

# The Person God Esteems

by Richard Ganz

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*God desires a people with humble and contrite hearts, who tremble at His word, and are sympathetic and compassionate towards each other.*

**Duration:** 49:53

**Scripture:** Ezra 10:1, Isaiah 66:1-2, Luke 21:5-6

**Topics:** "Humility"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the story of the poor widow who gave everything she had as an offering to God. He emphasizes the contrast between her sacrificial giving and the prideful giving of the rich. The disciples, however, quickly change the subject to something more comfortable when Jesus brings up this topic. The preacher then emphasizes the importance of approaching God with fear and trembling, acknowledging His holiness and power. He also highlights the response of Ezra in the Bible, who humbly acknowledges the guilt of the people and earnestly prays for God's mercy and intervention.

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## Transcript

Please turn with me in your Bibles to the last chapter of the Gospel of Isaiah. That's the 66th chapter. We're beginning this chapter this week.

We're finishing our study through Isaiah, which began before quite a few of you were even born. So you'll have to catch up by going to the website or something. I don't know how you'll do it, but I've just been so blessed to have had the privilege to preach.

Well, I've preached through the Old Testament to this point, but this book has just been extraordinary for me. I'm just very thankful for the - it's the privilege as a pastor, as a shepherd, to preach through the Scriptures like this. And this book, which has had such an impact on my life, I guess I haven't wanted to see it come to an end.

But I won't be on this chapter for more than six or eight months, so I don't know how it'll be. But anyway, I just have the first two verses for tonight. This is what the Lord says.

Heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool. Where is the house you will build for me? Where will my resting place be? Has not my hand made all these things? And so they came into being, declares the Lord. This is the one I esteem.

He who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word. God, please take this word. Make us to be that humble, contrite, broken people who yet tremble at your word, even this night.

In Jesus' name, amen. As we have seen, Isaiah's concern, particularly in these last chapters of Isaiah, is to have God's people take their eyes off of themselves and see God for who He is and to see God's plan for what it is. Isaiah's concern is for the Israel of God, all of those in faith who call upon God's name, who recognize that in and of themselves, even their so-called righteous deeds are nothing more than filthy rags and fit only to be thrown away, Isaiah 64.6. And we are to be those who repent, who trust in the Messiah Jesus Christ for our salvation, who do not forget God's holy mountain, Isaiah 65.11. But instead, we are the ones who obey Him and who worship Him in spirit and in truth.

You see, Isaiah's focus is to bring God's people to their ultimate destination, not just in their life, but in the plan of God. We saw last time that the ultimate destination of the people of God is the new heavens and the new earth, Isaiah 65.17, in which, as Peter in 2 Peter 3.13 says, this is the place where righteousness dwells. The picture of the new heavens and the new earth is that given as a picture of glory.

It's a picture in which, in Isaiah 65.16, God's people are blessed and called by another name and in which the former troubles, all of the former troubles are put away and it's glorious because it is there that, as Revelation 21 says, God Himself dwells with His people. If only all could just be as wonderful as that, but it isn't. Sadly, Isaiah 66 ends the book of Isaiah in a fashion that's no different than how the book of Isaiah began.

It's so interesting. It even gives you a sense of the ownership by God of this book. It's not ended happily.

It's not ended pleasantly. It didn't begin pleasantly. No one writes a book that's going to sell, that starts out bleakly and ends even more bleakly, but this book does.

And this is one of the most powerful books in the most powerful book in the world. This is the word of God. Listen to the opening words in Isaiah 1. Hear, O heavens! Listen, O earth! For the Lord has spoken.

I reared children and brought them up, but they have rebelled against me. The ox knows his master, the donkey his owner's manger, but Israel does not know. My people do not understand.

O sinful nation! A people loaded with guilt, a brood of evildoers. Children given to corruption. They have forsaken the Lord.

They have spurned the Holy One of Israel. They have turned their backs on him. And then, in the last chapter of the book of Isaiah, here is the Lord's verdict about Israel after 66 chapters.

They have chosen their own ways, and their souls delight in their abominations. So I also will choose harsh treatment for them, and will bring upon them what they dread. For when I called, no one answered.

When I spoke, no one listened. They did evil in my sight, and they chose what displeases me. It's verses 3 and 4. It is obvious what God hates.

These verses, and many other verses like them, spell it out clearly. God hates idolatry. God hates hypocrisy.

Especially when it's religious hypocrisy. Especially when it is connected with the worship of God. When people say that they love God, but instead, really, all that they're caught up in are superficialities of

religion.

Or when they're just going through the motions of religion, caught up in doing things they want to do. They are worshiping God how they think is the best way, and paying no attention to what God is telling them about His worship, or obeying Him in any way other than just wanting to do what they want to do. Although at the time they may speak words that sound great and right, their pride and their glory is not in God, but in, as was the case with Israel, in this case, was their temple.

That was their glory. In an outer show of offering bigger and better sacrifices in this magnificent temple in order to please God. But is God satisfied by this? He says in Isaiah 66 verse 3 of these people, they have chosen their own way, and their souls delight in their abominations.

Now, before we discount this as only something specific to Old Covenant Israel, I want us to remember that even the apostles were not exempt from this kind of spiritual pride and arrogance. Late in Jesus' ministry, as they stood with Jesus above Jerusalem, and as they looked out over a glorious temple, one in which the stones were inlaid with pure gold, gold that glistened in the brilliance of the afternoon sunshine, producing a spectacular, a beautiful sight. They stood there looking at this just after Jesus had spoken to them about what was true in religion, what was right, what true religion was all about.

And you remember his description was about watching rich men put a token of their wealth proudly into the temple offering, but a poor widow gives everything that she had, even though it was just the smallest amount of money. And she's the one who is accepted in God's sight. And hearing this, the response of the disciples is to quickly get off the subject and move to what they thought was a safe topic.

Here's something that the master, here's something that the rabbi can get into without hitting us with something really too difficult for us to take. So we read in Luke 21, verses 5 and 6, some of his disciples began remarking about how the temple was adorned with beautiful stones and with gifts dedicated to God. But Jesus says, as for what you see here, the time will come when not one stone will be left upon another.

Every one of them will be thrown down. The apostles still did not have the slightest idea about true religion. Jesus is saying, here's your centerpiece of religion.

This is it for you. It's all going to be destroyed, period, end of sentence, end of statement. Their love for this beautiful building with its sacrifices and with its gifts did not move Jesus any more than the wealthy men who gave lots of money from their excess had moved him just a few minutes earlier.

He wasn't moved by it. Their adoration for the temple, the dwelling of God in the Old Covenant, didn't move him a bit. You see, Jesus' concern was not how his disciples viewed the temple, whether or not they loved the building, but how they viewed God, whether or not they loved and obeyed God.

Now, this is not something new. For instance, in 1 Kings 8-12, at the building of the temple, Solomon says this, I have indeed built a magnificent temple for you, a place for you to dwell forever. And then, just as this magnificent work is being completed, before anything had yet happened in this new temple, God met once again with Solomon.

And this is what he had to say to him. This is in the next chapter, in 1 Kings 9-6. But if your sons or you turn away from me and you do not observe the commands and the decrees I have given you, and I think I would connect this with what Steve was talking about earlier with the catechism.

I think this is in relationship to religious worship. If you don't obey the way I am telling you to worship God, and it's obvious because it goes on and says, and instead you go off and you serve other gods, worship them. Set up your own standards of worship and worship what you want to worship and the way you want to worship that.

I will cut off Israel from the land I have given them and will reject this temple that I have consecrated for my name. Israel will then become a byword and an object of ridicule among all peoples. And though this temple is now imposing, and all who pass by will be appalled and will scoff and say, why has the Lord done such a thing to this land and to this temple? People will answer, because they have forsaken the Lord their God who brought their fathers out of Egypt.

And they have embraced other gods, worshiping and serving them. That's why the Lord brought all this disaster upon them. Words such as these are repeated again and again throughout the Old Testament.

I don't know if you've ever focused on this line of thinking, this line of reasoning that comes from God to his people. You see, God is not looking for people to build something for him. Even if it was another Sistine Chapel, even if it's another crystal cathedral, if they have another campus on the east coast of the United States instead of just one on the west coast, or even if it was a Taj Mahal worship center, the campus in India, as he puts it in Isaiah 66, 1 and 2, this is what the Lord says.

Heaven is my throne. The earth is my footstool. Could you ever build me a temple as good as that? Could you build a dwelling place for me? Could you build me a place to rest? My hands have made both heaven and earth.

They're mine. I, the Lord, have spoken. By the end, when he says, I have made both heaven and earth, they are mine.

When he says, I, the Lord, have spoken, he says, this isn't a discussion. This is it. This is the word for you to understand.

You can't do this. Don't think this is what's satisfying in my sight. God does not want a temple.

If he does not want sacrifices, which are, by the way, intimately connected only with the temple, what then does God want? What can we do to find favor in his sight? What can we do to receive his blessing? Isaiah concludes that second verse telling us what God desires. He tells us, this is the one to whom I will look. And he uses a word for look, which means to look at intently and to favor and regard with pleasure.

What is it that God desires that brings this look with favor? Who are the people whom God will look upon with favor? He tells us, I will bless those who have humble and contrite hearts, who tremble at my word. Wow! Is that it? God, okay, I'm up for that. Anything else? I mean, while you're at it, throw in a couple of more difficult ones.

If we can make this temple for you, God, we can make ourselves contrite. No, there is nothing else. This is what he said.

That's it and that's all, but that's everything. You see, God is not looking for our buildings. God does not need our buildings.

He doesn't need anything we make. His hands have made the heavens and the earth. God wants our hearts.

I will bless those who are humble and contrite in heart. That is, those who are not arrogant and who see themselves as, instead, who they really are. Those who are maimed.

By the way, literally what contrite means is maimed, coming as broken clay pots needing the potter's help. You see, God is not after our skill. Even the skill to make beautiful things for him, even magnificent temples for him, God wants us.

God does not want a temple building. God doesn't want sacrifice. Instead, he wants a people serving him with their whole heart.

We read in Proverbs 15.8, the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, but the prayer of the upright is his delight. In Proverbs 21, verses 2 and 3, every man's way is right in his own eyes, but the Lord weighs the heart. To do righteousness and justice is desired by the Lord more than sacrifice.

In Psalm 51, verses 15 through 17, he goes even further. Open my lips, O Lord, that my mouth may declare your praise, for you do not delight in sacrifice, otherwise I would give it. You are not pleased with burnt offering.

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken spirit and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise. I mean, how often do we... We love the Psalms of David. How often do we even think, what is it that you delight in, God? What is it that I can bring to you that brings delight into the presence of the God who loves us and gave his son for us? Look at what God says.

This is the one God esteems. It's the one who is not looking to build a temple for God, but who realizes that, as Paul says in 1 Corinthians 6.19, as we saw this morning, that as a believer, we are the temple of God. Listen to this.

Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you? We talk about how much we should literally take from the words of God. Here is something God telling us. He is dwelling within us.

Do we live accepting that reality? I don't think this is symbolic. This is real God dwelling in our hearts. God does not want you to build a cathedral for his dwelling.

He wants to find a dwelling in your heart. He puts it this way in Isaiah 57.15. For this is what the high and lofty one says. He who lives forever, whose name is holy.

I live in a high and holy place. But also with him is one who is contrite and lowly in spirit. Why? Why does God live with the humble and contrite of spirit? He tells us.

This is for me the most amazing part of this text. He tells us in the rest of the verse. He lives within us in order to, and listen to this, revive the spirit of the lowly and revive the heart of the contrite.

Isn't that beautiful? When Christ is in you, he will minister to you. As Hebrews 4.15 and 16 puts it. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize, or show compassion to us, or is unable to be touched by our weakness.

But we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are, yet without sin. Let us then, he says, let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. You see, friends, the reason we need to be broken and contrite and humble before God is because God, God wants to heal us.

Because God wants to restore us. Because God wants to cleanse us from our sins. Because God wants his love to wash over us.

Because God wants to make us realize that in spite of all the mess that we are in, and even worse, in spite of all the mess that we are, he will never be insensitive, unsympathetic, uncompassionate to those who come to him honestly, admitting their need of his care and their need of his love. And that, coming to him in faith and repentance, he will make us new and he will heal us. Do you know that probably, thinking about this, probably the hurt that I hear expressed more often than maybe anything else from wives who come with their husbands for marriage counseling and they say this when the husband's present, think for just a minute, don't raise your hand or shout it out, but just think for a minute what it might be.

And you can think of it in terms of what I was just speaking about. This is what I hear, is that her husband is insensitive, uncompassionate really, unsympathetic, not really sympathetic to her, but let's just use the term insensitive. Men in those situations, really when they hear that, I don't like it, you're so insensitive to me, I'll hear that.

And then they will look at me, then they'll look at their wives, as if to say with a look, is this why we're here? Is this really what's bothering you? Oh, wow, Dudas, what is wrong with you? I mean, that's the look that you see. Where they might actually say something like this to their wife, half as a kind of, and I've heard this any number of times, not exact same words, but the same idea, half as a kind of cute little manly joke, wow, do you want me to get in touch with my feminine side and become all kind of sensitive and feely? Now if I answer that question, the answer is no. If I was to answer it, the answer is no.

I don't want men to turn into women, if that's the way they see it. I don't want them to turn into anything else, as a matter of fact. The problem, though, is a case, really, not of sensitivity or insensitivity, the case really is a case of nasty pride.

Because, you see, we are to be like Christ. We are to love our wives as Christ loves his church, which is sacrificially, which is givingly, which is sensitively, which is compassionately, which is not pridefully, and it's not arrogantly. And the Bible teaches over and over that Jesus was sympathetic and had compassion.

If you have a pen and you take these few references, you can look just in Matthew 14.14, Matthew 15.32, Matthew 20.34, or you can see that not only is he compassionate, but it says, it goes strong, it says he's moved with compassion in Mark 1.41 and Mark 6.34. There is no doubt that Jesus is sympathetic and filled with compassion for his bride. You can read that, that Christ is sensitive. And he is sensitive to our weaknesses.

He is sensitive to our frailties. He is sensitive to all the troubles that we bear. And this is what Jesus wants us to be, sympathetic.

He wants us to be sensitive to our wives. He wants us to be sensitive and sympathetic and compassionate to one another. And he expects that not only of men, by the way, who may, I would say, stumble somewhat more on this than women do, but he wants it of women as well.

He wants it of all of his people because he wants us, what? To be like him. He wants us to be like him. And if we cannot, or if we will not, which is more often the case, really, sympathize with each other's frailties, weaknesses, then we are hopelessly out of touch with Jesus.

Jesus is not the source of our dogmatic textbooks. You don't pull him off the shelf like a systematic theology book. He is our savior and he is our lord.

And if we want to be in touch with him, then we are saying we want to be in touch with the one who dwells in us, not on our bookshelf, in our hearts, precisely so that he can firsthand help us through our often heartbroken lives. And men, by the way, men, if any of you think that such sensitivity and sympathy will make you less of a man, if you listen to this from me and you think that, then all that I can say is that you are already less of a man than you think you are. And I want you to know something else.

Something that all of us need to see. Jesus shows us just how to be these kind of men and women, how to sympathize with one another in our frailties and our struggles and our difficulties. And by the way, sympathizing with these things doesn't mean he's condoning sin, but he is teaching us how to exhort, how to encourage, how to speak with one another, exhort one another, encourage one another, pray for one another, teach one another.

And we do this. Here is the difficult part. We do this by getting really close to one another.

After all, if it's to be like Jesus, he's within us. He's not gazing at us from eternal distances. He's within us.

And in our closeness with one another, by dropping our pretenses of, I need my space, please dear, I'm totally sympathetic, but I need my space. By getting rid of the lies that we tell ourselves that we are not really interested in feelings. I mean, I hear that from guys, so I'm not interested in, you know, it's a cool way, I'm not interested in feelings, man.

You see those guys in the cage talking about feelings? Yes, I do, when they lose and get their face smashed, and they're talking about, oh, I can't believe this happened to me today, I'm going to be back. Yeah, they're thinking about it too. But I'll tell you something, and you can trust me on this one, when the strongest men, the most independent men, get hurt badly, they cry, just like everyone else.

And you know what? They're thankful when someone sympathizes enough to put even just an arm around them, and just hold them for a moment. And the few who resist and never let that happen because they're so tough, have no idea what they're missing, often until they're dying. And then they begin to wonder, how come no one's at my bedside with me? You see, they go through their lives, and they never see how much better their lives can be when they live them like Christ, reaching out, being available, and being sensitive to one another.

You remember, I think it was last week, I mentioned how God brought a couple of Muslim men into my life. Men who are part of a religion that I have very strong, mostly accurate, negative opinions about. Men whom I would never have thought that I could speak to, let alone become friends with.

Someone in this congregation met one of my Muslim friends when I was with him. And when I introduced them to each other, he said this, speaking of me to this person, he said, he is my best friend. And I stood there, and I just, I couldn't believe what I had heard.

He wasn't playing a game, he wasn't joking. He was totally serious. It was unbelievably humbling to hear that.

How can a man, whom I would have done everything to keep away from, call me his best friend? I've known him for two months. I've talked with him for no more than 20 hours. We haven't done anything other than talking with each other.

It's not like we go for dinner or get our families together. This is just him and I. Well, I let myself get close to him. And it happened that this was at a time when he was wondering, he told me this, whether Canadians could ever see him as a decent person.

And this was his view of himself, because I am obviously a Muslim man. Despite what I may have wanted to do, I let myself be available to be used by God, whatever way it would be, with this man. I let myself get close to him.

And you know what? Each one of us can do this. Each one of us. Until this point, you could have said, it's easier for you, Rich, you really do resonate with people, but I don't resonate with Muslims.

And God put these men in my path. And I had a choice. Each of us can make the same, have the same response to the same choice.

You can let yourself, you know what it is? You know what the choice is? You can let yourself be humbled by God. And in the process, get close to your family. It's not just some Muslim man from Iraq, who I'm talking about, or Iran.

I'm talking about your family. Get close to your family. Get close to your friends.

Someone told me recently, in terms of a relationship with a friend, we never talk about anything. And you can get close even to people in, even to people in the church, whom you might not want to get close to, especially the ones you might not want to get close to. Don't wait until you feel that you can trust them.

I'll tell you why not. Because even if you love them fully, and as perfectly as you are capable of loving one another, you are still, you know what? You are still going to be disappointed. Or maybe they will.

Even worse, maybe you will be betrayed, be betrayed even through your love in that relationship that happens. But you know what you're becoming like? Even as you take that chance and make yourself vulnerable in these relationships, you are becoming like Christ. Doesn't mean you divulge all your secrets.

Christ didn't divulge everything to his followers and his friends. You're not divulging all your secrets in this. Don't be frightened about, what am I saying that you have to do? But taking your eyes off of yourself and fixing them on God first, and then on others, and then being open, and then being available for those people, for them, and to them.

And there's something else. In various ways, bringing God to them. Look at the people whom Jesus loved.

Just think about this for a minute. I want you to look in your mind at the people whom Jesus loved. Look in your mind at the people for whom Jesus died.

Do you know what you see? You see us. There we are in our mind's eye. Those for whom he died.

And who are we? Do you know who we are? We are the ones who killed him. Speaking of betrayal. I know we all like to think as believers, it's the unbelievers who killed him.

No, he died for his people. It's our sins that nailed him to the cross. And we killed him.

He loved us. It's our sins that killed him, and he loved us anyway. Please stop telling yourself that you can't do this.

Please stop keeping yourself from someone, maybe even right here and this evening, who desperately needs the compassion that only you can give to him or to her, if it's needed. And you know what? If it's needed, you know what? Give it to that person now, tonight. Don't look at that person and say to yourself, I'm going to pray for the next month about whether I should be sympathetic to this person.

Don't worry about it. Do it. And risk feeling stupid.

Risk being embarrassed or awkward. So what? Do you know what? We are all quite a bit more stupid than we would ever like to admit. Just do the right thing.

Do the right thing. Start right here with people who love you to begin with. Verse 2 of Isaiah 66 ends with the Lord calling us not only to such brokenness, contrition, and not acknowledging our maimedness and humility, but to fear.

He says in the same context, tremble. But not just tremble. Tremble at my word.

The root meaning for the word tremble is to shake. This is a kind of fear that makes us, as the expression goes, shaking in our boots, to just use an idiom of our culture. When Ezra was going to preach one of the most important messages ever spoken to the entire nation of Israel, one that, if the people understood it and acted upon it, would change the entire destiny of Israel, he says in Ezra 9.4, then everyone who, listen to this, trembled at the words of the God of Israel gathered around me.

It's an interesting picture. He's saying he looked around and the ones who were ready to listen were the ones who had that fear of God that made them tremble at the word of God. Listen to how Ezra prayed a few moments later.

At the end of the message, he gave his message to the nation, and in verse 15 he says, O Lord, God of Israel, you are just. We stand before you in our guilt as nothing but an escaped remnant. I mean, it's amazing.

Not, we're your people, we're the house of Yisroel. Do it with us, Lord. Do it now.

No, there's none of that kind of foolish stupidity. It is total seriousness, rock-bottom seriousness with him. We are nothing but an escaped remnant, though in such a condition, none of us can stand in your presence.

Listen to the response in Ezra 10.1. While Ezra prayed and made this confession, weeping and throwing himself to the ground in front of the temple of God, a large crowd of people from Israel, men, women, and children, gathered and wept bitterly with him. And Isaiah, in Isaiah 66, uses the same word for tremble, just three verses down from verse 2. In verse 5, he's using it a second time. Hear the word of the Lord, you who tremble at God's word.

I mean, it's as if he's saying, the end of my ministry, the end of all my years of service and prophecy, I'm not looking for all of you. Come on, the ones of you who tremble at the word of the Lord, I'm looking for you. Come to me now.

I'm finishing my word from God. Hear it, because you're the only ones who will be able to hear how this word from God ends. None of the rest will even listen anymore than they've listened before.

It's a remarkable verse there, because what we see here is that Isaiah does not call all of Israel to hear his message. He calls only those who tremble at God's word to hear God's word. One final reference for tonight.

The most powerful of the seven places that this word tremble is used is in Exodus 19.18, and it's not referring to people. It refers to something else. Listen to it.

Mount Sinai was covered with smoke because the Lord descended on it in fire. The smoke billowed up from it like smoke from a furnace. The whole mountain trembled violently.

You know what's happening? It's when the holy law and the word of God was about to be delivered, when they were getting ready for Moses to head up onto that mountain, and there was no one on the mountain but God, warning them about the holiness of the mountain, and the mountain becomes a smoking furnace before the face of Moses, and the mountain begins to shake violently. I sometimes think that we just write these accounts off as interesting, exciting stories, but this is the word of God, and God calls us in humility and brokenness to tremble at His word, to treat Him and His word with proper reverence and fear, the reverence and fear that is due His name. Friends, when I first heard the word of the Lord, I'm not talking when I was a little child in the synagogue.

When I first heard it, when my ears were opened, my heart was opened by God, and the Messiah of Israel was revealed to me from this book of Isaiah, and I saw Isaiah's name after it had been read to me, and I saw Isaiah's name at the top of the page that I had been read from, and knew, and I knew that this had spoken to me of Jesus Christ, and I knew that it was 770 years before Christ was born. I was in terror. It terrified me.

I had come into contact with the holy. I didn't think holy existed, and I'm in contact with the holy, and I was shaking with fear. I felt as if I had been stabbed with a sword that had gone right through me.

I felt as if I had just been, through the reading of that word and the noting of the name on the top of the page, I felt as if I had been left for dead. My life was over. I knew it, as everything that I ever thought my life was or was to be.

It was finished. It was over. It was done.

All the hopes, all the dreams, all the values, all the direction, everything that was planned was over. I was in terror of the God who could arrange what he had arranged on the pages of that book, and how I was now unalterably accountable before this God that I had previously had nothing, absolutely nothing to do with. Friends, God calls us to take our gaze off ourselves, to not gaze at a building, but to gaze at him, to turn to him.

And if we never have before, to turn in repentance and faith. And then, having done so, having been covered by the blood of the cross, by the blood of the new covenant, by the blood of Jesus Christ, having

been covered, having been forgiven, having been made new in the final sacrificial work of Jesus on the cross, God will look upon us in favor and acceptance being sympathetic and compassionate and sensitive to us in our frailties, in our troubles, in our sorrows. We know what he will do.

He will help us. Friends, in faith we are to live. Not trusting in our own strength, but in his strength and his power, which through Christ in us, he gives us, offering our sacrifices of praise, our sacrifice of prayer, offering ourselves with our whole heart to him.

If you listen to the word of God, and the Holy Spirit is at work in your heart, it should make you tremble. We're not talking about games or fun or a nice church building. We're talking about coming before the Holy God.

It should make you tremble. It should break your pride. It should humble your heart.

It should make you cry out for mercy. It should bring you to see that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. And you should, in bowing your heart to the inevitable consequence of such unalterable holiness and power, you should be saved from your sins with your face and your body on the ground.

That's where I was when the word came to me, on my face and my body, on the floor. Because you're trembling with the fear of the Lord and you cannot even stand up. Friends, God calls us to tremble.

But that's not where he stops. Because then he lifts us up. Then he binds our wounds.

Then he washes our filth. Then he heals us from the scourges of our sinful ways. And all that we are to do in response, all it is, is to give everything to him.

I know it's said, you don't have to do anything. He doesn't want anything. You can't give anything.

Yes, you can't give anything for that favor of God. But you know what he wants from us? He wants you. And that means everything.

He doesn't want a little bit of you. He doesn't want a moment of you. He wants you.

He wants your life. He wants your heart. He wants your talents.

He wants your gifts. He wants your hopes. He wants your fears.

He wants your admiration. He wants your love, because he loves you. He wants you to give to him, without question and even without hesitation, the rule and the lordship of your entire life.

The direction and will from your life to give it to him, that his will becomes your will for now and forever. And recognize that because of what has happened to us, that we have, in Christ, we have died. And our life is now and forever, hidden, as Colossians 3.1 says, hidden with Christ in God.

This is the beautiful, glorious, holy temple that finds pleasure with God and all that God desires. May we pray. Hallelujah.

Praise the name of the Lord. For the Lord's name is glorious. Thank you, Lord God, for taking us from out of the garbage heap and putting us with princes and princesses, seating us in the heavenly places in Christ.

Oh, God, for this short breath that is our life, help us to live it. Help us to reclaim today and every day that is still called today. And the only way to reclaim it is to give it back to you.

That is what you have given us today. God, enable us to give today back to you. And then use that day in and through us for your glory.

In Jesus' name, amen.

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