

# Faith for the Future

by Robert B. Thompson

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*Robert B. Thompson emphasizes the necessity of living by faith and maintaining a relationship with Jesus amidst worldly challenges.*

**Duration:** 1:01:07

**Scripture:** Luke 9:62, Luke 17:32, Philippians 3:13-14, Hebrews 11:1-10

**Topics:** "Forgiving Past", "Gods Will"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of forgetting the past and focusing on the future. He encourages the audience to let go of their past mistakes and regrets, and to press on towards their goals. The preacher uses the example of Lot's wife, who turned back and was turned into a pillar of salt, to illustrate the danger of looking back instead of moving forward. He also highlights the need to align one's will with God's will, ensuring that it is in line with the scriptures. The sermon concludes with a reminder to keep one's dreams and aspirations focused on the future.

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## Transcript

By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. By faith he made his home in the promised land, like a stranger in a foreign country. He lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise.

For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God. By faith Abraham, even though he was past age, and Sarah herself was barren, was unable to become a father, because he considered him faithful who had made the promise. And so from this one man, and he as good as dead, came descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky, and as countless as the sand on the seashore.

All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised. They only saw them and welcomed them from a distance.

And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth. People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return.

Instead they were longing for a better country, a heavenly one. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God. For he has prepared a city for them.

Now, back in the 8th verse, this whole 11th chapter is a definition of the just shall live by faith. It is how the righteous live. And back in the 10th chapter, in the 38th verse, a couple of verses from the end of chapter 10, it says, But my righteous one will live by faith.

The just shall live by faith. It appears four times in the Bible. This is the last one.

And it is the cry of the Protestant Reformation as we know. The just shall live by faith. It's a way you live, that just live by faith.

The opposite is living according to your own strength, wisdom, and talents, and desires. That's the opposite of living by faith. The righteous live by faith in God.

And this is given in many illustrations in the 11th chapter of Hebrews. And interestingly, all the illustrations are from the Old Testament. So that shows us that the only way the righteous have ever lived from the time of Adam, and it goes back there and it talks about Abel, the only way the righteous have ever lived is by faith.

We're not in a new dispensation of faith. That is not a scriptural expression. There's a continuity to the Bible.

God has always required the same thing of people. He's shown the old man what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? But to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God.

That never changes from covenant to covenant, whether it's the covenant of Noah, the covenant of Moses, or Abraham, or Adam and Eve. God always is after the same thing. That we live in righteousness.

That we do not trust ourselves. We do not follow our own way. The righteous live by faith.

That's how they live. And all of these are illustrations of what it means to live by faith. It's all action, by the way.

We sometimes think of faith as being belief or assent to a theological position. That is not what faith is. The demons know more about God and Christ than we do, but they're not saved.

Faith is not an assent or a mental position. There's no life in that. There's no salvation in a mental position.

Your mental position has to bring you to Jesus. Christianity is a relationship to Jesus. A relationship to the living Jesus.

Not the Jesus of history, but the living Jesus. And if you are a righteous person today, you are today, you have contact with Jesus. You're praying, you're going to Him about everything that you do.

He is living in your life. If not, you're not living by faith. You may be religious.

You may at one time have made a profession of faith. But believe me, that's yesterday's manna. It won't work today.

You have to touch Jesus today. Which means that your life, you can't live the ordinary American life and be all engrossed in what's in the television, the internet, and the newspaper. You have to be involved with Jesus now in everything in your life.

And anything that you can do that you don't need His help is loss for Him and loss for you. Believe me, you need His help. I need His help.

And so, the Lord spends a lifetime getting us into this consciousness of Jesus. Especially hard in this country because there are so many opportunities. Our country is a very difficult place to serve the Lord.

We're too rich. And so that makes it difficult to enter the kingdom. A very difficult place.

As I look out on you, I don't know all of you, but I do know that your life is very busy. It's frantically busy. With all kinds of things.

But there's only one thing that matters. And that is, all these things should just be a carburetor for you. All your problems should just be a carburetor.

That's all it should be. It's supposed to be mixed with Jesus. If you want the engine to go, you've got to mix all these problems with Jesus.

Sometimes we say, well, when this problem is over, when I feel better, my health is better, the relatives leave, or whatever it is, I'm going to serve the Lord. When the kids are grown, I'm going to serve the Lord. When I get through college, I'm going to serve the Lord.

Believe me, it will never happen. It will never happen. You're deluding yourself.

These things come upon you to give you an opportunity to press into Jesus. The problems are God's way of bringing you to Jesus, so you won't be wasting your time just living like an animal, which we would do if left to our own devices. We'd eat, sleep, work, play, and reproduce.

That's the life of a horse. We've got more than that. But only if we touch Jesus.

All eternal life is in Jesus. There's none of it in theology. There's none of it in our head knowledge.

It's all in the man. And he's alive, and he's here. And while you're sitting there and worrying, take it to Jesus.

Let it be a carburetor. And God will mix Christ with it, and the engine will go. But if you don't mix Christ with it, you're just going to sit there and worry.

That goes nowhere. The only significant thing in any of our lives, the only significant thing in any of our lives, is our relationship to Christ. And the rest is just spinning out, just like the family dog, just eating, sleeping, working, playing, and reproducing.

Eating, sleeping, working, playing, and reproduce. We work so we can eat, sleep, play, and reproduce. You know, you'll end up somewhere, old, and tired, and probably incontinent, wondering what happened.

What happened was, you didn't touch eternity. You didn't touch the Lord. Because it's in Jesus.

He said to the Pharisees, Go ahead and read the scroll, but there's no eternal life in it. You won't come to me. Here's life looking at you.

Got your nose stuck in the book. And everybody said, Amen. Alright, now this is what faith is.

By faith, Abraham, when called to go to a place, he would later receive as his inheritance. Obeyed and went, even though he didn't know where he was going. You're not going to figure God out.

You're not going to figure out what God is doing with your life. In fact, you don't even know your real name. Your mother named you arbitrarily after someone in the family, or something she read somewhere, or heard in the movies, or something.

You don't even know what your real name is. You don't know anything. You don't know any more than I do what God's plan is for your life, or anything.

You have to obey Him, and go where He tells you to go. And if you wait for Him to explain it to you, you'll be sitting around a long time. Faith is going out where God shows you.

Faith is an enduring belief and trust in the goodness, the power, and the faithfulness of God. It's the way we live. Have faith in God for everything.

Every spoonful you put in your mouth. And you're going to have to do that over in Ireland, because this hoof and mouth disease floats all around, all over the place. You're going to have to be protected by the Lord.

It isn't fatal, it isn't like mad cow disease, but it is a disease. It's actually more of a threat to the livestock industry than anything else. But nonetheless, if you don't get blown up with a bomb, or shot by some zealous Irishman, you come back safely.

Oh, what an optimist we've got here. Alright. Well, that's Christianity.

Hasn't always been safe. You can say that Thompson, stand up here. Alright.

He obeyed, and you know, faith and obedience are almost totally synonymous. They're almost totally synonymous. You cannot have a genuine faith in God and be disobedient.

You have to do... People say, well, you can't obey God. Nobody's obeying God. Well, that came right up out of the pit.

God expects to be obeyed. He's your Father, and He expects obedience. And He'll never tell you anything you can't do without His grace.

Huh? You can do it with His grace. Otherwise, He's just frustrating you, and God's not in the business of frustrating anybody. We've heard that lie long enough.

God wants us to obey Him. His commandments are not grievous. It's Satan's commandments that are grievous.

Not God's. They're a blessing. And if we'll obey Him and let go of our own way and just do what He says, it's a dance.

What's the problem? Of course we obey God. To disobey God is absolutely unthinkable. Unthinkable.

Disobey the Creator of all. Why? That's craziness. Abraham... I knew you'd like that.

He did not know where he was going. By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country. This world here, right here, right now, this is our eternal home.

Well, of course, this one's going to pass away, but there'll be a new earth. Earth. Man was made on the earth.

That's where we belong. Right now, we're not at home in the world because the spirit of the world is the spirit of Antichrist. And it's money-driven.

It's a money-driven world we're in. And if we're all involved in it, we're not pleasing God. Whoever will be the friend of the world is the enemy of God, it says.

Now, but the earth, the meek inherit the earth. This is our turf. This is ours here.

Now, right now, just like Abraham, we're wandering in a place that one day will be our possession. But we're not part of the world's system. We're not part of it.

Don't be part of it. Jesus has called us out of the world. He said in John 17, you are not of the world.

If you're of the world, the world would love you. But you're not of the world. Therefore, the world hates you.

We are not of the world. People, it's very difficult in America not to be part of the world because we're being bombarded with media. And media brings everything toward a group consensus.

You have to swim upstream if you're ever going to serve Christ in America. Take up your cross. Follow the man.

Boy, it takes a lot of doing. He made his home in the promised land. And that land he was in, the land of Israel, that belonged to Abraham.

But when he was in it, he was a stranger and a pilgrim because it was inhabited by Amorites. And our world is inhabited by people that are led around by the devil and it's not our home. And if you're getting comfortable here, God's liable to make you uncomfortable to save you.

To save you. Sure, we suffer a lot of stuff to save us. Save us.

Our sufferings save us from the world. He that has suffered in the flesh is ceased from sin. 1 Peter 4.1 He lived in tents as did Isaac and Jacob.

Now, he could have lived. You know, he's fabulously wealthy. Egypt had a tremendous civilization.

He'd been there. He could have hired people out of Egypt to build himself a castle. Fancy thing.

And he chose to live in a tent. People, let's choose to live in tents. Don't get your mind on this world.

Keep it up. God gives us the things we need. But this generation that's coming up and things are in such a turmoil that I don't know if they're going to be able to do like we've done to this point and get a mortgage and put a down payment on a house and get a mortgage and two cars and be consumers.

I'm not sure that's going to work out for the kids coming up. It may be much more of a fluid situation than that. In which case, they'll be better able to enter the kingdom.

So don't get your heart set on retiring because things are afoot. Hallelujah. Kathy, did you retire, did you? Kathy worked all these years and retires.

Wonderful. Alright. He lived in tents.

He was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God. Somehow, Abraham, by the Spirit of God, he was a man of prophecy, and by the Spirit of God, he saw the New Jerusalem. And the New Jerusalem has foundations.

This world does not have foundations. The 24th Psalm tells us that God has established the world on the floods and the seas. There's no foundation in the floods and seas.

How are you going to stand in the floods and seas? There's no foundation in this life. Sometimes we're lured into believing that we're safe. You're never safe.

One way of getting safe is to crawl in bed and pull the covers over your head. Did you ever get safe and secure that way? I did that one night. I always go to bed and say, well, I will lay me down in peace and safety in the Lord.

But I guess I didn't that night. I woke up about 11 o'clock. My face didn't feel right, so I looked at myself in the mirror.

My eye was swollen up like that. And I thought, what in the world? So I went down to Kaiser to find out what in the world. Well, they didn't know.

So anyway, I sat there and it all went away. They say, well, you don't have faith. Well, you do as you please.

When I feel like going to the doctor, I go. I don't sweat it. And so anyway, something bit me.

So I set off a couple of bug bombs. And then later I found crouched under the heater, it was a perimeter heater, was a tarantula. And here I was all safe under the covers.

How can you be safer than that? Tarantula had no business doing that. If I'd have seen him, I'd have opened the door and booted him out. They've got a place in the world, but to bite your eye when you're asleep, that's dirty pool.

The only way that you're safe, the only rock is Jesus. This world is very much of a flood. And you think, oh, I've got it.

I've got all my money in the bank. And then what happens? You do some foolish thing and hit somebody and kill them with your car and then you're sued and you lose your shirt. It all happens.

Well, you're not as safe as you think you are. But in Jesus, in Jesus, you're safe. Hallelujah.

Heaven is not our place of safety. Christ is our place of safety. Our problems are coming down from heaven according to Ephesians.

Christ is the place of safety. You can count on it. By faith, Abraham, even though he was past age, I'm sensitive about that, and Sarah herself, she is sensitive about that, was enabled to become a father because he considered him faithful who had made the promise.

Now, there's something about God. Now, when Abraham came to him in the 15th chapter of Genesis, he didn't say, oh God, what will I ever do? Fast and pray. I've got to have a child.

If I don't have a child, I'll die. Who was it that said that? I think it was Rachel said to Jacob. Give me children or I die.

Well, he didn't do that. He just discussed it with the Lord. You can see that in the 15th chapter of Genesis.

He said, well, Lord, I want you to remember that my heir is going to be this, Eliezer of Damascus. It won't be somebody born. How about it? So, there's a time to rend and tear the heavens, and there's another time to discuss your problems with God.

And the reason that God heard him so readily was because he obeyed God. And if you obey God and you call, he says, here I am. The problem is people don't serve the Lord as they should.

Believers. Then they call on the phone and they say, Pastor, I need a conference. I'm talking about people outside the church.

One calls Saturday. And I said, well, alright. I said, if you'll give me... We were in the middle of something.

I said, if you give me your phone number, I'll see that someone gets back to you and we'll work on this problem. But they were apprehensive about that. I said, well, when you feel comfortable, just call us and we'll do something about it.

But what it is, people, they don't take up their cross and follow Jesus. Well, sooner or later they've got bad problems. Well, then they want to come to the pastor and the pastor will figure it all out and fix it up so that they can go on their way without the Lord.

That's what people do. I'm not in that business. I don't have any time for that.

I'll be glad to counsel people until the cows come home, providing they're serving the Lord. If you're serving the Lord, you call out. God says, here I am.

But if you're not serving the Lord and you call out, you may not get heard as readily. Abraham was serving the Lord, so he didn't have to go through some big thing and weep and wail and cry and have a tantrum. He was disgusted with the Lord and the Lord said, let me tell you something.

I'm going to tell you what I'm going to do. I'm going to give you your seed. Do you have any seed, Abraham? Right, check.

Alright, I'm going to make your seed in number like the stars of heaven. Whoa, this is kind of heavy for a guy 75 years old with no kids. Yeah, that's right.

Okay, you said it, chief. I believe it. If I never see it, I believe it.

What I'm pointing out in this is that God is able to answer your prayers beyond your wildest dreams. Did you get that one? We're talking about God that stretched out the heavens. Now, some of the things he

promised Abraham did not come to pass in Abraham's life, but they're coming to pass and they shall come to pass.

So don't limit yourself to this world. You know, we're in perilous times. We need to get one foot in heaven.

I'm telling you that. We need to be citizens of two worlds and not get all locked into the present world. Oh, you'll be on stronger ground if you are because someone dies in your family, you don't go crazy.

Get a bigger look at life than just these pitiful years we have here. God said, Abraham, 400 years from now I'm going to bring your seed into this land. Their sins, they're not bad enough for me to drive them out.

400 years. Our country has only been in existence for around 250. You've got to get the big picture.

When you pray, Jesus said, you shall ask what you will and it shall be done. Now, if somebody else said that, prudential life insurance or something, it might mean something, or it might not. But when God says it, it happens.

So when you pray for something, the machinery starts operating. Can you hear me out there? Hello? When you ask God for something in Jesus' name, there's a covenant there. You shall ask what you will and it shall be done.

There's a covenant there. God said that. Now, what God does then, and you say, well, He didn't answer it.

Sure He answered it. How can He not? Is He a liar? Of course He answered it. What is He doing? He is preparing you so that when you get the answer, it will be a blessing and you can keep it.

If you're praying for something that will not bring you love, joy, and peace, and no matter what you pray for, what you're really praying for is love, joy, and peace. And you may be praying for a new car, but that's just a symbol of love, joy, and peace. You wouldn't want a car if you knew a month later it was going to drive so powerful it got out of control and you climbed up a pole with it.

So you're not praying for a car. You just think you are. You're praying for love, joy, and peace.

And if not, there's something wrong with your scrambled eggs up here. Because what we all want is love, joy, and peace. And we think, oh, this will bring me love, and this will bring me joy, and this will bring me peace.

Well, maybe it won't. But God is good. And when you come to Him, He wants to bring you to love, joy, and peace.

So if what you're praying for is not going to do that, God is going to work with you and bring you experiences and work in your spirit until you're finally praying for what you really want. That's one thing. The other thing I just said a minute ago is so that it will be a blessing to you and you can keep it when you get it.

Now, Adam and Eve were in paradise. You could not have a better environment than Adam and Eve had. I mean, that was it.

Love, joy, and peace. You got the whole branch right there. Love, joy, and peace, okay? But what was wrong? They couldn't keep it.

There was something wrong with them. They couldn't keep it. So, God doesn't want that to happen again with you that He brings you into the paradise that you envision, and then you can't keep it.

So, He's answering your prayer, but He's doing it the right way so that when you get it, whether it's in this world or the next, and what's the difference? I'm old enough now. I'm looking down the hill. I'm anxious about the future.

You can dream about the past, or you can dream about the future. And I choose to dream about the future. Consider the pit out from which I am being dug and the glory toward which I'm moving, the realistic thing to do is to dream about the future.

Don't you agree? Oh, yes. I agree with myself on that. So, when I pray for something, I'm not going to bind God to do that in this world as long as He does it.

And if He gives me assurance and says, we know that if He hears us, we have the petition, then I'm going to get it. If it's in this world, fine. If it's in the next world, fine.

What does it matter? Unless we're so glued to flesh and blood, we think this is the best God can do. But Abraham lived in faith and died in this belief that God had a better city. And let me tell you, part of real down-home salvation is living in that hope of the future, knowing that what you have now is not the best that God can do.

You've got to believe that God can do better than what you've got right now. What if the Jews, there they were at Mount Sinai, 140 in the shade. What if they said, oh, how wonderful, God has brought us out from Egypt into this marvelous desert.

Isn't this wonderful? There's no water. We're living by manna. You can't have farms out here.

There's no irrigation. Oh, this is so wonderful. Thank You, Lord, for saving me.

Isn't that about it? Patote, let me die. Don't bring me into the land, Lord. Don't bring me into a place that's absolute peace and joy.

Whatever you do, let me stay here at Sinai so I can go around it. In the meanwhile, people are setting up fast food stores and selling magazines so that when you're going around Mount Sinai, it's interesting. There's always someone with an eye on business.

Well, this is wonderful, Lord. Here we are out here in Sinai. Isn't this great? God, don't move me.

I've just now got my tent set next to the person I want it set next to. Don't let me move. Whatever you do, I'm afraid.

Live in fear. This world is not the best God can do. If you want to know the truth, this is the valley of the shadow of death we're living in.

So keep your perception pure. This is a rotten place. Not the earth, but the world.

Sickness. I think of Children's Hospital every now and then. I think of the agony that's going on down there.

This is not a nice place to be. And if you're able to sit up and pay attention and breathe today, you're better off than a lot of them. And everyone said, Amen.

Well, you're out there. I knew you were out there. And God's Word, I mean, such a miracle.

You know, there's three things about knowing the will of God. There's three things. I could only think of two of them Tuesday night, but I finally thought of the third one.

Three things. If you know the will of God, if you want to test the will of God, there's three things for you. One, it must not be against the Scripture.

Something God has said something to you, you feel a burden, it must not be contrary to the Scripture. Okay? He's not going to tell you to go out and do some immoral thing. God isn't going to do that.

Or like people say, I went down and tried to drown myself because the Lord told me. You get this kind of stuff. God is not going to tell you something contrary to the Scripture, Mike.

It's not going to happen. Secondly, if it's God's will, it will give you joy inside. It will give you peace inside when you think of it.

It feels kind of good. Sometimes conscientious people get themselves strung out on duty. And then Satan takes advantage of that and says, well, the Lord wants you to go to Tibet and just wear a sweater.

And conscientious people, they believe it and they own it. They're not old enough to know the voice of the Lord. And they say, I'm going to Tibet.

God has called me to Tibet as a missionary. I knew a young man. God had called him to Indonesia or someplace like that.

And I thought, oh yeah, you're going to go there and get sick and come home. And that's all that's going to happen. It's in the water.

It'll make you sick. Well, we do. We're conscientious and so we strive.

But when we think of it as a sinking feeling, that tells you that's not the Lord. You're just racking yourself for nothing. You're just making things hard for yourself.

Whenever you find that you go through two weeks running and it's hard. I mean, you get up in the morning and it's hard. You go to bed at night and it's hard.

It's just grievous. The whole thing is grievous for two weeks running. Check it out.

You may be bringing it on yourself. Now, I know there's hard times. I've been through hard times.

But usually there's a little something along the way. The Lord lets you know, yeah, I'm here. It's going to be okay.

But when there's an unrelieved nightmare, watch it. Because that's not the way of the Lord. He gives us joy and that's our strength.

We go through hard times. I know that. But watch it.

If there's no relief for weeks at a time, check it out. Say, Lord, am I bringing this on myself? Now, if you want me to endure this burden, fine. You've got your pack animal right here.

But if I'm bringing this on myself, please, get me out of here. You like that? First, it must not be against the Scripture. Second, it must bring, when you think of it, there must be something that kind of sings in there.

Oh, this is good. And the third thing, if I can remember it, is the outer circumstances, the world must concur. In other words, the rooster must crow.

There must be something. Ordinarily, God does not lead you to some strange and weird thing that everyone around you says, well, this is crazy. This doesn't make any sense.

Watch it. Because God eventually makes sense. And so what? Now, here with Abraham, where God told him this, He didn't tell him to go out and do anything.

He just said this is what's going to happen. And Abraham believed it. And it was fantastic.

And then it came to pass. It came to pass in the real world. When people get off, and Pentecostal people often do because they're attuned to the supernatural.

And when they get off, they'll get a thing going where there's no reality. And you try to point out to them, they'll say, well, God called me to be a mighty prophetess or God called me to do whatever, some great thing. And you look at them and you think, well, that isn't real.

That just isn't real. You're not a witness to it. But they're so bound into it and we get this way.

We're clutching it. I think God told me that. And people are saying cool it.

Cool your jets. It's good to listen to people. It's good to listen to your husband and wife.

Husband or wife. It's good to listen to the elders of the church. It's good to listen to unsaved people.

And if your boss on the job says you're a religious nut, then go back and say, Lord, am I acting nuts? Don't say, well, he's just unsaved. This man smokes cigarettes and swears like a drill sergeant. He doesn't know God.

This is just Satan. How do we do this all the time? If we would listen to the people in the world, you want to find out how to live? Ask somebody that's unsaved. They'll tell you how you're supposed to live.

We have violated that in Christianity. The world looks at Christianity and says, if that's God, save me. And you know, when that's going on, you don't withdraw into your spiritual ivory tower and say, well, if they were saved, they'd know what a jewel I am.

Well, the truth is they see you as you are. They're not wearing religious blinders. So, reality is a real check on the will of God.

Could you remember those three things? It must not be contrary to the Word. Second? It gives you peace in your heart when you think about it. Oh boy, that sounds good.

Not, oh Lord, I don't feel right about this. And what's the third thing? Yeah, the dog and the cat will tell you pretty well if you're on the right track. Because they're not religious.

That's right. So, God... And I like what I'm hearing. I didn't get to go to the Saturday conference, but everything Audrey told me about it was marvelous, marvelous beyond words.

It all sounded so down-home and so right. You know, when God moves, it isn't with Hagar, it's with Sarah. Good old Sarah, as perverse as they come, tells Abraham to take Hagar first.

The concubine. Then when he does and she gets pregnant, and then guess what Sarah does? Blames Abraham. Oh, don't you love it? But she's the one that God chose, not Hagar.

So, just go with it. And watch God because He works in a down-home way. Not in strange, weird, spiritually different ways.

He works just in life. And I think if the American people saw a church that was just interested in being people and relating well to God and relating well to people, there's a lot of people that accept the Lord. But they get turned off by the religion.

And who can blame them? Alright, you're still there, and I'm still preaching, in spite of everything. Alright. All these people were still living by faith when they died.

Did you see it? How many saw that in the Bible? 11, 13. All these people were still living by faith when they died. Now, in the famous rapture passage in 1 Thessalonians 4, it says the dead in Christ shall rise.

I don't think people pay enough attention to that. The expression in Christ. They say, well, once you make a profession of Christ, you're going up in the rapture.

Not so. You can make a profession of faith in Christ and accept Christ in the terms we use or make a decision for Christ, which is totally an unscriptural expression. But whatever we do to satisfy our religious demands and then not live by faith.

None of this would be applicable to us. We don't go out following God. We don't believe God for miracles.

We don't hear from the Lord or anything else. But 15 years ago, by gum, I accepted Christ. Well, it doesn't work that way.

It says the dead in Christ. That is, like it says here, they were living in faith when they died. You've got to be in Christ when you die.

Not what you did 20 years ago. You've got to be living in Christ when you die. If you expect to meet the Lord when He comes.

Huh? Can you do that one? You know what it says? Well, it's not in there to take up space because the writer was getting a nickel of word. They did not receive the things promised. Well, if I don't get it while I'm alive, maybe God can keep it.

They didn't get it while they were alive. So it's all lost because who knows what's in the next world will float around like ghosts in Halloween with a pumpkin for a head. People say, well, I know my loved one after death.

Well, you know your loved one for crying in the soup. Of course you'll know your loved one when you die. Why? What do you think they're going to be? Some kind of a wraith? A ghost? Boo! They'll be their same

old ornery self.

Well, you may not believe that, but it's closer to the truth than a lot of things. That's what Christ did. He removed the fear of death.

He removed the fear of death so that we can have confidence. Well, no, I didn't see it come to pass in my life. But what's that got to do with anything? I'm going to live forever.

I'll get around here sooner or later. Start planning ahead. Dream of the future.

Andy's an insurance agent. They all dream of the future. Get your mind on the future.

Hallelujah! There's something in the Bible about might not perish, but have everlasting life. I read that somewhere. I don't think that's in the Sears catalog.

It's in the Bible. Should not perish, which is talking primarily about our body. Really, it's your body that perishes.

Should not perish. He that lives and believes in me shall never die. Well, we say, well, we believed and then we died.

Well, obviously, the Lord doesn't regard physical death as death. When we say, He that lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this? When you're going to be alive somewhere.

So start preparing for it. Huh? Start preparing. There's people in here who have money in the bank.

I know that. And you're all occupied with your IRA and your TO plan and your bonds and stocks and everything else. Oh, yeah.

Yes, you are. Well, what are you planning for? You don't know what you're planning for. You may never live to spend a nickel of it.

And your kids may get it and it'll ruin their character and they'll waste it. That's what Ecclesiastes said. The wise man said.

You store up all this. He says, I stored all this gold up. And he says, and then I'll die and somebody that didn't work for it will get it and waste it.

That's what it says in Ecclesiastes. Well, you don't have anything going there. What did Jesus say? Lay up your treasures where? In heaven.

Where nobody can steal them. I know. You've got your strong box in the closet bolted on the underside of the floor.

I understand that. Well, let me tell you, thieves and drunks move by spirits. They do.

They move by spirits. You get a drunk, he'll tell you if there's a bottle of wine anywhere in the building. And thieves have that same thing too.

They'll go right to that closet, open the door, and the spirit in them will say, it's under there. While you're in Florida. And you come back, there'll just be a big hole in the closet where your strong box was and your

Krugerrands.

Our people go home now and move it. They'll say he gave it away. Now everybody knows where it is.

Lay up your treasures in heaven. You say, well, I'll get them all. No, you get them when the Lord comes.

Read the Bible. The Lord will bring them with Him. Paul says, the crown of life that I'll get when the Lord appears.

When the Lord comes, and this is what you should be concerned about. You should be concerned about your state when the Lord comes. People take it for granted.

You shouldn't do that. Because when the Lord comes and you're raised, or if you're alive, you're transformed or whatever, you're going to receive what you have sown. Oh yeah, that's a kingdom law.

Grace does not change that. So if you haven't been laying up your treasures in heaven, and you've got a zero account in the bank of heaven, and you've got a couple of million down here, let me tell you, it isn't going to do you any good when Jesus comes. Because what you're going to get is zero.

Because that's what you laid up. There's not much interest drawn on a zero account. And that's what you're going to get when the Lord comes.

You're going to get, that's what it says in Revelation 22. It says, I'll give every man according as his work has been. Okay? Revelation 22.

Check it out. When the Lord comes, you're going to get what you have done. I thought that would cheer you up.

Now, all these people, they did not receive the things promised. So faith goes beyond the grave. Let me tell you, if your hopes do not go beyond the grave, you'll never make it as a victorious saint.

You won't make it. Why is that? It's because we've got something we want so bad we can taste it. That's an old expression my father used to use.

I don't guess they use that anymore. I don't know what's in that. That's what they used to say.

You want it so bad you can taste it. And you think, well, the Lord promised me. Okay.

And then life goes on and you don't get it and you want it so bad. Be careful if you want anything that bad. It'll throw you off balance and ruin your prophecies and you'll end up in delusion.

The only thing that you want that bad is Jesus. Because anything you want that bad is probably an idol and so spare yourself a lot of grief. So, you want this thing so terribly, I can't live another day if I don't get this.

Well, what will happen when you see that you're getting older and you're not going to get it? What will happen is you'll cave. And you say, well, I guess that's what Abraham did. He caved.

He waited just so long and he wanted it so bad. Okay. Okay, I guess God helps those... Somebody said to him, well, Abraham, God helps those who help themselves.

And I don't know what book that's in. Do you know what book that's in? I don't know what book that's in. But it's quoted all the time.

God helps those who help themselves. So, Abraham helped himself. They're still fighting about it over there.

So, you say, okay, it has nothing to do with this world. It's between me and Jesus. And if He wants me to have this later, so what? So, Satan can't hurt you.

But see, if you've got to have it in this world, he's got an angle. He's got an angle and he'll push it and push it and push it until suddenly the, quote, Lord tells you how to get what you want and you're off and running in a paddle-less canoe. Things got quiet there.

Does anybody in here want anything that bad? And God's speaking to you. Now, if you get up in the morning and your shoes are untied, that's a sign. You get up in your morning and you meet your wife, that's a sign.

That's what will happen when you want something real bad. Boy, you'll get signs all over the place. You'll get fleeces.

They'll be dry. They'll be wet. And they'll float around in the air if you want something real bad.

Man, you'll get more fleeces. You could sell them and live on the interest. Alright.

They welcome them from a distance. Can you welcome your hope from a distance? You have to have it now. The faith message came.

If you've got faith, you get it now. Did it jump out of the way for the answer? That's anything but God. There's one thing that's in the kingdom.

It's patience. Anybody find that out? Anybody here have any problem with patience? You know, the first three letters in impatience is what? Imp. They admitted that they were aliens and strangers on the earth.

Well, who are you, buster? Well, I'm a stranger and a pilgrim on the earth. Who you are? Yes. Well, isn't that different? People who say such things show that they are looking for a country.

Now watch this. I'm going to conclude with this so you can relax. Finally, dear God, I never get over it.

One more thing. One more thing and we're out of here. No, we're not out of here.

We've got to have communion. After all of this, you're going to need it. Take it at the altar.

You've got the strength to come up and flop. People who say such things show that they are looking for a country. If they had been thinking of the country that they had left, they would have had opportunity to return.

Now what does that tell us? You walk around moping around and say, oh, it used to be so wonderful before I was a Christian. Just think of it. It was great.

I'm going to give you a couple of Scriptures here to prepare you for the communion. Luke 17.32 Ta-da! Well, anyway, Mike, did you find it? It's in here somewhere. Luke 17.32 We're still in Hebrews.

What happened up there? You know what we're going to have to do? We're going to have to read it in the Bible. Well, you know, as will happen if the power goes, we're back to the Bible. Ta-da! Well, I better tell you the other two so you'll be prepared.

Not you. Up there in the third heaven is Luke 9.62 and Philippians 3.13 and 14. Don't you look there.

Luke 9.62 Philippians 3.13 and 14 So now we're on this one. Remember Lot's wife. That poor soul.

Imagine going down through history. What is your testimony? Remember Lot's wife. We don't even know her name.

Oh, that poor duck. Remember Lot's wife. Well, anyway, she served as an example about what not to do.

And she didn't commit any great crime. She didn't run around, rob a bank, swear, beat on her husband or anything. All she did was the poor thing.

She turned around. Well, everybody knows that a woman's heart is in her home. A man can be out sashaying looking for a new cave.

But a woman's heart is in her home. And she had two sons-in-laws there. And all her friends that she talked to at the laundromat.

They're all back there in Sodom. And Lot, what did he care? He's out for an adventure. He was an evangelist.

Hard on wives when their husband was an evangelist. He was ready for the next meeting. And she was thinking, Man, I've got my friends.

Bam! Remember Lot's wife. Don't look back. Once you put your hand to the plow, don't look back.

Don't look to see if anybody's gaining on you. You can rest assured they are. And that time you spent looking back, they're going to pass you.

You don't have strength left to turn around and look. Just keep going. You're in an open field.

Don't look to see if there's any tacklers. Just keep going till you're in the end zone. Alright? Luke 9.62 You go looking back.

Boy, somebody's going to hit you sideways in your knees. Alright, Luke 9.62 No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God. Once you get going, go and don't change your mind.

Amen? And the last one, finally, Philippians 3, verses 13 and 14. We're talking here about let your dreams be of the future. Let your dreams be of the future.

Paul took this from Psalms 45. Talking to the bride. He says, forget your father's house.

That's where he got it. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of the old guy. I mean, this is an old man talking here.

They weren't a new Christian. But this one thing I do, forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead. Forgetting what is behind.

If you want to have a picture album, take pictures of the future. I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heaven. An old man.

He said, I'm not there yet, boys. I'm forgetting all the mess I made out of things and messing up Stephen and all the rest of it. My hot shot Pharisee days.

The people I stepped on getting up in front of Gamaliel. It's all behind me. One thing up.

Shall we stand? You're saved this morning. He that endures to the end shall be saved. Andy, if you want to get the communion, stand and get the musicians.

Let's look to the Lord for a minute. I don't know everyone that's here this morning. I wish I did, but I don't.

If you're here this morning and your life is not an interaction with Jesus, you need to come and take communion right here at the altar. We'll serve you at the altar. If your life is not red hot for Jesus, I want you to come and take communion at the altar.

Would you do that? Lord, I cannot believe that there's no one in this place but what needs to serve the Lord in a greater way. And if you're here, you need to come. This is the time.

I prayed carefully about what I preached this morning. I had something else in my mind. I was charging around this morning.

Which one? Which one? Which one? Which one? Lord, this is the one that God wanted that was for You. I don't study these things out two weeks in advance. I get them a half hour before I preach.

This is for You. If you want to be considered righteous in God's sight, if you want to be saved, not in the conventional sense of a theological profession, but He that endures to the end shall be saved, that tells us that salvation is not only past and present, but also future. Maybe your past salvation is cool.

Maybe the present one is a little weak. But the future is where it counts. It's not those who start.

But those who finish. He that endures to the end, that implies resistance. It implies attesting.

Endures. He who endures to the end. I don't know what your particular problems are.

But I would like you to, if there's something bearing down in your spirit, I would like you to come and say, Lord, just mix yourself with this to turn the wheels. Let this be a carburetor and not just a block in my life. Not just a worry.

Not just something that's distracting me. Lord, turn it into power. Mix with my problems.

If you're here this morning and you're worried about something, I want you to come and lay it at the Lord's feet. And take His body and blood. Believe me, He'll give you grace.

If there's someone you have not forgiven, there's virtue in the blood of Christ, that same virtue that said, Father, forgive them. They know not what they do. That power's there so that you can forgive.

I don't care what the person did. You can forgive. And God wants to purge this thing in your heart today.  
You can forgive through the virtue that's in the body and blood of Christ.

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