could tell me what had happened in veiled terms but I understood. And she said I've confessed it over and over and over again to God but I have no peace. And I said well let's once more then.

Let's pray. So we got down on our knees by the bench and I said you confess to the Lord. Well she started in praying around the world and she started lecturing God and how wise and how just and how good he was and what he had done.

And just coming right up skirting around the point never getting to it. Finally I just took one finger and touched her shoulder and I said you keep on as long as you want. But I have important things I need to do with some others that are here.

Well what's the matter? Well I said I think you're not praying at all. I think you're just trying to lecture God. I'm not sure that he's benefiting much from it.

I'm quite certain you're not and I'm not. And so if you want to do it you keep on but there's no point in it my staying. Well I'm confessing now.

I said you're not nowhere near confessing. And she said well what is confessing then? Well I said confession means to say with God what God says to call it by its regular ordinary everyday name. The kind of names that God uses.

Couldn't do that. I said why not? You think you'd shock him? You think you'd surprise him? You think he didn't know what was going on? Well no but I couldn't well I said then go ahead I'll just have to leave you. Don't leave I need help.

I said well you won't do what God told you to do so how can I help you? She said give me one more chance I will. And so I said alright we knelt. Boy this time she came right to the point.

Oh God I am and I did and I hate what I did. She confessed and after a few moments the joy of the Lord filled her heart. Blessing of God flooded her life.

Real assurance that this was settled and she was his child and restored to fellowship and she'd been all these months because she wouldn't deal with it the way the word prescribes. Word says confess call it by its name however ugly that name may be. Call it by its name.

That's what confess means. Say with God what God says. Now this person that is the exception the child of God that falls into sin overtaken in the fall.

Hating the thing they've done. Grieved because of what they've done to God and they have to deal with it the way God's prescribed. But now we're talking about somebody else.

We're talking about that person that has a name to live. Claims to be a child of God a church member but keeps on practicing sin. The scripture says whosoever is born of God does not practice sin.

In this the children of God are manifest and the children of the devil. How can you tell who's a child of God? The children of God do not practice sin and the children of the devil do. Period.

I didn't write it. If you don't agree don't fuss with me. If I haven't interpreted it correctly then you can fuss with me.

I'll accept that. But if I have or if you don't like the text don't fuss with me because I'm that rabbit hiding behind the stump see. If you want to shoot go ahead but if I can just stay behind that stump now if I've stuck out on one side to the other because I didn't interpret it correctly then I'll deserve the shot and I won't complain about it.

But if I'm giving you what the word says and there's an objection I don't think you should object to me. You should go to God and say I don't like the way you put this. Maybe you can hunt around and find a version

that waters it down so it'll be acceptable.

That's up to you. I have to deal with this and what I have found from studying the text and the original languages and I'm convinced that God wants us to see it this way. And oh how many people there will be in your ministries your life that you'll see.

I'm not sure I'm a Christian. All right. If we say we have fellowship with him and walk in darkness we lie and do not the truth.

How do you walk? Hereby we know him that we keep his commandments. Do you love his commandments? Do you love his law? Love not the world as things of the world. Do you love the father? Do you love the world? He that committeth sin is of the devil.

Are you practicing sin? Do you see how this works as an x-ray machine to show what people have in their hearts? Father in heaven our hearts go out to thee today. Realizing that thy great purpose and grace was to conform us to the image of thy son that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. That from eternity past thou hast wanted to have as father thou hast desired children like thyself.

The eternal bridegroom sought a bride that loved him and to whom he could pour his love. Our elder brother wanted brethren like himself with whom he could share all that he is and has. Thy purpose and grace therefore has been to remake man in thine image and likeness and deliver him from all that had bound him during his time of captivity under the God of this world.

And to then bring him to full maturity in Christ. But father the only kind of believers that will ever grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ are the ones that have been truly born of thy spirit. Father we've spent so much time trying to get those that are dead in their sins to want to love your word and love your son and grow in Christ and they haven't been responsive.

Oh we've been told that what it takes is follow up. But father how much follow up do we have to use to get a stillborn baby to live? Teach us father how to so proclaim thy word in truth that people are born of thee, truly born of thee. And then for those with whom we must work, whom we had no part in their profession of faith in Christ, help us to so apply the word and the truth that they will bring themselves against this x-ray machine and discover where they are.

If they are not thine but thou will draw them and they will come, then Lord that word will be the means by which they will seek thee. Some will go out, others will come on into the reality of life in Christ. But father we know that we can't get those that are without divine life that haven't been born of thee to grow up into the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

So to that end Lord, give us wisdom as we use thy word so that we may know how to serve our generation wisely and well. We ask it in Jesus' name and for his sake. Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/25/SID25532.mp3>

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