

The Bema Seat

by Pete Briscoe

The sermon explores the Bema Seat of Christ, emphasizing the importance of living to please Him and the eternal significance of our actions on earth.

Duration: 1:18:38

Scripture: Matthew 6:33

Topics: "Bema Seat"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the topic of making an eternal impact and focuses on the teachings of the Bible. He begins by stating that the Bible doesn't provide much detail on the subject but offers general principles. The speaker then shares a story written by his friend, Tim Stevenson, about a life-changing encounter with Jesus. He goes on to summarize the story, highlighting three observations made by the protagonist. These observations include the completion of judgments, the joyous reunion with loved ones in heaven, and the shift in perspective towards things of eternal significance. The speaker concludes by sharing an example of a changed working relationship that prioritizes eternal impact over worldly success.

Transcript

Now what in the world does V-Day mean? Well, that's why I asked you to turn to 2nd Corinthians 5-6. One of the number of passages in the New Testament that talks about what we will come to know is the Bema seat of Christ. Let me read it to you.

It says, therefore, Paul speaking to the Corinthian church, we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body, we are away from the Lord. We live by faith, not by sight, meaning as long as we are here on earth away from the Lord physically, and we have to live by faith because we can't see him. We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.

I mean, if we were all honest, we'd all say, yeah, take me to heaven right now. That sounds good to me. I'd love to be with Jesus right now.

That sounds like a good deal. But we can't. He's left us here for a reason, verse 9. So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it, whether we're here on earth, or when we get to heaven, we will have one goal.

It will be our driving motivation. Our one focus will be to please Jesus. It should be today to be pleasing Jesus.

That word, please, is the same word used in Romans chapter 12, verse 1, where we are told to offer our bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to him. It's what we're about, is bringing a smile to the face of Christ. Why is this our driving force? Paul gives one reason in verse 10.

You ready for this? The reason that this is our driving force is because we all must appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad. You say, wait a minute, Pete. Time out.

I've heard you preach. I know I've heard you preach, Pete, that we don't have to go through the judgment. You're right.

You've heard me preach that. I'm talking about the judgment of the great white throne. That's described for us in Revelation chapter 20, verse 5 and following, where the book of life will be opened, and those whose names are found in the book of life, those who have trusted Jesus for salvation, they will be ushered straight into heaven.

Those whose names are not found there, they will be cast away for eternity. That is the judgment that we get to escape because we're Christians. But the Bible teaches that as Christians, there's a judgment for us as well.

That's what he's talking about here. The word judgment seat in the text is the word bema in Greek, not beamer. We're not talking about a German sports car.

Bema. Bema. The bema was an elevated seat at the top of steps where a judge used to sit and cast judgment upon people.

People brought their disputes before him, and he would make settlements there. Apparently, one day, in 1st Corinthians, it is called the day, all of us who are Christians will sit before Christ. We will be pulled out of our chair.

We will stand before him, and he will judge us. Now, what will that judgment look like? Well, that's a great question. The Bible doesn't have a whole lot of detail about it, but it does teach us some general principles.

What I'm going to do over the next four weeks is I'm going to teach you what the Bible has to say about this so that we can be focused on that day instead of today, and you will realize how short life is and how little time we have to make an eternal impact. How am I going to do this? Well, the way I'm going to do it is I'm going to tell you a story. It's a story my friend has written.

That's why you don't have notes. I want you to go ahead and close your Bible, put your pens down, put them on the floor, and get ready to hear a story. My friend is Tim Stevenson.

He's the pastor at Crossroads Bible Church in Louisville. He writes books in his spare time. Don't know how he does that, and he's written one, and he gave me the manuscript, and folks, as I've been reading it, it is changing the way I live.

As I was reading it, I think, if this is changing the way I live, I know it'll change the way other people live too, so I'm going to share it with you. The book is called The Bema. It goes something like this.

Boy, have I had a day. What a day. I mean, of all the days, this was the day.

Literally, the day. There's never been a day in the history of mankind like this day, but in order for you to understand it, I've got to take you back to the very beginning. It started like almost every other day starts.

I got up before my wife and my kids did because I had to get to work to work on this proposal. Lately, I've been skipping church. I've been skicking the kids games.

I've been skipping dinner. I've been skipping everything because I got to get this proposal done. The reason I got to get this proposal done is because the boss is kind of tightening the screws a little bit, and he's told me that if this thing flies with the Addams Group, there may be a partnership in this for me, and I want to provide for my family, so I'm really driving for this thing.

Driving to work, going as fast as I can. I park my car. Sun isn't even up yet.

I'm going through the front doors. As I'm walking through the front lobby, I hear Joe. I don't even know his last name.

Joe the security guard. I call him. Maybe that's his last name.

Joe the security guard. Good morning, Mr. Mathewson. By the way, that's my name.

Daniel James Mathewson. Good morning, Mr. Mathewson. Hi, Joe.

How are you today, sir? I'm fine, Joe. Is the Lord being good to you today, sir? Yeah, the Lord's been good to me, and he starts quoting a verse. Remember, no temptation to seize you.

I push the button. I'm going up to the 28th floor. The guy drives me nuts.

He's too sunny for my type, you know. I get upstairs, and I walk into my office, and the cleaning lady's still in there. Now, I've told her a thousand times.

I want the clean. I want the office clean when I get there, because I've got a lot of work to do, especially today. I've got this proposal to do it to.

I've got to get done. I'm a Christian, so I don't want to verbally tell her that I don't want her there. I want to be nice, and so I do it non-verbally.

You ever done this? You know, I just sit down at my desk, and I just get to work, and I'm communicating with every fiber of my being that I don't want to talk to her right now. She wants to talk to me, though. Hey, Mr. Mathewson.

Hello. Hello. She's looking at the pictures on my desk.

Oh, your children, Mr. Mathewson. They're so beautiful. Thank you.

Thank you very much. And your wife, what's her name again? Yeah, okay, and she's okay, fine. And she gets the hint after a little while, and she goes to the door, and as she's leaving the door, she says this.

She says, Mr. Matthewson, you're a good man. You're a good man. I pray for you, and I pray for your children all the time.

I just want you to know that, and she walks out. Now I'm feeling guilty, right? I mean, she prays for my kids, and I don't have a sense. But you know, the proposal's got to get done.

And for the rest of the morning, I've got people coming in my office, time after time after time after time, and they've all got stuff to do with my proposal, and some of them have dropped the ball, and I had to yell a few times. I mean, when you come up to a deadline, that's okay. And I'm yelling at them, and I'm getting them where they need to be, and about noon, I've got everything together.

I've got two hours before the proposal, I decide to go have a bite to eat. So I get in my car, and I'm driving down the road, and that's when it happened. It was just like that.

Jesus came back. Now, in my Bible studies earlier in my life, I'd always learned that one day Jesus was coming back, and one day it made it sound like it would be incessantly in the future. But all of a sudden, it was very present.

It happened, boom. It happened on... Oh, the date's not important, but that's the day it happened. I can't go into the details about the second coming of Christ.

That would be a whole story in and of itself. We don't have time this morning. But I can tell you what happened next.

We went through this great throne room, where a great book was opened, and my name was found in the book of life, and I was ushered into heaven with millions of other saints. And as we're walking into heaven, I can't tell you what it was like other than to use an analogy. And the analogy was like a ticker tape parade in New York, you know, where everyone's jumping up and down.

It was like that, except multiply it by millions of people, and millions of emotions, and the heart, and the life, and the joy in people. The exuberance was like nothing I'd ever seen before. I was seeing people that had died years earlier that I'd missed so much, and I'd almost forgotten I missed them.

And we were hugging and embracing, and I was almost exhausted. And so I sat down on a rock, just to catch my breath for a minute. Sit down on the rock, and while I'm sitting there just thinking about this incredible day, I sense a presence.

I sense there's someone with me. And I'm looking around, and I don't see anyone, but I know someone's there. And so finally I said, is somebody there? Somebody was there.

Hello! What and who are you? He said, Uriel. Uriel, what are you? He said, I am one of the heavenly beings. Angel.

Nice to meet you, Uriel. Never met an angel before. It's nice to meet you.

He goes, well, I've known you for a long time, Daniel. You have? Yes, since the day you were born. I was commissioned to care for you since the day you were born.

Oh, you're my guardian angel. He said, well, we don't use that terminology up here, but if you want to call me that, that's fine. And I went to give him a hug, and I couldn't.

I mean, how do I describe him? He's kind of like this hollow person made of light. I could see him, but I couldn't touch him. I said, oh, Uriel, I'm so glad you're here.

I have so many questions. He said, shoot. And he taught me the ropes of heaven.

He taught me that communication is different in heaven. That we don't have to use verbal communication, that we can just think things and hear each other. And so I tried it.

And we were talking to each other. It was really incredible. And he taught me about time, that time is elastic in heaven.

That something that might take five years on earth might be done in a minute. Something that might take a lot longer is done a lot shorter. And time is, we're outside of time, and that was a new concept that kept coming back.

He talked about eyesight, that something could be 30 miles away, but I'd be able to see it like it was right in front of my face. This came in very handy in a few minutes, as you'll see. He taught me about transportation.

He taught me about the fact that he could lift me up, and he could take me through the air. I wouldn't have to walk anymore. So we took a couple of test spins.

It's so cool. Just flying around, Uriel's carrying me around. And then he sat me down, and he taught me about the coming judgment.

I said, what? The coming judgment, the famous seat of Christ. I said, wait, I thought I passed the judgment. Wasn't that what I went through? That was the great white throne of judgment.

But soon there will be a judgment for everybody in the church, for Christians. And I got terrified. I mean, as soon as I heard that, I got this shriek of terror from my heels all the way up my body.

How do I describe the fear? It wasn't like the fear of an enemy. It wasn't like I was afraid of Jesus. It's kind of like the fear you have of a doctor when you're a kid.

You know, you're sick. And I'd like the time I had a terrible pain right here in my abdomen, and I went to the doctor, and he poked and prodded, and made it hurt a lot more. And then he cut me open, which really hurt.

But he took my appendix out, and then I got better. And so there's this momentary pain, but you know in the long run you're gonna be better because you went through that momentary pain. But you're still kind of afraid of the doctor.

Well, that's kind of how I felt about seeing Jesus face-to-face in front of all the church, from all of history. Just me and him, boom, face-to-face. I was terrified, but it was kind of a loving awe, like it's gonna hurt for a few minutes.

But long-term, it's the best thing that could be happening to me. I said, Uriel, teach me about this judgment. I need to know what's gonna happen.

Well, he said, you need to understand it's not a punitive judgment. You're not a defendant that's on trial because of your sin. Your sin has been washed away by Christ.

It's a reward judgment. It's like the end of the Olympic Games when you get to stand up on that platform, and you're given your rewards. That's what this judgment is about.

Jesus will give you commendations for what you accomplished as far as eternal things are concerned. I was still terrified. I tried to remember some things of eternal significance that I'd done, and I was praying that Jesus' memory was better than mine.

We sat and chatted for a little while. All of a sudden, in the distance, we heard a great fanfare. What's that, Uriel? He said, it's time for the judgment.

Christ is calling everyone to the bema. Let's go, and he picked me up, and we started to fly. I was flying through the heavenlies, and I saw saints all around me, all heading to one place, and throngs of Christians on the ground walking towards this little circle off there in the distance.

At least it looked a little from where we were. But the closer we got, we realized it was getting bigger and bigger and bigger, and the closer I got, I realized it looked like something. It looked like a stadium from the sky on earth.

You know, I've never flown over a stadium. It's just this big, huge round stadium is what it was. But the closer I got, I realized how big it was.

I mean, it was massive. It was bigger than a city. It was bigger than a metropolitan area.

It was miles and miles and miles across, and he dropped me right outside the gate, and he said, I can't go in any farther. I said, what do you mean? You're my angel. You get to go everywhere with me.

No, he said, this is a special moment just for the bride of Christ. Only Christian saints are allowed inside. But he said, us angels, we'll be watching up ahead.

We'll be celebrating with you, but go and enjoy your brothers and sisters in Christ. And so I went through the door, and the sight just amazed me. It was miles across, and it was filling in with people, and down about three miles, I would guess, down there was a platform.

But remember, with my new eyesight, I could see it like it was right in front of me, and I could see millions of people, billions of people, but as I looked at them, I could see their faces like they were right in front of my eyes, and I was overwhelmed with the immensity of the church of Jesus Christ. I worked my way in, and I found a row where there was an empty seat, and excuse me, excuse me, excuse me. I sat down.

The anticipation was growing. The dread and the fear was growing. The anticipation, the love, and the awe, it was all just welling up inside me.

And I sensed someone was sitting next to me, and sure enough, there's a guy sitting next to me, and I shook his hand, and he said, my name is Njira Nagasaka. He said, when and where are you from? Never heard that question before. But I've heard, where are you from? But never, when and where are you from? And I realized that this gathering of people was from the entire history of the church, all 2,000 years, right here at once.

Why don't, where are you from? Told him I was on earth when Jesus had returned. He said, oh, what a blessed privilege that must have been. I said, when and where are you from? And he said, I'm from Japan, what you would call about the 18th, 17th century.

I said, I didn't know those Christians in Japan back then. He goes, oh yes, the wooden boats that brought traders over from Europe, they brought missionaries as well. And they brought the good news of Jesus, that he had come, the Son of God, and had shed his blood.

And that anyone who trusted in him alone for salvation would be saved, and would get to spend eternity with God the Father. And many people responded. I responded.

I fell on my face before the cross and gave my life to Jesus. Many of the masters, the people who ruled in our area, responded to Christ as well. But some didn't, and my master was one that didn't, and he hated the church, and he persecuted the church.

And many of us were put to death. I said, what, you were put to death? Yeah. I said, in fact, I was crucified on the side of the road, and a long string of people who had trusted Jesus.

Right next to a samurai, who one day earlier had been slicing off people's heads, and he had trusted Jesus, and had been a changed man. And there we hung, dying the same way our Savior died. And I sat next to him, and I hung my head.

He said, what are you thinking? I said, I never suffered like that. He said, that's okay. It is in God's hand who suffers, and who doesn't suffer.

If he calls you to suffer, you suffer in his grace. If he doesn't, praise be to God for that. The feeling I had wasn't shame.

It was, it's just disappointment. It was like, I missed out on something. He got to suffer and know Jesus better.

And I thought, what a difference a day makes in perspective. I never looked at suffering that way when I was still down on earth. As we were talking, there was a pronouncement made.

A huge angel walked up to the front of the platform, and he had a big staff in his hands, and he thumped it five times. Two, three, four, five. And we all rose to our feet, and he said, welcome the Son of God, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords, Jesus Christ, the Messiah, the Lamb of God.

And Jesus came into the place. I've never seen glory like it. Remember, I could see him like he was right in front of my face.

And we all just fell to our knees. And we were looking in the face of the Savior. And Jesus said, welcome my special ones, my precious one.

I have long awaited this day, when I would hand out my commendations and rewards to you. What a celebration. We will all enjoy together.

He said, please, welcome my Father, who will preside over our judgment day. And behind Jesus, how do I explain this? God the Father showed up. Now, I know why John's book of Revelation was so hard to understand, because trying to put this in human language is pretty near impossible.

I'll give it a shot. Up on the other side of the stadium came a cube. Kind of looked like a cube.

And on each corner, there was a strange winged creature. I figured that was the cherubim and the seraphim, the angels that the Bible talks about. And they were ushering God's presence into the arena.

And this cube was full of colors that I'd never seen before. They were outside our spectrum. And inside the cube, there were moving parts.

And inside those moving parts, there were other moving parts. And it just confused my senses. And I realized that I was looking at the presence of God.

Now, I don't know about you, but I'd always thought that when I saw God the Father, he'd be like an old man with a beard, and I'd kind of crawl up in his lap. And I thought of him in bodily form. But then I remembered back to my Bible teaching, where they taught me that God the Father isn't in bodily form, that he is an omnipresent spirit.

He's a spirit that goes everywhere. And I realized that this wasn't even God the Father in its entirety. It was just a representation of his presence.

And it was so awe-inspiring that we all fell to our knees. And the more we looked at him and the closer he came as he settled his presence over the whole presiding, we fell prostrate on the floor. We couldn't even hold our head up in his presence.

And the cherubim and the seraphim, they started to chant, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty. Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty. And we started to sing.

Music started coming out of the presence of God. And we all started to sing along with the immunals. And it's like we knew the words and we sang together.

And we put our hearts out to the Father. I don't know how long we worshiped for. But after a while, we just started sitting down around the stadium and getting back to our seats.

And really enjoying the process of praising the Son of God. I thought back to all those days I'd sat in worship back on earth. I was living for that day instead of the day.

I never really worshiped him. I didn't realize that I was just practicing for the day and for the rest of eternity. If I had to do it over again, I would praise Jesus differently.

If I'd known so much about what I'm telling you now. After we finished praising the Lord, wiping the tears from our faces and catching our breath, Jesus rose from his throne. He walked to the center of the stage.

Welcome, he said. The judgment is about to begin. I want you to know what this judgment is about and how you will be evaluated.

Every single person in this great gathering will be evaluated one by one before me alone in front of all. And here are the criteria by which you will be judged. First of all, you'll be judged on the quality of your life.

In the Bible, we taught you that if you stored up treasures on earth where moth and rust destroys and thieves break in and steal, you'll leave them there. But if you store up treasure in heaven where moth and rust cannot destroy and thieves cannot break in and steal, well, then your treasure will be there where

your heart is. And many of you have put a great treasure up here in eternal significance and you will be commended for that.

You will be evaluated on behalf of your stewardship. This is very important for you all to realize. You will not be evaluated in comparison to someone you're sitting next to.

You will be evaluated in comparison to the resources that you are granted. Some of you were given tremendous resources. You will be evaluated in comparison to the resources I gave you.

Some of you were given very meager resources. You will be evaluated by that basis. No one was given identical opportunities.

So you will all be evaluated individually based against the resources granted. Stewardship. And thirdly, you will be evaluated by your motives.

The Bible taught you that mankind looks at the outside, but we God, the Father, the Holy Spirit, I look at the heart. I look at the heart. And I want to see what your motives were behind your giving and your service in the time that you gave to other people.

When I evaluate those things, and we will do that together, I will decide whether rewards are coming to you. What kind of rewards might you expect? Well, there's the crown of righteousness you may get. The crown of righteousness will be given to those of you who longed for the day of my return and patterned their life based on the fact that I was coming soon and they lived righteous, holy, pure, and godly lives.

You will be given the crown of righteousness. Some of you will be given the crown of life. The crown of life is for those of you who are persecuted for my sake.

Remember I told you in the Sermon of the Mount that blessed are you who are persecuted for my name's sake. You will receive a reward for your persecution today. Some of you will receive the crown of glory.

That's for those of you who shepherded my flock. Not the professional people. They will be evaluated more stringently than others because they were given so much more time to spend in people's lives.

But for you normal folks, all of us are normal folks here, for you normal folks, you will be evaluated how you minister to my people, the church of Jesus Christ. And if you did minister in my power and in my grace, you'll be given that crown of glory. Some of you will be given the crown of faith.

For those of you who persevered under all kinds of trials and trusted me through them, you'll be given the crown of faith. Some of you will receive more than one. Some of you will get all of them.

Some of you will receive verbal commendation. I will say to you, well done, my good and faithful servant. I will say to you, in you, I am well pleased.

Some of you will not. Some of you, no, all of you will be glorified. It is today that you will receive your glorified body, the one that you will live with for the rest of eternity.

And you will be brighter and more radiant than you could ever have imagined. In just a moment, you'll see what that looks like. It's time for the judgment to begin.

One by one, you will be called. Please prepare your hearts for that time. And Jesus returned to his throne and he sat there at the center of the platform.

And boy, if you could cut the tension with the knife when we walked in, now you could really cut the tension with the knife. Who's he going to call first? Is it going to be me? The angel walked to the center stage and he went three times with his staff. Thump, thump, thump.

Timolus Germanicus was called to the front. His angel picked him up and carried him down to the beginning of the platform and he stopped at the steps and he looked up at his savior. They slowly went up the steps and he met his savior face to face for the first time.

They had a private conversation there that we couldn't hear. I have no idea what they were talking about. But while they were talking, something strange happened.

It was a biographical sketch that came across our mind and we could see what this man was about. And we could see what he was about to be rewarded for. And we learned that Timolus Germanicus of Dunedin Gaul was from the third century.

He was born in Lyon, Greece in Lyon, France under the Roman Empire. A time of great persecution for the church. He was a poor man, a smith by trade, but he was a deacon in the church and he gave out of his very small resources to those who had greater need than he.

He was persecuted for his faith. He was tortured for it. He was put on the rack and bent backwards.

He was scraped, which means his skin was removed from his body and he was thrown to the lions and the leopards and he was devoured by them. And as he was on his knees being devoured by the wild beasts, he raised his hands and he said, Jesus, I'm yours. Jesus got up off his throne and he put his hands on his shoulders and he fell to his knees.

Jesus lifted his hands and raised him up and stood behind him and said, this is my boy Timolus Germanicus in whom I am well pleased. Well done, my good and faithful servant. And in that moment, he was glorified.

Boom! And he was changed and he was the most glorious being in the place next to Jesus himself and his angel flew him back to his seat. And when he got back to his seat, he looked like the North Star in the black sky and it was a radiant thing and we were all amazed anticipating the moment that we would stand before our savior. Now, I saw a number of more people go.

Maybe millions. I don't know. Time is elastic in the heavenlies.

And I noticed some trends. I noticed that not everybody received the commendation. Well done, my good and faithful servant.

I noticed that not everyone heard. In you, I am well pleased. I realized that there were degrees of glorification.

Some people were more brilliant when they were glorified than others. Kind of like when you have a diamond, it's a beautiful, radiant, glorious thing. When you have another diamond next to it that might be a little bit larger or cut differently, it might be more radiant.

It was that kind of thing. Both were absolutely radiant, but some were even more radiant than others. I also noticed that some people came into heaven completely bankrupt of eternal significance.

They received no rewards. They received no verbal commendation. They were glorified.

They weren't as brilliant as the others. But as they were ushered back to their seats, I noticed in my heart that I loved them just the same. There was no envy or jealousy of competition.

There was a little sadness in my heart. And the sadness, I think, came from the fact that sin had entered their life after they had trusted Christ. And as a result, they had missed out all these opportunities to have an eternal significance.

To really make a difference. It left them all behind. The judgments continued.

And I was amazed at the variety of the people in the church of Christ. The angel came forward. Thump, thump, thump.

Pomponia. Pomponia came forward. Pomponia was from the first century.

Rome. She was one of the first, if not the first, of the senatorial class to trust Jesus. In about 50 AD, she was a Christian before Paul even got to Rome.

She was ostracized for her faith by those around her, her peers, even her husband for a short time. But then her quiet witness and her steadfast love for her husband enabled her to lead him to a saving knowledge of Jesus. They planted a church in their home.

And for three centuries, that church survived. And Jesus stood behind her, put his hand on her shoulder, gave her some crowns, and said, Well done, my good and faithful servant. And she was glorified in an instant.

She was radiant. And she flew back to her seat as the angel thumped again. Thump, thump, thump.

William Carey. William Carey. If ever there was an unlikely hero in the Christian church, it was William Carey.

An impoverished shoemaker from England that didn't have two pennies to rub together who had a passion for the lost about the 17th century. He went to Malta and he started a mission work there. And then he went to India and spent the rest of his life reaching the lost in India.

He is known as the father of modern day missions. And because he planted the mission mindset in a dead church, millions of people were reached with the gospel. Jesus did a fascinating thing at this point.

He put his hands on William and he said, If anybody is here because William influenced them with mission. And that's why there are Christians today. Please stand.

And I can't tell you how many there's probably close to a billion people that rose. And they all clapped and they all yelled. Thank you.

Thank you. And he crumbled before his master and Jesus lifted him up and he said, Well done, my good and faithful servant. I'm well pleased with you.

And in a moment he was glorified and he was changed. He was more brilliant than he'd ever been before. And he flew back to his seat and thump, thump, thump.

Angela Moser. As soon as Angela's name was said, there was a fluttering in the angels above the stadium. There was an excitement.

There was an electricity. I knew she was something special. I thought to Uriel, I said, is she something special? He said, oh, is she something special? Why? What did she do? What did she build? What did she make? What did she start? None of those things.

None of those things that in earthly categories you think are successful. She was a very different type of person and I listened to her biographical sketch in my mind. She was a young single woman who remained single by choice so that she could care for her sickly mother and her invalid sister.

She was a public school teacher in the 20th century in a western country. She served faithfully behind the scenes in her local church, quietly serving people. And the reason she was so famous in heaven was because of her prayer life.

In fact, the news around heaven, Uriel told me, was that angels said of Angela that 10,000 demons quaked in their shoes at the mere mention of her name because of the power of her prayer. She was a great enemy of the evil one through her prayer. She lifted people up.

Once again, Jesus said, please, if she has had an impact in your salvation, stand. And I don't know how much of the stadium stood. It was a large majority because of her prayer.

Jesus said, oh, Angela, I am so pleased with you. Well done, my good and faithful servant. And she was glorified in an instant.

And her glory far surpassed anyone that had gone before her. It was 10 times the radiance. And as she flew back to her seat, I thought, oh, that prayer thing.

I should have listened to Pete. That prayer thing that really makes a difference, really makes a difference. Thump, thump, thump.

Joseph Ray Robinson. Joseph was born during the depression to a very poor family in the south. He was ostracized because of his race, but he never became bitter.

He worked diligently to support his eight children. He shined shoes. He drove limos, delivered papers, worked in office, office buildings.

Oh, it was Joe, the security guard. I just recognized the guy that I ran by this morning because I didn't have time. The guy with the sunny disposition always drove me crazy.

I learned that Joe, because of his race, had never been allowed to be educated, but he never got bitter. He filled his heart with scripture. He had memorized almost the entire New Testament.

And whenever he saw someone, he shared scripture with them. As a result, the number of people that stood that had been influenced by him were immense. What an impact it had.

I saw at least a hundred people from my office building alone that were there at the bama seat because he had shared Christ with them. And I thought to myself, in heaven, will I be even worthy to shine his shoes? In an instant after hearing, well done, my good and faithful servant, he was glorified and he flew back to his seat radiant in the grace of Christ. Thump, thump, thump.

Juanita Perez. Yes, my cleaning lady. My cleaning lady.

Juanita flew down. Juanita saw her face, the face of Jesus, and she gazed into his eyes. And I learned about Juanita, and I learned that her husband had deserted her with four small children, and she had poured her life into those kids, worked two jobs to prepare for them so that they would know Jesus and trust him.

And they did, and they were responsible for many more at the bama seat. And there, as I looked at her, it hit me. It was right there in my mind that she had prayed for my children, and I saw all the results of her prayers for my kids.

And it hit me that she had prayed for my kids more than I had. I was humbled. I thought, oh, a woman that this morning I wouldn't even take the time to say hello to is a woman I want to spend a thousand years with now.

Oh, the difference a day makes. And Jesus said, well, God done my good and faithful servant in you. I'm well pleased.

And she was glorified. And she went back to her seat, a radiant beam. And I stood there.

And I thought my turn is coming soon. My turn is coming soon. Oh, if I could go back and do it again.

If only I'd known this when I was still there. Thump, thump, thump. Daniel James Matthewson.

Oh, here we go. My angel Uriel flew me down to the front of the stage. Stopped me at the steps.

I realized that all of the church from all of history was looking at me, but that was nothing compared to the fact that I was about to walk up these steps and meet Jesus face to face. Only by the grace of God and in his power was I able to traverse those steps. When I got to the top, I looked at the face.

He said, Daniel, come. I came closely to my savior. I had a conversation with him.

I realized that this was the conversation that I'd seen many people who had went before me for their judgment what they were having. The conversation lasted a long time. In this conversation, he said, Daniel, I want to explain the judgment to you.

I want you to know exactly what we're going to do. And so he briefly explained the judgment to me. This is what he told me.

He said, first of all, Daniel, you need to understand the purpose of this judgment at the Bema seat. First of all, it is not to punish you for your sins. Your sins have been paid for.

They have been covered with my blood. They are done. They are gone.

I thought, good. Just to make sure that that's dealt with. That's a good thing for me.

He said, this is about stewardship. Stewardship, Daniel, is doing, evaluating what you did with what I gave you. What you did with what I gave you.

He said, I gave you 37 years, 25 of which were lived after your conversion. I gave you tremendous resources, both financial and people resources, human resources. I gave you time.

I gave you resources. I will evaluate what you did with those time and resources for eternal things. I said, okay.

He said, the next thing you need to understand is the timing of this judgment. Why we need to do this here at the end of time. And the reason is because the impact of someone's actions, many times you can't see that impact until centuries later.

Because human beings, and when they impact each other, they impact others, and they impact others, and they impact others, and others, and others. And it's like a web that goes out throughout the years. And as he was saying this, I couldn't help but think of the judgment of D.L. Moody I'd seen just a few minutes earlier.

A man that lived a couple hundred years before me. A man of tremendous passion and ability to communicate the gospel. But he started also a little school, a bible school in Chicago, that became known as Moody Bible Institute.

And I remember remembering that my youth pastor and his wife, Mark and Eleanor from my church back in Dallas, that they graduated from Moody Bible Institute. And when I watched D.L. Moody's judgment, I saw his impact on them. And then all the youth that they impacted on our church, they were impacted by this couple that had been impacted by Moody.

And so he got partial credit for those kids, and then the people that they impacted as they went on, he got partial credit for them. And there's this wonderful web of people. I sat there thinking, investing in people is certainly a worthwhile thing.

The third thing that Jesus told me was the process, how we're going to go about doing it. It's interesting. He used an analogy that we had in scripture back on earth from 1 Corinthians chapter 3, verse 10 and following.

He said, the life that you lived is built on a foundation. That's me. You trusted me as your savior.

Jesus, the foundation. And then everything you did after you trusted me is like building a house. And you can use different types of materials.

You can use cheap materials or you can use valuable materials. If you use cheap materials, then it's a cheap house. If you use valuable materials, then it's a valuable house.

It makes sense. He said, Daniel, I want you to imagine I'm taking a huge flamethrower over your life, over your house, and I am putting it on there. And all the things that are cheap will be immediately incinerated.

Ashes will blow away, never to be seen again. But those things that are valuable, those precious stones, the gold and silver, they will be purified. And it is those things you will be rewarded for.

We are about to take a walk through your life, through your entire life, and we will evaluate what you did, whether it was worthwhile, eternally, or worthless. Those worthless things, my eyes will burn them away. Those worthwhile things will be purified and you will be rewarded for those.

Are you ready, Daniel? Okay. Ready as I've ever been. I'm not ready now.

When will I be? I'm ready, Jesus. He said, you can feel free to ask questions whenever you want. Let's get started.

I've heard people say, my life flashed before my eyes. You've heard that phrase. Well, my life flashed before my eyes.

When everyone else was up here, when I was watching their judgments, this whole thing seemed to last about a minute and a half. For me, I think it lasted 37 years. Time is elastic in heaven.

We lived my entire life over again, but I saw it from his perspective instead of mine. I saw myself being born and my parents and the love and the passion and the care they had for me. I saw the first 12 years of my life being burned, incinerated before my eyes, because there was nothing in those 12 years of eternal significance whatsoever.

The impression that was struck in my mind was sin. I mean, I just saw myself sinning time and time again. My attitudes were terrible.

My self-centeredness was horrific. But you know what was fascinating? Even though I could see my sin, it was as though he couldn't see it. I looked in his eyes and he was just accepting and loving and passionate towards me.

And that never changed throughout the entire judgment. And I realized that he doesn't see my sin. It's being covered by his blood.

And as every one of my sinful acts and worthless things were incinerated, I realized that they were blowing away gone forever and that I would never even be able to remember them even. What a joyful moment. But the most joyful moment up until this time was that time when I was 12 years old.

And Jesus showed me what happened that day that I trusted him and him alone for salvation. A little boy coming to grips with my sin realizing that I needed a savior. And I looked that day to him and I said, Jesus saved me.

And he saved me. And looking at it from Jesus' eyes, I saw my soul go from death to life. And I saw life come into me.

And it was such an exciting thing. And when I look back into Jesus' eyes, the most amazing thing, they were filled with tears. And his tears started to roll down his cheeks.

And he said, Daniel, I love you so much. Thank you for trusting me and me alone for your salvation. Oh, thank you.

And I'm like, thank you. Oh, Jesus. No, thank you.

And we started thanking each other and we were just so in love. It was such a precious moment. He said, now, Daniel, we can really get to work.

Because from this point on, you are now saved. And you now have the ability through my spirit to do things of eternal significance. So let's see what happened.

And we went from that point on through the rest of my life. Now, I don't have 25 years with you this morning. So I'm going to have to summarize for you.

And I thought what I would do is I would summarize with some observations I made. Three simple observations. The first one was this.

As I looked over the course of my life, I realized that Jesus' opinion of me is paramount. That what Jesus thinks of me is more important than what everyone else thinks of me combined. I noticed a pattern in my life starting when I was very young.

And the pattern was that I had a strong desire to be accepted by people. And as a result, I would do whatever I could to make them accept me. Their opinion was more important to me than Jesus' opinion.

It started in my elementary years. Jesus reminded me of the little boy, Jimmy, my best friend. And one day we were playing on the jungle gym and we were climbing around and we were having fun.

And some other big boys came over. They were part of the in-group. And they said, hey, Daniel, you want to come play baseball with me? And I said, yeah, we'd love to come.

They said, we've only got one more spot. We want you. We don't want Jimmy.

You want to play? I looked at Jimmy. He looked at me. He said, go ahead.

I don't care. I said, really? He said, no, go ahead. I don't care.

And so off I went, running off to play baseball with my new in-crowd friends, never looking back at Jimmy. But here from the Bama seat, I could see what I did to him. Their opinion was more important than his.

And I hurt my best friend. It started coming again in the adolescent years. And I decided to fit in with the in-crowd no matter what I did.

I did the hair wars with my parents. I wore these ridiculous clothes. And here from the Bama seat, it was so embarrassing.

I'm like, oh, why in the world would I wear clothes like that? Why would I argue with my dad to wear clothes like that? He's, you're not going out like that. Oh yes, I am. And we're here nose to nose.

Why would I do that? I said, Jesus, why were other people's opinions so important to me? He said, Daniel, because I'm the bread of life. And unless you feast on me, you will constantly be trying to fill your hunger with other people. But only I satisfy Daniel.

And if you would have trusted in me and spent time with me and nourished me, you wouldn't have worried about what other people thought of you. It went all the way into my college years with my good buddy, Jerry. Jerry and I were inseparable, man.

We had all the handshakes, boop, boop, boop, boop, boop. You know, we can do all this stuff. And we had decided, we had decided that we would be together forever.

We were going to be roommates all the way through the end. Nothing was ever going to split us up until it came time for the frat houses to pledge. And the big time frat house asked me to be part of theirs because I was athletic and they didn't want Jerry.

Come on, you want Jerry? No, they didn't want Jerry. He said, it's okay. Go ahead, Daniel.

I don't care. Really? No, I don't care. And he had a big smile on his face.

What a great guy. And off I went to my frat house and I never looked back at my friend, Jerry, but here from the Bama seat, I could see what it did to him. And it grieved me.

And I thought to myself, if I could do it again, if I could go back and do it again, what I would do is I would think about what Jesus thought of me instead of what everyone else thought about me. That's one observation. The second observation was this, that worthwhile is much better than worthless.

Worthwhile is much better than worthless. One of the things that became apparent to me throughout the entire judgment process was that people were very important to Jesus. I used to see people kind of like scenery in my life.

You know, they were there to make my life look better. They were instruments and tools for my purposes so that I could get done my goals. Jesus doesn't see people that way.

Jesus is passionate about people. He sees them as eternal beings who need nurturing and loving and serving and caring for. I missed the boat.

There were a number of worthwhile instances in my life. Times when I allowed the Holy Spirit to work through me and really impact people long-term. One of those was reminded to me during the Bama seat judgment.

His name was Randall. He was a youth worker, a lay guy. He was a businessman, but he worked in the youth ministry in our church.

And he came alongside me when I was a senior in high school and he really held me up and he encouraged me and he got me into leadership in the group. And I was really growing. I was spending time with the Lord.

It was probably the best part of my life spiritually. And he encouraged me to help other people feel comfortable. And there's this girl, her name was Sandy.

And she obviously wasn't fitting in. And I went over, prompted by the Spirit. And I talked to her and she talked to me.

And I asked her if she wanted to get involved. She said, yeah, but she didn't know how. And so I took her and I introduced her to some of the leaders and they just were so welcome and warm.

And they took her in and they made her part of the group. And I saw this and I was so excited about the impact that I'd had. And I said, whatever happened to her, Jesus? And he said, oh, whatever happened to

her, she can't wait for your judgment to be done because she wants to talk to you because you had an unbelievably profound impact in her life.

And my knees buckled. And I realized that the approval of Jesus is probably the toughest thing I'd ever had to grapple with. His smile, his radiant eyes.

He was so pleased with what I had done. He reminded me that she had trusted Christ with me in a prayer a few weeks later. And he told me she went on to be a wonderful leader on her college campus.

And she started an evangelistic ministry to those who are lost in the college. And I got partial credit for those people who were saved. It was incredible.

And he told me that she grew up to be a very godly wife and a godly mom. And she raised three beautiful kids who knew and loved Jesus and all the people they impacted. I got partial credit for it, too.

She went on to be a disciple of women and I got partial credit for that. And she taught the Bible and I got partial credit for that. And I was overwhelmed by the impact I could have as a senior high kid.

And he looked at me and he said, oh, Daniel, you invested in that girl and look at the dividends it paid. It is worth investing in people. I started thinking about the wood, the hay and the stubble from that passage in First Corinthians chapter three, the cheap things that we build our life with.

I used to think that that just meant evil things, sinful things. Those are included there, but it's much broader than that. What it really means is things that are worthless, things that have no eternal significance.

Now, you can do a good thing, Jesus taught me, and you can do it for the wrong reasons or with the wrong motives. And that is worthless as far as eternity is concerned. And I said, well, Jesus, when did I ever do anything with 100% pure motives? He said, never.

You're incapable of that. You're human. We are incapable of doing something with 100% pure motives.

But what he told me is he said, Daniel, what I was looking for was your dominant motive. Sure. There were times you put money in the offering plate, hoping to be noticed.

I understand that. But there are other times that you honestly gave out of your heart and you gave without your right hand, knowing what your left hand was doing. You did it in secret.

You did it quietly. You did it because you wanted to help those things. Those are the jewels in your building.

Those other things, even though they look good on the outside, their motives were impure, completely impure. And as a result, they are worthless. But those, um, 90% pure motives, what the fire does is it purifies those things.

So they become a hundred percent pure so that you can be rewarded for those things for all eternity. I said, I think I'm starting to get it. And I said, I didn't have many of those worthwhile times.

Did I, Jesus? And he said, no. He said, the worthless times were far outnumbering the worthwhile ones. He reminded me of Peggy.

When I got into that frat house, they started leading me in a direction. I didn't really want to go. I started drinking a lot.

I became sexually active and I started dating all the frat girls and that was pretty empty. And then Peggy came into my life and she seemed so different. She seemed so radiant and so pure and innocent.

She wasn't sexually active. She wasn't drinking, but it didn't take me long to lead her down the wrong path. And it seemed the more impact I had on her life, the more desperate she became, the more despondent she came.

And eventually we broke up, uh, complete enemies. I thought I was going to die right there, standing in front of Jesus, Jesus. I'm responsible.

It's my fault that she struggled. So I said, what happened next? I said, she went through three marriages, all of which ended in divorce. She was abused by her first two husbands.

I couldn't believe it. Oh, it's my fault. And Jesus said, no, you are not responsible.

Peggy was responsible for her own choices. Now we can help someone or we can be a stumbling block to someone, but every single person is responsible for their own choices. The real tragedy with Peggy Daniel was that you had an opportunity to her, lead her to me.

And instead you led her the exact opposite direction. And that's tragic. Said whatever happened to her said actually 10 years after her third marriage broke up, somebody shared the gospel with her and she trusted Christ and Daniel.

She's here today and she wants to see you too. She does. Don't worry, Daniel.

Don't worry. Grace abounds in my heavenlies. She wants to thank you for the good things you poured into her life.

And I thought to myself, Oh, if I could do it again, Oh, if only I could do it again, what I would do is first of all, I'd worry about Jesus opinion, not other people's opinion. And then I would focus my life and I would pour my life into things of eternal significance, worthwhile things, instead of this worthless stuff that I spent so much time on. The third observation was this, that things just look different from the Bema seat.

I mean, perspective is everything. And the perspective at the Bema seat was a completely different view on life than what I had enjoyed. Let me give you one example.

Shortly before Jesus returned, I had made a switch in my working relationships. There was Ben Hogan. Ben Hogan was the premier guy in my industry in the city.

He was top dog. And one day he called me up and my heart was pounding. And he said, Daniel, I want to talk to you about a job.

And he came over and he started schmoozing me. He started flattering me. He started talking about how great I was, how valuable I was.

He told me he'd double my salary, double my salary. I started imagining what I'd be able to buy, the things I'd be able to do. And I said, I need to go talk to my boss.

And he said, don't wait too long. The offer won't be on the table very long. So I went to talk to John Mitchell.

John Mitchell was a godly, honest man of integrity. He was one of my father's friends. He gave me a chance at a college.

He got me started. And I'd done very well in his company. And I told him I was thinking of going with Ben Hogan.

And he wasn't really excited about that. Didn't really try to talk me out of it. But he said, Daniel, think very carefully.

And I thought, oh, double salary, a chance to get in with the in crowd, that whole thing again. I said, I'm going, I'm sorry. And I said, I'll tell you what, I'll make a handshake agreement with you that I won't take any of the people that I've brought to our company over to Ben Hogan for at least three years.

OK? OK, he said. And we shook hands on our no compete agreement. And off I went.

And I left him in the dust. And I started with Hogan the next day. And his demeanor changed quite quickly.

And he started drilling me. And he started telling me the quota. And he started making me work hours that were just ridiculous.

And I was doing well. I mean, I actually went up two house sizes in the next few months. And I bought a boat.

And I got to do some really cool stuff. And I wasn't seeing the family much. But I figured this was just for a short time.

And then I'd be able to have everything that I wanted. And I was in with the in crowd. I was in with these really cool people.

I was at the top of the game. I was going to all the sporting events. And I was sitting in box seats.

And I mean, it was great stuff. I was really excited. I mean, that's how I saw it down there.

Up here from the Bama seat, I looked like a fly flying around a Venus fly trap. You know those? I looked at it from here and I saw him as the slimy businessman he was. I saw him as the cruel, money motivated man who didn't care about people.

Perspective was completely different up here. One day, Hogan said, go get that new century account. I said, well, I can't.

He said, why not? I said, well, because it belongs to Mitchell. And I told him that I wouldn't go for any of those accounts. And he said, you have no compete contract.

I said, well, no, I don't have a contract. I didn't sign anything. He said, well, there's no agreement.

I said, but I gave my word. He said, that doesn't matter. Go get it.

I said, I can't do that. He said, get it or be gone. Okay.

So I went and I grappled the new century account away. It wasn't hard to do. I had all the relationships and I tore the heart out of my old friend, John Mitchell.

And I broke my word to him, lost contact with him. But here from the Bama, I could see how I devastated his business, a good man, my own selfish means the rest of my life sped by from this time. I was focused and completely consumed with what I could accomplish monetarily.

I was so focused on earthly things that I completely neglected my heavenly father. And the rest of my life, to be quite honest, was just incinerated before my eyes got to the end. Jesus said, Daniel, your judgment is complete.

Come here to the front of the platform and we will summarize it. And then you will be glorified. And here's what he said, Daniel, I gave you monetary resources beyond most people's wildest dreams.

You'll be interested to know that you were in the wealthiest 1% of all of human history, but you were never content with your financial blessings. You gave very little in comparison to what I gave you. You gave very little to my work.

And as a result, you receive low marks concerning eternal significance. As far as your finances are concerned, you had tremendous human resources. You had godly parents who poured into your life.

You had lay people who poured into your life. You had pastors who taught you the word, but you neglected almost all that turned your back on all of it so that you could be successful in the world's eyes. There were certainly moments, positive impact for the kingdom, but the worthlessness of your life far outshadowed the worth wildness.

I thought, what could I possibly hear that would be worse than that? And then I heard it. He said, Daniel, my summary of your life is that you left your first. You left your first.

I fell to my knees thinking I would never be able to rise again. You left your first love. The sound just echoed in my head.

It was true. I knew it was true. I had, I'd asked him to save me.

And then I completely neglected him and allowed him to work through me at all. It was a completely true statement. There was no pretense.

There was no fake in it. There was no, yeah, but it was true. I had left my first love.

And then I heard the most gracious, glorious words. As I looked into his face, it was yet unchanged. He still looked at me with passion and love and grace in his eyes.

But he said, Daniel, always remember your first love never left you. And Daniel never remember that there is no condemnation for those who are in me. He's not going to condemn me.

Oh, thank you, Jesus. And Daniel always remember that the old have gone, but the new is here. The old has passed away, but the new is here.

Oh, Daniel, it's all uphill from here. And I can feel the tears flowing down my cheeks. And I found myself thinking, you know, I always thought there was no tears in heaven.

But then I remember what the passage in Revelation really said was that Jesus will wipe away tears, presupposing that there are tears to wipe away. And I thought, oh, here are the tears. Oh, if only I could have lived my life differently.

And Jesus did it to me. He got off his throne and he wiped away my tears. And I never cried again.

Never for all eternity. My crying days were over. And he grabbed my hands and he picked me up and I felt a lightning bolt go through my body.

And I was glorified in a moment. And you know what happened at that moment? All the stuff that had been incinerated in my life, it was completely and absolutely for all eternity obliterated from my memory. I couldn't remember a thing.

All that was left was the things of eternal significance and the rewards that he had given me. And he stood behind me and he said, this is my beloved Daniel James Matthewson. Welcome him.

And the whole crowd went nuts. They started cheering and clapping. And I flew back to my seat into my own power now, my glorified body.

And I looked down and I could see my wife and my kids and they were jumping up and down and they were cheering and my kids were going like this. And I got back to my seats and all the people around me were patting me on the back and hugging me and saying they were so proud of me. And I was so overwhelmed with joy.

All that was left was the pure stuff. And I thought, oh, this is what heaven's about. I get it now.

Hey, God, thank you, Jesus. Someone up near the front of the platform went running up the stairs and they took off their crown that they had received as a reward, a crown of faith, and they ran up to the throne of Christ and they threw it down. With a huge grin on their face, I could tell this was the most ultimate act of worship.

And I saw someone else take their crowns and they threw them down at the throne and someone else ran out and they threw them down at the throne as they threw them down the throne. They lay prostrate before Christ and they worshiped him and they praised him and they threw their crowns down and they worshiped his name. And I was standing up on my seat just wishing I had a crown to throw down.

Oh, to worship Jesus in that way. And as they threw down their crowns from all over the stadium, the music started to play and they started to sing and they sang a beautiful song. We fall down, we lay our crowns at the feet of Jesus.

The greatness of mercy and love at the feet of Jesus. And we cry, holy, holy, holy. And we cry, holy, holy, holy.

And we cry, holy, holy, holy is the Lamb. We fall down, we lay our crowns at the feet of Jesus. The greatness of mercy and love at the feet of Jesus.

And we cry, holy, holy, holy. And we cry, holy, holy, holy. And we cry, holy, holy, holy is the Lamb.

As they continued to sing and as the music played, we all stood to our feet, drawn out of our seats by the Spirit of God Himself. And we stood to our feet. We looked to the heavens and we focused on Christ and

His throne.

And we praised Him. And we worshiped Him. And we sang this song from the very depth of the core of our soul.

And we cry, holy, holy, holy. And we cry, holy, holy, holy. And we cry, holy, holy, holy is the Lamb.

We fall down, we lay our crowns at the feet of Jesus. The greatness of mercy and love at the feet of Jesus. And we cry, holy, holy, holy.

And we cry, holy, holy, holy. And we cry, holy, holy, holy is the Lamb. And we cry, holy, holy, holy.

And we cry, holy, holy, holy. And we cry, holy, holy, holy is the Lamb. To continue, we were drawn to the face of our Savior.

We were drawn to the tears in His eyes and the love, the grace that He had for us, the compassion and the passion He had for us and our children. And we were amazed. We stood there amazed that He would save us, that He would love us, that He would do in us what He had said He would do.

And that it was all taking place. We just stood amazed and we started to sing. After pouring our hearts out in worship to the Lord for a long, long time, we all sat down to catch our breath.

And Jesus strode to the front of the platform, climbing over all the crowns that have been laid at His feet. And He said, the judgments are now completed. I'm sure you've got a lot of catching up to do.

And you got to understand that this stadium full of a billion plus souls, every one of them as radiant as the sun that we used to see rising every morning and setting every night on earth. And they all took off at once. It was the most amazing fireworks display you've ever seen.

And I took off and I went out to a place that I just intrinsically knew my family would be. And there was my wife and my kids. And we hugged and we embraced.

And my parents who had gone on before us and their parents. And we had this huge family reunion and what a blessed moment it was. And I ran into John Mitchell, the man that I had broken my word to.

And he ran towards me like the father of the prodigal son. And he threw his arms around me and he said, oh Daniel, I love you. And I saw Sandy and she was more radiant by far than me.

And she said, oh Daniel, thank you for impacting me. And I said, oh thank you for being impacted by me. You are one of the only ones.

I really appreciate it. And I turned and there was Peggy. There was no shame.

There was no anger in her eyes. Only grace and love and purity and honor and unconditional love. And we embraced and we talked about the good things of life.

As we were walking and talking, off in the distance I heard another sound. Could it be another trumpet sound? No, it sounded different. This is a different sound.

It was an irritating sound, a sound I hadn't heard yet at heaven. What was it? Oh no. Oh no.

Oh no. And I turned off my alarm clock and I opened my eyes. It was a dream.

And I looked and there was my wife lying in the bed. I thought it was a dream. I want to go back.

I sat on the side of my bed and I remembered all those things I'd said at the baby seat. If only I had another chance. If only I had another chance.

And Jesus said to my spirit, Daniel, you have another chance. This is the first day of the rest of your life. What are you going to do with it? And I looked at my wife and I thought, you know, honey, life's going to be different from you from now on.

And I walked down the hall and I looked and poked my head into each of my children's bedrooms and I said, okay, daddy's coming big time. Life's going to be different from now on. And I went into the living room and I grabbed my Bible and I looked up the passages.

First Corinthians three and second Corinthians five. And I looked up Romans 14 and some of the parables that Jesus talked about rewards. And I realized that my dream for the most part was theologically sound.

I looked up and I said, oh Jesus, things are going to be different now. I want them to be different. And I got down on my knees to pray and I prayed a prayer of commitment.

I communicated my desire to be walking intimately with him and to be used by his spirit for his purposes for the rest of my life. I made myself available to him for whatever he had for me. And what I'm going to do right now is I'm going to make that opportunity available to you.

If over the last two weeks, the Holy spirit has touched your heart and you are sensing in your heart, you know, I want it to be different from now on, whatever that means. I'm going to invite you to get down on your knees physically with me today, right where you're sitting, turn around and put your hands on the seat in front of you and get down on your knees. You can get out in the hall if you can, if you're not physically able, that's fine.

Don't feel necessary. But if that is your heart's desire, I invite you to join me on my knees now as we pray this prayer to him. I'm going to pray a little bit first, and then you can join with me in the quietness of your heart.

Lord Jesus, you have laid on my heart that this body of believers in North Dallas called Bible fellowship is a special one to you. You've laid on my heart that if we can just get it, there are so many resources represented in this room that you have given to us. If we can just get it, the impact that we could have.

Oh, it's unbelievable. We can't even begin to imagine it. And Lord, that's hard.

That's our desire. And we know that individually we need to get there so that corporately we can have that kind of impact. And so we who are on our knees now, we pray this earnestly.

We pray this because we need it. And Lord Jesus, here is our prayer or Jesus. Thank you for saving me.

Say this out loud with me, Lord Jesus. Thank you for saving me. Thank you for changing me or Jesus.

I desire to live for you. Boy, I want my motive to be to please you. I can't do this on my own.

Only by your spirit is it possible. Lord Jesus, I ask you these things. Come on, say it out loud.

Let us hear it. Lord picture back to my mind when I need it. Help me to remember it.

Help me to live for the day. Give me the desire to live for the day. Give me the ability to live for the day.

Help me impact people. Jesus help me to invest my life in worthwhile things. I'm trusting you to do this in me because I can't do it myself.

I look forward to seeing you face to face. What a day that will be. I love you, Jesus.

And I pray these things in your name. Singing. Someone called your name.

I turned and saw this young man and he was smiling as he came. And he said, friend, you may not know me now. Then he said, but wait.

You used to teach my Sunday school. And I was only eight. Every week you would say a prayer before the class would start.

One day when you said that prayer, I asked Jesus in my heart. Thank you for giving to the Lord. I am a life that was changed.

Thank you for giving to the Lord. I am so glad you gave. Then another man stood before you.

He said, remember the time a missionary came to your church. His pictures made you cry. You didn't have much money, but you gave it anyway.

Jesus took the gift you gave. And that's why I'm here today. Thank you for giving to the Lord.

I am a life that was changed. Thank you for giving to the Lord. I am so glad you gave.

One by one they came far as the eye could see. Each life somehow touched by your generosity. Little things that you had done, sacrifices made.

I noticed on the earth, in heaven now proclaim. I know up in heaven, you're not supposed to cry. I am almost sure there were tears in your eyes.

As Jesus took your hand, you stood before the Lord. He said, my child, look around you, for great is your reward. Thank you for giving to the Lord.

I am a life that was changed. Thank you for giving to the Lord. I am so glad you gave.

Thank you for giving to the Lord. I am a life that was changed. Thank you for giving to the Lord.

I am so glad you gave. I am so glad you gave. I can only imagine what it will be like when I walk by your side.

I can only imagine what my eyes will see when your face is before me. I can only imagine. Surrounded by your glory, what will my heart feel? Will I dance for you, Jesus, or in awe of you be still? Will I stand in your presence, or to my knees will I fall? Will I sing hallelujah? Will I be able to speak at all? I can only imagine.

I can only imagine. I can only imagine when that day comes and I find myself standing in the sun. I can only imagine when all I will do is forever, forever worship you.

I can only imagine, yeah. I can only imagine. Surrounded by your glory, what will my heart feel? Will I dance for you, Jesus, or in awe of you be still? Will I stand in your presence, or to my knees will I fall? Will I sing hallelujah? Will I be able to speak at all? I can only imagine, yeah.

I can only imagine. Surrounded by your glory, what will my heart feel? Will I dance for you, Jesus, or in awe of you be still? Will I stand in your presence, or to my knees will I fall? Will I sing hallelujah? Will I be able to speak at all? I can only imagine, yeah. I can only imagine, yeah.

I can only imagine, yeah. I can only imagine. I can only imagine when all I will do is forever, forever worship you.

I can only imagine.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/20/SID20365.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/pete-briscoe/the-bema-seat/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net