

# Resurrection of the Witness

by Robert B. Thompson

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of the resurrection of the witness, which is the central act of redemption and salvation, and how it proves that the witness has already overcome the very things that Antichrist has authority over.*

**Duration:** 1:18:00

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, Revelation 11:11

**Topics:** "Spiritual Discipline", "Godly Control"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of pressing into the rest of God, which has already been foreordained. They explain that our job is to use the sword of the Lord and of Gideon, meaning we can only receive what we receive from God. The speaker warns against not using the talents given to us, as they can be taken away and given to someone else. They also discuss the concept of self-control and how we often let our passions and feelings dictate our actions. The sermon concludes by reminding listeners that God is in control and that we should not live in fear or dread, as His word is more real and substantial than our environment.

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## Transcript

Lord, as we come unto you tonight, it is with great thanksgiving and praise, Lord, for your wonderful love and your goodness to us, Lord, as your hand watching over us. Appreciate it, Lord, keeping us in all our ways, keeping us from accidents, Lord, sickness, tragedy. We thank you, Lord, you brought Lisa and Abby and Grace and Rebecca home safely.

I pray your hand will be on Bob Porcelli in Singapore, Lord, just keep your hand on him, Lord, in Jesus' name. Lord, others in the church that may be traveling, Lord, you know people are all excited with their presence and everything, so we just pray your hand of protection on the people. Thank you, Lord.

Work out the problems that are in the homes represented here, Lord, you know what they are, you know your wisdom is needed and your grace, Lord, that we might come through to perfect victory in every respect. Help us, Lord. As we continue tonight, Lord, you know the need, you know what needs to be said and perceived, so help us, Lord, in Jesus' name.

Amen. All right, we're going to start and continue where we were in Revelation 11, chapter 11, verse 11. Okay, we've been talking about that.

Revelation 11 in symbolic language is referring to God's double portion of the Spirit upon Christ and his body in the last days, and in 11.11, where we finished off Sunday night, this is, as far as I can tell, the coming of the Lord and the resurrection of the saints, and you know it's after the three and a half days, that is at the end of the 70th week. For those that are new to us, it's on the past three or four tapes. You can get in the tape room tonight, but this is the end of this great prophetic week.

The latter rain revival has taken place up to the middle of the week, and then the last part of the week is the reign of Antichrist, and the tribulation time, terrible time indeed, and at the end of this now, and the witness has been overcome. We've brought out the scriptures that talk about the overcoming of the Christian witness to be driven from the cities of the earth, but God has it so under control, because after this is over, after Antichrist and at his time, people are saying peace and safety, then the breath of life goes back into the witness, and they stood on their feet, and according to my understanding, this witness now will include God's witness of every age, all the way back to Abel. It's mentioned in Hebrews 11, the righteous Abel, all of God's witnesses will be on their feet.

Now we see that, and now notice that they stood on their feet, that's very important, that is not emphasized enough in these days, and they talk about the rapture, they forget that the rapture comes after the resurrection, and they're not the same. The resurrection is portrayed many times in types in the Bible, and it's one of the central acts of redemption, if not the central act of salvation, is the resurrection of our body. The ascension up into the air is not typified, it is not a part of redemption or anything else, it's just a kingdom event, like Jesus walking on the water, it's a kingdom event.

The big issue is the resurrection, and the big issue with you and me is what we will face when we're resurrected. So the resurrection, how many can see that they stood on their feet before they were caught up? They're two separate things. Standing on their feet is the resurrection, that's the important thing.

Now if you go back to 1 Thessalonians 4, you'll see the same thing, which I think this is describing the same event, it's my point of view. 1 Thessalonians 4, 16. 16.

The voice of the archangel, the loud command, and the dead in Christ will what? Rise. See, that is not talking about rising up into the air, that means to be raised from the dead, like Christ rose on the third day, he didn't ascend on the third day, he rose on the third day. And I think in the rapture teaching that is often not emphasized at all.

The idea is we'll be here all of a sudden, boom, go up. That is not what will take place. Yes? Is it the same language that Jesus used when he healed people? Rise, take up your bed and walk? It's possible, I see Tony isn't here yet, our resident Greek scholar, and I've never looked that up.

But the Greek word for resurrection is anastasis. That's the word, anastasis. And that has no relation to the catching up of the saints, that's an altogether entirely different word.

And see the impression is left when the teaching of the raptures will be like this, all of a sudden the trumpet will sound and we'll ascend. If they would just read what it says, first of all, it says that those who sleep in Jesus, that's back up, that's 1 Thessalonians 4, 14, that Jesus died and rose again. We believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him.

That's where I get that the witnesses of all ages, those all asleep in Jesus, God will bring with him. Well, this is a terrific event. Man, first of all, these people have to return with the Lord and then get their bodies

back from wherever they're buried and stand on their feet.

That's what it says, the dead in Christ will rise, all the dead in Christ, all the way back to Abel, all who have died have been true witnesses of God. See, Revelation 11 is talking about the witness, it's the witness. There are other parts of Revelation that tell about the coming of the Lord, not just this, but this one is talking about the witness.

Revelation 11 is talking about the witness, and God has had witnesses, and Hebrews 11 talks a lot about them, and Hebrews 11 begins with Abel, and then it goes on with Noah, and then it talks about Abraham and Moses, and all of God's witnesses, and then at the end of Hebrews 11, it says, they without us shall not be made perfect. Speaking of the resurrection, that's where we're made perfect, when finally we receive the body that we'll have for eternity. And so, Hebrews 11, the last verse says, they without us cannot, we better look at that.

So you've got to hold your thumb in Revelation 11, and your big toe in 1 Thessalonians 4, and turn to Hebrews 11. Now notice what it says, they, speaking of all the people, going back to Abel, they without us cannot be made perfect. Speaking of the resurrection, that's when we're made perfect, is in the resurrection, when we're completed.

You're called the Son of God three times. When you're born of a woman, when you're born again of the Spirit, and when you're raised from the dead. See, Jesus was called the Son of God, when he was born of Mary.

That holy thing that was born used to be the Son of God. Then he was called the Son of God, when the Holy Spirit came upon him. And then again, Romans 1 says he's declared to be the Son of God, by the resurrection.

And Paul says, that we will be adopted as sons, when our body is changed. So you're called, you have to be called the Son of God three times. When you're born of, as Jesus said, of the water, that is of the flesh, referring to the bag of waters, when you're born of the water.

Then when you're born of the Spirit, that's when you're born again. And then when you're born of the resurrection. Those three times you have to be born, to finally be made perfect as the Son of God.

So they, all these people of Hebrews 11, beginning with Abel, cannot be made perfect until they get their bodies back. But those who sleep in Jesus will God bring one in. But now notice, remember that these writers did not write in chapters.

So as you proceed, he says, therefore since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses. Witnesses. All these people of Hebrews chapter 11 are witnesses.

Tony, we had a question in the Greek and you weren't here to answer it. You're here now. Well, Andrew wanted to know, we're talking about the Greek word for resurrection, rise.

And Andrew wanted to know if that's the same word where Jesus said to people, rise up and walk. He wanted to know if that was the same word in the Greek. The dead in Christ shall rise is the same word as rise up and walk.

So I don't expect you to just, it isn't. There's a resident Greek scholar has spoken. Revelation also means stand up.

Right. But one is stand up from a sick person and the other is stand up from the dead. And Gnosis is resurrection.

We don't ordinarily use the word resurrection to mean rise, but we do sometimes. They'll say this factory was resurrected, meaning it was brought back to life. But ordinarily we restrict the use of the term to coming back from the dead and standing on your feet, referring to that which was supine and then was raised up till it was erect from the dead.

So that's probably, that may be, it would take an expert in the Greek language. I mean, someone that really was acquainted with the corny Greek and had gone into the lexical background to be sure. Yes.

That's an opportunity to understand. Well, both of them to erect, but it sounds like one is talking about, what was the first thing you said? To arouse? That's not an anastasis, is it? No, that's not. No, that's the other one.

Anyway, but you could pursue that. That would be interesting to pursue that. You could write a master's in theology on that.

Yes? Another anastasis that we can understand, it says that you can use. Do you have a Vines? Vines, New Testament words? Vines would show you. Not as well as Vines.

Vines will go into the usage. Greek lexicon will work in this way. If you look up in the Greek lexicon anastasis, it will show you every time it's used in the day.

Then the other word that Tony used, you can look that up in the lexicon and see how that is used. It's very interesting. I've done that, for example, with parousia, which is usually translated coming of the Lord, but it can also be used where Paul said he felt better because of the parousia of Titus.

We see that the word means more presence than it does coming from a information by seeing how it's used in the New Testament, and that's what a Greek lexicon will do. It will show you every time that anastasis is used, and then every time that other word is used, and then from the context of how you can tell how the writers use those terms. Yes, that's a very fruitful pursuit, and Vines is very good on that too.

All right, now notice that the witnesses are all these people from the time of Abel, because this is referring back to the beginning of chapter 11. So all the people mentioned in chapter 11, the heroes of faith, including Rahab and all the others, are witnesses, and they are surrounding us, but they're in the spirit realm. So the witness on earth will be overcome by any Christ at God's discretion and under his supervision, but when the Lord comes, all the witnesses of all ages will be made perfect and rise up to meet the Lord, and that's a very unfortunate omission in the rapture teaching, because it just leaves the impression that we who are alive will suddenly go up, you know, like a Roman candle, and we're off, a great surprise, and many teachers will be invisible, so there'll be no testimony to the world, no witness, because we just turn invisible, and then all the cars start crashing into each other, and all this other mythology, whereas if they would read it, the big event, I mean, 1 Thessalonians 4 is not talking about the going of the saints, it's talking about the coming of the saints to comfort the living saints by the reappearing of their deceased loved ones, so it's the emphasis, it includes the catching up, but the emphasis is on the return of the saints, so it's preached 180 degrees out in these days.

The big event is the awakening of the witness of all ages, that's the big event, and notice the characteristics, which makes me think it's the same as Revelation 11, is that you've got, they're caught up in the clouds, you've got the clouds, you've got the loud voice, you've got the trumpet, you've got the whole nine yards, and as far as I can see, this in Revelation 11, I'm talking about the same event. I don't see why not, and also because 1 Thessalonians 4 is talking about the time when the Lord returns and establishes his kingdom, and that's exactly what Revelation 11, when you proceed on, is talking about the Lord and the establishing of his kingdom, and the last trumpet. So anyway, do with that as you will, but that's the way, when you teach, you can teach your version.

Alright, now, they stood on their feet, that's the main thing, not that, this is the destroying of the last enemy. Where does it talk about the last enemy? 1 Corinthians 15, and what does it say? The last enemy is what? Death. So this is the big event, this is the climax of the Christian redemption, right here where they stood on their feet.

That's the climax of the Christian redemption. Where they go after that is just an act of kingdom power. But how many can see that if this is what happens, and it is from 1 Thessalonians 4, that the purpose of the catching up is not for these people to escape Antichrist or the Great Tribulation? Why not? Why is the catching up of the saints not an escape from Antichrist and the Great Tribulation? Larry? Because the resurrection proves that they have already overcome the very things that Antichrist has authority over.

So they are no longer susceptible to anything he can do to them. There's nothing he can do to them. In fact, the wicked will be terrified.

See, it's preached today, like, you know, the wicked will be there to get us, and we'll be caught out. Well, after your resurrection, it's the wicked who will be frightened. And what a crazy doctrine, it's really upside down.

Alright, then they heard a loud voice from heaven, which fits 1 Thessalonians 4, they never whisper up there, they're always yelling, and that's where I get it. Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, come up here, what a word, come up here. And they went up to heaven in a cloud, which is what 1 Thessalonians 4 says, they were caught up in a cloud.

Now, Tony, you were not here when I discussed this, but the Greek construction in, I went into this a lot Sunday night, in verse 12, where it says they're caught up, went up to heaven in a cloud, you can't tell whether it's up into the sky or the heaven, it's the same construction. It's, I think it's eis to orno, or orni, one or the other. Into, it's literally into the ornos.

So, it's dealer's choice whether you want to consider it to be heaven, heaven, or the sky, because the Greek makes no difference. It's, it's, the translator just takes his choice, he decides whether he wants to call it heaven or sky. Same way with Revelation 21, I saw a new heaven and a new earth.

Well, some of the translations say I saw a new sky and a new earth, because the Greek can go either way. And since 1 Thessalonians 4 talks about them being caught up into the air, I would say a better rendition would be, they went up to, they went up into the sky in a cloud. Right? And then I talked about that, if you were here Sunday night, remember when we went back to Acts 1, and how Jesus was caught up into the sky, they watched him go into the sky, and then it says, and then they watched Jesus go into heaven, and it's the exact same word.

The translator just thought that in one case it meant sky, and in another case it meant heaven. But, the King James, where the NIV says sky, says heaven. So, it's completely arbitrary.

So, there would be no case, see their enemies looked on, which means they went up into the air. You may be interested to remember that in Genesis 1, the same is true of the Hebrew. In Genesis 1, it says in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, and then it says he called up heaven, he called the firmament heaven, and then he put the stars and everything in the firmament, or in the heaven, so we know it's not talking about the spirit heaven, where God is, in Genesis 1. So, the same is true of the Hebrew.

The word for heaven means both the heaven of heavens, where God is, the spirit heaven, and the physical heaven, in the Hebrew and in the Greek is the same word. And there's probably a good reason for that. It probably is because the spirit heaven is part of the physical heaven, but it's just invisible.

Because it says, well, Jesus lifted up his eyes to heaven. Well, if a Chinaman lifted up his eyes to heaven, he'd be lifting up his eyes in an opposite direction. So, evidently, it's just referring to all of space, and heaven is there, and in fact, Isaiah talks about the time when the veil will be removed, so we'll be able to see, like Stephen did, we'll be able to see God and Jesus at his right hand, which tells us they're not way out beyond the Milky Way galaxy, because how could Stephen have seen them? So, heaven is part of Stephen's heart, there they are, there's Jesus, God, and all the witnesses, and everybody else.

But alright, one time, and I've told this several times, and Stan probably can't bear to hear it one more time, but one time, when I was young people's leader in the Assembly of God in Chula Vista, I took a burn on one of the leaders. He did something I didn't like. Did you ever take a burn on someone? And I was mad about it, well, I knew I couldn't live with that.

So, I was down praying about it, and I said, Lord, I forgive him, and the minute I said that, my eyes were opened, and the Lord gave me the scripture, you are come unto Mount Zion, and there it was all around me. Just briefly, but there it was all around me. So, I realized that heaven, the spirit heaven, is not far away, it's not contiguous, that is, you could travel forever in a spaceship, and you'd never come to it, because it's all around us.

See, you are come unto Mount Zion. Not you will come unto Mount Zion, you are come unto Mount Zion. And you remember that Elijah, I think it was, Larry can correct me, he's an expert on Elijah, and Elisha, it was Elisha, said to the young man, the Lord opened his eyes, and the hills were filled with chariots of fire around Elisha.

How many remember that? There are more with us than there are with them. See, but we can't see them. But we are surrounded.

We are surrounded with all these witnesses. Are they in God's heaven of heaven? Yes! But we're surrounded with them. So, someday your eyes will be opened, and you'll find out you've been in a mission impossible all the time.

You were in a fabricated environment to test you, to see what you would do. And all the while, and then when the show is over, and it's all there, you were right in the middle of everybody watching you all the time. That's the truth now.

So be careful what you do. Because you're in a mission impossible. It's made to look like some dreadful thing is going to happen to you.

You know, how many live in fear and dread? Most of us. Well, anyway, we're in fear, dread, and apprehension most of the time. But this is because the environment was fabricated.

And all we've got to go by is God's word. And God says, what are you worried about? I'm here, I'm taking care. You know, I can't see you.

Well, don't worry about it, I'm here. I'm just fabricating this environment to see what you're going to do. But the truth is, that God's word is more real and more substantial than our environment, because our environment was made by his word.

Yes? So it's clear you're saying that this earth is kind of like virtual reality? Yes, it is virtual reality. And any scientist can tell you that. It's only an illusion that is interpreted by your brain.

See, you don't really see anything. What happens is light bounces off something, it impacts on your retina, it goes back along the optic nerve, and then it goes into your brain. If you had no brain, you wouldn't see anything.

Because all that's hitting your brain is electrical charges. That's all that's hitting your brain. No picture's hitting your brain.

Just electrical charges. And your brain translates that into a picture based on your perception, see? Based on your background, you'll see things different. All people see things different.

You know, like a carpenter would come in here, he'd see things we'd never see, because he knows how the building was built. So perception enters in. So the whole thing is an illusion.

It's all an illusion. It's all a form of energy, is what it is. Yes? Now, I've noticed this in my earlier story, that Isaiah looked different when I looked at him in the mirror than he did when I just looked at him.

So I came to the conclusion that I don't know what I really look like. You don't really know. None of us know what anybody looks like.

And someone said, I don't know how true it is, Mark Overton is a physicist, he can correct me, but they said if all of the space was taken out of us, we'd be about the size of a postage stamp. So what we are is mostly space. And we would weigh the same if we were the size of a postage stamp.

We weigh just the same. Because it's mass that we're dealing with there. So the whole thing is an illusion.

So don't get too stuck on yourself. It's a fabricated environment to see what you're going to do as far as your opinion of God's character. It's all a test of our assessment of God's character.

That's what faith is, it's your assessment of God's character. Do you really feel that he's that faithful? Do you really feel that he's that powerful? Do you really feel he's seeking your good? That's what faith is, it's your assessment of God's character. And seeing him really doesn't change that.

Because the fallen angels could see him, but that didn't give them faith. Faith is something that is born within you by the word of God, and then you make a judgment on God's character, and that's what saves

you. That's what saves you.

You're saved by faith and you live by faith. But you're in a fabricated environment, and don't forget that. Because just picture yourself, you're in a mission impossible, you say this is not real, this is not real, the only thing that's real is God's word, that's all that really matters.

And that's a test of our faith, isn't it? Alright, so they went up to, and I'm going to say into the sky, because that's what 1 Thessalonians 4 says, into the air. Now the air is a different word, that's Eros in Greek. Yes? Student, are you saying that we're surrounded? That's just what, you know, people's total mind is basically directly assessed.

They're right around us, watching us all the time. And you're foolish if you think that you can say something that won't be heard. Whatever is spoken in secret will be proclaimed on the housetops.

Yep, whatever is spoken in secret, yep, will be proclaimed on the housetops. Yes? Doesn't it say in Malachi that there's a book of remembrances? Yeah, it was written up for those who feared the Lord. A book of remembrances was written up for those that thought on His name.

Exactly. So it's in the book, it's on television, internet, and everything else. All right.

Notice that their enemies looked on. How many see that at the end of that verse 12, their enemies looked on? How many see that? All right, that's what God, when God showed me this thing in a vision, I told you, down in the basement of the Fremont Assembly of God, God showed me this in a vision, showed me the meaning of the dead bodies, you know, Israeli Christian institutions without the life of God in them, and He showed, and when, and when they began to go up, you know, they didn't just go pow, and they didn't disappear, because this is a witness. This is something for the wicked to see.

This is the greatest witness the world will ever get, is Christ calling up His saints. And they went up slowly. First, they had a long time of fellowship.

Remember, it was 40 days before Jesus ascended, and we may have 10 times that, or we may have exactly 40 days, but the thing was, that was such a marvelous hour that God wanted His people to savor it. He didn't just raise them up, and now you're up here, and now you're down there riding on the white horses, and before you have time to think of anything. I mean, the first thing, people have to get, in fact, I've read the visions of people who have died, and near-death experiences, and so on, and they say when a person dies, if they die suddenly in a car accident, that when, when they awaken in the spirit realm, they don't know where they are.

They have to get oriented to it, and in, you remember, if you've read Return from Tomorrow by Dr. Ritchie, if you've never read that, you should read it, that's a marvelous, marvelous story of after-death experience by a psychiatrist. Yes? The title is Return from Tomorrow, the author's Dr. Ritchie, and that's enough, they can bring that up on the, on the microfiche in a Bible bookstore, that should give you enough to bring it up. It's probably still in print.

He died, Dr. Ritchie was not a doctor at that time, he was a young man in the army, he was in Texas, and they had a bad cold, the wave went through, and the officers didn't use good judgment with the men, and first thing you know, they had thousands of men, it was a huge camp. I think it was World War II, I think so, it was World War II, is that right Stan?

And he caught, the men were coming down with influenza by the thousands, literally, and he got double lumbar pneumonia, and he died from it, and he was dead, I guess, for about eight minutes, but during that time he had a tremendous adventure with the Lord, and the thing was, he didn't know, he was, he was late, he was, he was supposed to go to medical school, he got in the army medical school program, and he got sick, and everybody was trying, all the nurses and everybody were trying to help him to get better, so he could make his train, he had a train he had to catch to get back to medical school, so he's like this, you know, and so he, but he couldn't get, shake this fever, so he fell asleep when he woke up, it's all blood and everything, and then finally he woke up, he died, but he

didn't realize it, and in his mind was this, I've got to, I'm getting on the train, so all of a sudden he's on his feet, and the only thing he can think of is, I'm late, I'm late, I'm late, and he didn't realize it, but he was not in his body, he was rushing around the place, and he ran out to grab the corpsman, and he couldn't get the corpsman to look at him, in fact he passed right through him, but he was in such a mental state, because it meant so much to him to go to medical school, that it was quite a long while before he recognized that he was dead, in fact he went up and traveled a long way to different places, which after he was revived, years later he drove back, and there was all those places that he had seen, so he knew he was really there, and he couldn't understand what was

wrong with him, and it finally dawned on him that he was not in his body, after several weird experiences, like trying to lean on a lamppost, and his hand went right through it, so then when that happened, he decided, I've got to get back there and get my body turned back, across the country, to get his body, and when he got there, I don't know if all of you have been in the military, you know that when they set up a camp, they're all identical, so there was all these identical quonsets, or whatever they were, and he got there and didn't know which one it was, so he's racing around from room to room to room, and looking at all the people, he didn't know whether they'd covered him with a sheet, or what was wrong, and he had a terrible time trying to find his body, and he finally did find

his body, and he was able to get back into his body, and actually, what was happening on the outside was that a corpsman came in, and I don't know whether the corpsman did it, or a doctor, I think it was a corpsman, and he took a hypodermic needle, with some kind of a drug in it, and put it directly into his heart, and his heart started beating, and in the spirit realm, finally he found his body, and they came together, and he came back to life, but he had been dead for about eight minutes, and so he wrote this book, Return from Tomorrow, and told the whole story of it, but I was just saying that, that when, that is why there has to be a period of time after people are raised, before they're caught up into the air, because, and worse even for the people that are being changed, while those

who are living, will have to sustain this change from blood metabolism to spirit metabolism, while they're standing on their feet, and so this, God isn't going to rush this thing, this will take time, and the, yes?

Do you suppose that change is the twinkling of an eye, is God's twinkling of an eye, instead of ours, so people can look? No, I think the change will probably, the change will happen pretty quick, because it says the twinkling of an eye, and we shall be changed, but it's our orientation to a new form of life, and see, I mean, Dr. Ritchie went halfway across the country, didn't even realize he was dead, which shows that just coming back to life doesn't mean, oh yeah, you know, I'm back to life, I mean, you have to say, where am I, you know?

Yeah, because so many people have been dead for thousands of years, where am I, you know, finally back on the earth, well, this is what God promised, and Christ kept his word, and here I am, and who are all these people, and another thing that you want to be careful to look for, when you're raised from the dead, is what you're seeing, if you see all these people in shining robes and everything, all around you, you've made it, but if what you see, if there's no earth, and that's gone, and there's a huge white throne, that doesn't mean, that doesn't mean that you're going to go into the lake of fire, but it does mean that you're going to stand before that throne and be judged, whereas if you can make the first one, there's no judgment, so you're judged during your lifetime, so that's what I

say, it's well worth your diligent attention to do like Paul says, to attain the exonostasis, the out-resurrection, by the way, in Philippians 3.11, where he says that if by any means I may attain the resurrection, that's anastasis with a preposition ek in front of it, it's the only time it's used in the New Testament, so Paul is saying if by any means I may attain the out-resurrection from the dead, not the resurrection of the dead, but the resurrection out from, that's a proper translation of exonostasis, the resurrection out from the dead, or the first resurrection, the one that will occur at the beginning of the thousand year period, so if when you come to, into your body and there's no earth and you're just standing there suspended in the hand of God in front of a great white throne,

you know you've missed the first resurrection, and the next item on the agenda is the judgment of you according to what's written in the books, evangelical teaching is that everyone will be lost at that resurrection, that is not solid scripture at all, not solid at all, in fact it is not what it says in Revelation chapter 20, so the problem with that is, I don't know how many of you have ever been in court waiting for a sentence, but if you have, I'm here to tell you, the only thing that you think of is the maximum, I mean, because all you want to know is what can possibly happen, you don't think of, well maybe I'll get ought, if you're a conscientious, intense person, all you're wondering is the max, the max, and the max on this one is eternal separation from God in the lake that burns

with fire and silver, and so you will be scared spitless until you're judged and hear how God regards you, so it's well worth it to make the first resurrection, and making the first resurrection means that now God has begun, as Peter said, the time has come that judgment must begin, God is already judging people, in order to be judged, in order to be judged now, see it is appointed unto man once to die and after this the judgment, so in order to begin the process of judgment now in this world, you have to reckon yourself dead and mean it, I mean you have, because when you reckon yourself dead and alive unto God, God regards that as a genuine death, and that's why I tell you it's so important for a Christian and the shame is that when people are baptized in water that the minister does not

say to them, this means that you are dying, this means that you are dying to the world, and to your deadly nature, and so they don't know that, they get baptized and think, this just means I'm going to be saved, it means that you're baptized into his death, and so God will test you to see if you really mean business, and if you keep clean your life, the judgment will not begin because it is appointed unto man once to die and after this the judgment, so before God can begin to deal and judge that body of sin that's in you, then the whole thing has to die, the reason we have to die is so God can get out the body of sin, that's the Roman 6s, in other words God totals the thing so he can get at that body of sin that's in us, but God can't get in that thing and judge that thing until first

your Adamic nature is dead, there's a difference between your Adamic nature and the body of sin you understand, your Adamic nature is not thoroughly bad, it's not thoroughly bad, but God is not going to save

any part of it because he's after the body of sin that's in there, so he just says shine the Adamic nature because I don't want to fool with it, I'm going to get rid of the body of sin and give you a new body and a new nature, okay, I'm going to make it new, I'm going to make all things new, I'm not going to fool with the old one, I'm not going to save what you are, I'm going to kill what you are, so that you might be born again and come forth as a new creation in Christ, okay, does that make sense to you?

Well until you are willing to reckon yourself dead that can't start because you're going to keep getting off the altar, you're going to keep trying to save your life and that means you're not, when you wake up you're going to be facing the white throne because at some point God has to deal with the sin in your life and if you don't let him do it now then it'll have to be done later because sin will not be allowed in God's kingdom, it will not be allowed in the kingdom, there's no sin in the kingdom, so you make the decision, I make the decision, I either face the music now, I'm going to face it later, when God begins to deal with lust and worldliness and pride and self-will and lying and stealing and profanity and hatred and jealousy and envy and rage and all the other stuff, boy, I want it out now, I don't because we're going to face it at some point, we're going to face it, you can put it off, you put it off, pray you'll go to heaven by grace, you can follow the old mythology all you want to, but I'm here to tell you the bible says in 2 Corinthians 5.10 we must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ that everyone may receive the things done in his body whether good or bad and that when that takes place as to a certain extent it's up to you and me, we can go through it now, pay now or pay later and that's a horrible feeling to be raised and find out you've missed the thousand year period, you've missed the first resurrection and now we're going to be judged according to what's written in the books and you have no guarantee how God's going to view that and Christ has absolute power of life and death, in fact on the great white throne will be not only Jesus Christ but all the saints who were raised in the first resurrection because it's given to them to judge the world.

As we're working to die as felons and shouldn't we be judged? They have to be judged at some point and only Christ will decide who's raised in the first resurrection but I'll tell you what we have to go by and that's revelation chapter 2 and 3 that's revelation 2 and 3 and you can stand on the bible like a law book, I mean God will honor that word so you know there's no guesswork and the bible says if you overcome you will eat of the tree of life and you will have the crown of righteousness and you'll sit in the throne and so on.

Alright so then the issue comes down to is overcoming something you do right now or is overcoming a standard that you finally attain after I finally have overcome and the second death has no authority over me. The truth is that overcoming is a status now, it's not a goal that you reach in the future. When you die you are in a state of overcoming you can hold God to his promises and then we say well what about the rest of the sin in me? Well see the Lord has the power believe it or not to go poof and all the sin would be out of your personality.

He has that power and we see that in the book of Zechariah about the third chapter where he says he removed the iniquity from the high priest and it's gone. You say well then why doesn't he do that for us? See that's the question isn't it? If Christ can go poof and all my sins are gone and I ask him for it why won't he do it? Why do you think? Yeah see the problem is alright let's say we've got a brand new Christian. He's fuller of sin than a preacher's bible is full of notes.

Like we all are. Christ has received us so come as you are a party when you first get saved. Christ takes you sin, self will, worldliness and all and brings you into his person.

Now if he then were to come to you and go whoosh and all your sins were gone you would be like Adam and Eve. You would be like Adam and Eve. You would be without the inner determination to serve God.

That's the way Adam and Eve were. See Adam and Eve had no sin in them. When they were created there was no sin in them.

There was no worldliness in them. There was no lust in them and there was no self willingness. They were perfect.

They were created pure in the hand of God right? What was lacking? An overcoming ability. The knowledge of the holy. What we spend our life learning was lacking.

So along comes the serpent poof over they go. But after God has spent your life teaching you, you're not going to be such a patsy. Christ is not going to have any innocent Eve for a bride.

His bride is terrible as an arm of the banners. Alright now let's say somebody gets saved and they've been saved for a week and during that week they have overcome. Now remember all that overcoming means is that at any time you can look up to Christ and you've done all that he said.

That's all. You can't overcome for tomorrow. You can only overcome for right now.

So whatever he's given you right now you overcome. Alright there they are. They've overcome for a week and they die.

Alright what then? Because the Lord didn't have a chance. They didn't have a chance to learn kingdom warfare. But the Lord they overcame so the Lord is hoist with his word.

So he has to give them all the promises. So which tells us that he'll see to it. He has in mind for them to rule that they don't die.

Because the Lord is in control of when you die and when you don't. So the key to rulership is suffering. That's the key.

The old timers used to say no cross no crown. The key to ruling is suffering. That's why it says in 2nd Timothy 2.12 or whatever it is if we suffer we will reign.

And the reason for that is the process of suffering develops in you the kind of warlike character that Christ needs when he comes and he needs you to return with him to install a kingdom on the earth. He needs that. Now so when if God has slated you to be a warrior and all of this is by election.

Your place in the kingdom is all by election. You can only press toward the mark to which you've been called. That you may grasp that for which you've been grasped.

The kingdom was designed in God's mind and the original creation. It was all done from the foundation of the world. Now whether you make your role or not it's up to you.

Every aspect of it is an opportunity. But your calling in the kingdom is just that. No man takes this honor unto himself except Aaron.

In other words you can't choose. It shall be given remember he said to those for whom it has been prepared. And so this whole thing was organized.

That's why pressing into the rest of God you're pressing into something that already has been foreordained. But your job is the sword of the Lord and of Gideon. So you only get what you receive from God.

And it's very easy to be given a talent and end up without your talent and in the outer darkness. There's no difficulty with that. It just means that you had your one talent.

You didn't use it. So it's taken from you and give it to someone to use his. And you go in the outer darkness.

That's the way it works. I mean this thing is as practical as your shoes. God designed it.

It's all finished. His works are finished from the foundation of the world. Hebrews chapter 4. And then it's to whoever will.

It's up to you. The opportunity is yours. It's to salvation.

It's to the Holy Spirit. It's to getting healed. It's to attaining your place in the kingdom.

Now if God from the foundation of the world appointed you to be at Christ's right hand when he comes in his kingdom, then that's it. And God will accept nothing less than that. You can't say, well, I'll settle, you know, I'll just, you know, join the ranks of the 30 fold.

In fact, someone asked me that. Who was it? It came on the email today. I think it was from Bob McCormick.

Yeah, I wanted to know, can you settle for the, he asked this question and it's worth repeating. People were asking at this church in our, what, your name is Brother Owen, isn't it? Owen, Brother Owen. He's a member.

Bob McCormick last Sunday was here. And by the way, he remembers your prophecy. He said, tell Larry, I keep that in mind.

Did you tell him that despise not the day of small things? Oh, he's living on that, Larry. Give you a little, a little support there and encouragement. But anyway, Bob wrote today and he said that some of the people up there were asking Mildred Orbelin, if we need to pray for her, by the way, she will be operating on next week.

She was in her eighties. She founded the church up there and she's been, she's been tracking with us for a long time. I don't know how long she's been tracking with us, Mildred.

And she was in a car wreck and injured her kid in her bladder or something. But anyway, so think of Mildred, she's going to be operated on next week. But anyway, Bob said that some of the people were asking her if, if they could settle for 60 or 30, because they didn't want to be a hundred fold in case their relatives weren't a hundred fold and they want to be with their relatives, which is a human question.

And I wrote back and I said, don't try that one. Don't try that one. Don't try that one.

Because Jesus said, whoever loves father and mother and so on, your relatives more than him is not worthy of him. So you don't say, well, I think I'll deal with it. If I could stay with my family, let the hundred

fold do their highfalutin thing.

I'm content to be, you know, so typically American. I don't want to be a show off. I don't want to be a hundred fold.

Let somebody else do it. You know, that's American. That comes in the frontier days.

We didn't want to look like a show off, I guess. But anyway, that isn't how you get stuff out of God. You get up there to the head of the class and boy, you hump, nevermind what the other kids think.

And I said, you better not try that one. You face a frowning Christ. If God calls you to be at his right hand, he won't settle for you to be a peon somewhere.

That's your calling. And you'll be judged as either being obedient or disobedient. You don't settle for a lesser calling.

God determines your calling. You can't go higher than God called. You can't go lower than God called.

You can't go either one. You obey or you don't. You overcome or you don't.

And if you don't, you're facing lashes. You're facing the outer darkness. You're facing being driven from the presence of Christ.

All of these things in the New Testament, none of them have any application to the unsaved whatever. They're all talking about the Lord's servants. Like he says, you cut you in pieces and appoint you a with the unbelievers.

So he's talking to believers. Always. The outer darkness never, never in the New Testament does it speak of someone who is not of God's elect cast into the outer darkness.

It's only God's elect that are cast into the outer darkness. And it's they that do the weeping and the gnashing of teeth. When you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, who is he talking to? He's talking to God's elect.

Sit down and you yourselves cast out, the children of the cast out. Then they'll be weeping and gnashing of teeth. You know why they're gnashing of teeth? Anger.

Rage. Rage. They were lied to by their preachers.

And people like that are blamers. People that lose out like that are also blamers. That's the kind of personality they have.

That's why they lose out. They're all the time blaming somebody else for their problems. Blamers.

And so it's, you know, how can they do it? They're not worthy. I'm worthy. How come I'm not up there? Why am I not up there with Abraham? I'm a Jew.

I'm worthy. Gnashing their teeth in anger. Doesn't pay to get angry with God.

It's our own fault. God opens up and says, here, I set a goal before you. Go for it.

I'll give you everything you need to make it. And you go fooling around, getting trapped in the American culture and wasting your time, not enduring hardness, and then you face an angry Christ. I do not envy anyone that does that.

I'm scared to death of God. I've been close enough to God to be scared of Him. I don't know about you, Hal, but I don't want to mess with an angry God.

No way. Woo. All right.

Now, how many of you see what it says, while their enemies looked on? When God gave me a vision of this, down in that basement in the Assembly of God Church, and I saw the saints going up slowly and majestically, because God had given them time to orient themselves to this change. And they'd had this long time of fellowship. And after they had sufficiently embraced one another and had fellowship and were oriented to their new way, then very slowly they began to go up.

And then God spoke to me. And I saw this happening. And God said, I will set a table before you in the presence of your enemies.

And that's exactly what it's saying. Their enemies be held. No, you don't turn invisible in any crazy rapture.

This is the witness. God wants the wicked to see this. And then God spoke to me and He said, if this was the worst thing that would happen to the wicked, but He said it is not.

This is only the beginning of their sorrows. How do you think they felt? How do you think the backslidden church people felt that would refuse to obey God when they see this, the dead, the graves are evidently, according to the Dallon children, the graves when they open up, open up with the sound of an explosion. So there's explosions all over the earth.

There's these people coming out looking like they've got a thousand watt bulb in their chest. All these shining saints. Can you imagine how the wicked will feel when they see this? Millions of people from the time of Abel, shining like the sun and then over them, the lamb, the slain lamb.

No, you don't have to get raptured to escape the wicked. The wicked might have to get raptured to escape the righteous. Their enemies, can you just picture Satan and Antichrist and all the lying they've done and all the New Agers and everything, looking at that thing going up, looking at those people going up, the sky filled.

That's what he means. You see, all these people are shining. They're shining with a militant righteousness.

That's why it says as the lightning shines from the east to the west. All they see is that these people going up, not into heaven to disappear, but into the sky above them where the lamb is. Hide us from the face of the lamb.

Let the mountains and rocks fall on us. Hide us from the lamb. Oh Lord, you don't want to be wicked in that day.

Now I'll tell you the first group that's going to be judged is the church people. I get that from Isaiah. Fearfulness has surprised the hypocrites.

And again in Jude, I don't remember what it says in Jude, the Lord comes with thousands of his saints. I don't remember that. To judge the ungodly among them, if you'll read that context, it's talking about the church people.

Talking about the adulterers in the churches. Read the book of Jude and you'll see where it says he comes to judge the ungodly. He's talking about judging the people in the churches.

That's something. So anyway, I thought you'd enjoy that. At that very hour there was a severe earthquake and a tenth of the, by the way, are there any questions so far? We've covered a lot of ground here.

Are there any questions you have? Many are cold, but few are frozen. All right, Brian. Don't laugh, Brian.

That's an old chestnut. All right. At that very hour, there was a severe earthquake and a tenth of the city collapsed.

It says one city. What city? Well, like I said before, I believe that all the major cities will be connected by telecommunications at that time. 7,000 people were killed in the earthquake and the survivors were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.

So the wicked won't be doing any boasting on that day. The second woe is past, the third woe is coming soon. I don't know what the third woe is unless it's the vials of wrath, but someone, I think it was Mark Overton, or maybe someone else said it may be, just what follows here.

The seventh angel sang. Now this is the last trumpet. This is what Paul is talking about, 1 Corinthians 15.

At the last trumpet. This is the last trumpet. This is the return of the Lord.

There are loud voices in heaven which said, now notice this very carefully. I wish this were preached more. Don't you? The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign forever and ever.

See, the devil, the devil fears that verse. Can you see why? Can you see why? The kingdom of the world. That means all the governments in the world.

You ever see the stupid picture of Christ knocking on the United Nations? How many have ever seen that stupid thing? Christ trying to get admission to the United Nations. Poor Jesus. Had no concept.

Pick it up like that and throw it in the Hudson River. That's what will happen in the United Nations. They don't look just nice.

Kiss the son, lest he be angry. And you perish from the way when his wrath is kindled but a little. It's good enough.

In the new age, in the United Nations, which is shot through with occult religions. Shot through with it. Christ is going to knock you.

Could I come in boys? Can I express myself? The kingdom of the world. Now you see, this was written back in the first century. Since that time, Gnosticism has entered into Christian thinking and calls us to be heaven oriented.

That's not the gospel. The gospel is that Jesus Christ is coming to rule in this world. That's the first century gospel.

Well naturally Satan's going to push the Christians to believe we're supposed to get out of here and leave it to him. I guess he thinks if enough of us believe that it will happen. If what's going to happen will happen whether we believe it or not.

Spiritual realities are spiritual realities. They're not moved by the fact that we have false doctrine. The kingdom of this world.

This world. What world? This world. This one right here.

The rulership kingdom. The rulership of this world. This world.

When the Lord comes. No, he's not going to go up in heaven while his dear saints live in mansions and play hearts and walk around on a street of gold. That's all mythology.

Christian mythology. This is the word. The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ.

Of his anointed. And that we know from Revelation 2 and 3 includes the overcomers. And they will rule forever and ever.

So the first resurrection, the one when the Lord returns is not the general resurrection of salvation. It's the resurrection of the rulership. People have not been raised when the Lord comes to be saved.

He's raising up rulers who can return with him and install his kingdom. The resurrection to salvation takes place at the end of the thousand years when it's determined whether you're saved or lost. Everyone that's raised in the first resurrection is a ruler.

A ruler. They're priests of God and they will rule. Revelation 20 verses 4-6.

Okay, a question about that. So that's why we don't compare ourselves with other Christians. And I'm not talking about this church here, but I mean us generally.

People. People will listen to the tape. Mildred, are you there? Mildred Orberwin, she'll hear it in the top of the corner.

People in Alabama and everybody else. All right. Now, we're not trying to get saved with all this stuff that's going on.

The testing. Tearing the guts out of us with the things that God does to us. It's not so we can go to heaven.

It's so we can learn to rule in God. God is preparing rulers now. He's beginning with his rulers.

When one trumpet sounded in numbers, I think it is, they call together the rulers. Then when the other trumpet, the two trumpets sounded, they call together the congregation. Well, God is dealing first with his rulers.

Doesn't that make sense? Because they're going to rule the rest of the outfit. So he's beginning with his rulers. And the standard is high.

And many that are last in the kingdom will be first, last in time will be first in the kingdom. And the standard is very high today. But it is perfectly possible if that's what you want.

But if you want something more than God, you won't make it. So the question is one of idolatry. You want something more than you want God.

You're not going to make it. The issue is God. Whatever he gives you is gravy.

The issue is God. Now you want to take a chance of the second resurrection. That's cool.

I don't want to be in your shoes. So wake up instead of this wonderful fellowship of all these light-filled saints. You're standing there with a bunch of people that are trembling in their boots and the goat nations and the sheep nations and everybody else is going to be judged.

And there you are and your time will come. So how do you judge all these people? No sweat. But suppose your turn comes way at the end and you have to wait all that time and wonder about the sentence.

You know, you better make sure that your last name begins with an A. If it doesn't, you better change it. If it doesn't, it goes alphabetically. Boy, I wouldn't want to be there and think about that.

I'd do anything to make this first one. All right. And the 24 elders.

And I say, who are they? I don't know. Sonny Tafoya said he knew. But he's dead now.

So that's no help. So I don't know who they are. I expect Billy Graham will be one of them.

The 24 elders who were seated on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshipped God. How would you like to do that forever? How would you like to do that forever? Just sit on a throne and cast your crown before God? That doesn't appeal to you? I suppose you've never tried. All these people, listen, we don't understand because we've never been in the presence of God to that extent.

But that would be the highest calling. That would be so, I mean, you would know nothing and you would know everything. There would be no time and there would be all time.

You would just be dwelling in perfect, perfect bliss all the time. Oh, yeah. Of course, the way you feel now, it doesn't sound so red hot.

All right. But trust God. Those elders would not change places with you and me.

No. We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, the one who is and who was, because you have taken your great power and have begun to reign. And we know that God has power and it's out there somewhere and whenever he wants it, he just reaches out and takes it.

God is so much in control of himself. He has perfect control and he wants us to have that. He doesn't want us to fly into a rage.

He wants us to know when it's time to be angry and then take our anger. Yeah, you can do it. It's not impossible at all.

Oh, now it's time to be happy. Now it's time to be sad. Yeah, he's in control of his emotions.

He's not subject to them. His brain tells, like Paul did that with his body. That's worthwhile, working on your body like that.

It really is. And on your appetite for food and everything else that you do, your sleep and everything. Try as much as you can to make your body subject to you.

Don't be dictated by it. Remember Paul said, I take my body and I bring it under subjection? You can. It's easier at my age, for sure, than when you're young and all full of vinegar and working hard all day.

But you can get to the place where you eat according to what you need and not because you enjoy food. You just pick out what you want to figure out how much you're going to need and just eat that much and no more. Bring my body under subjection.

And that's what God does. He says, okay, it's time for my power. Whistles for his power.

Overcomes his power. God uses it. Men eat.

That's called self-control. Oh, wow, we're so subject to our passions, aren't we? We go by how we feel. And our body tells us pretty much when we get up, you know, when it's time to get up.

You know how that goes. We have to get to a victory over it. And have begun to reign.

He could reign at any time. He decided not to. Now he's decided to do.

And your wrath has come. The time has come for judging the dead. So when the Lord returns, then judgment comes into the earth, into the churches first, finally to all the ends of the earth.

Satan is bound and cast down to the bottomless pit. The demons are silenced. And God's saints rule.

And the Holy Spirit covers the earth like the waters cover the sea. That is, it just blankets the earth. But it will always be under the administration of Jesus Christ through his saints, with and in his saints.

The wonderful paradise we're looking for will not drop down from the sky. It will come from within the believers. The day of the Lord is being created in us.

The creation is waiting for the revealing of the sons of God because it's at that revelation of the sons, plural, that the creation will be released from the bondage of corruption and futility and made animate once more as it was in the beginning so the trees of the field can clap their hands and nature shows a little life instead of being the dead thing that we look at. But that will all come out of the sons of God. The creation waits for the revealing of the sons of God.

But all that's been created in us. And you see, how many can see at this point, we're not talking about being saved. We're not talking about going to heaven.

We're not talking about going to paradise. We're not talking about any of these things. We're talking about God getting ready to reverse the effects of the fall, which he's going to do through Christ, in and with his saints.

How many see that? If you can see that, can you understand why it is that we cannot see how little we can do and still be saved? Well, let's see, can I drink a glass of wine and still be saved? Can I go to the next rated movie and still be saved? Can I do this and still be saved? We're not talking about being saved.

We're talking about being a partner with God in the restoration of that which was promised by the prophets. It's not talking about being saved and going to heaven, whatever.

It's talking about the beginning of God's kingdom. And the world doesn't need it, does it? The world's doing just dandy. The world is waiting for us to make up our mind that we want to be part of this thing.

And that's why the demands on you and me are absolutely total. And if you take up this curriculum, it's going to get more total, only as you can bear it. Now remember, when we're talking about the overcoming life, every bit of wisdom, power, protection, courage, faith you will ever need will be given to you.

The only thing that can stop you is your own attitude, nothing else. Your own unwillingness to turn loose of whatever it is you're collecting and let God have his way. Nothing else.

God will provide everything else. So if you don't make it in that day, you'll just have to say, this was my choice. Does that make sense? I chose, I had an opportunity to rule with Christ.

And I chose instead to be unbelieving and to hold on to the things in my life. And if you could see your life now compared to what's coming up, you would realize you're living in a hovel with your chickens and your pigs and your goats on a dirt floor in a tar paper shack with cellophane for windows and so poor that you eat beans once a day, threadbare, weak, having nothing at all. That's where you are now.

That's where I am. Compared with what Christ is offering you. Believe it.

And clutch what you've got now. And then later find out how I'm telling you the truth. When you see the ivory palaces, when you see the glory of Christ, you'll say, oh, stupid, stupid, stupid, stupid, stupid.

I traded my inheritance for a bowl of lentil soup. And you remember, we're warned about that in Hebrews. That there was no going back for Esau.

He had, on that one, can you imagine Esau, he was hungry. So he wanted a bowl of lentil soup. He couldn't see past the end of his nose.

Okay. I want lentil soup now, I'll worry about my inheritance later. That one simple tiny little action sealed his destiny for eternity.

Think of it. That's in Hebrews. It's a warning to us.

Afterwards he sought it and he cried and he bawled, but it made no difference because the spirit of prophecy had already gone forth over Jacob. And that cannot be changed. There's no backing up there.

Now that's a warning to us because you think, well, if I do some simple thing, it isn't going to be that important. What happens is that the whole tenor of your life and everything, that one simple act becomes, in God's mind, representative of what you are. And so the decision is made.

Who else in the Bible did that happen to, do you remember? Lot's wife. See, all she did was a simple thing, but it summed up a life of involvement in an evil culture and it was just one final act of disobedience. There wasn't any great thing she did.

All she did was look back to say goodbye to her friends and her sons-in-law. That's all she did. Big deal.

But you see, it summed up. God knew she would always be like that. She would never change.

So she became a pillar of salt. Esau. She sealed her destiny right there.

Esau sealed his destiny right there. And that happens to us. And so be careful the habit patterns you form and the decisions you make because God will watch that and watch that and watch that.

And when God is persuaded that you're really not going to change, all it will take is one simple little action and that will be it. You'll be gone, led away in chains. That's the way it works.

You know, it's hard for us Americans because we are basically soft. We are basically a very soft people. We don't realize it, but we are.

Maybe some of us for some reason might have to be away from home during Christmas. Maybe we caught something and we had to be in the hospital during Christmas. And we think, oh God, I'm not home for Christmas.

Stop the whole show. I'm not home for Christmas. That's where we are.

That's where we are. We were talking to a Christian who called us up today. A Christian man has been diagnosed with an incurable disease and it's a disease that causes disfigurement of some kind.

He didn't go into it, but I expected some disfigurement in his face. And there's no cure for it. He's about 35, an active, vibrant Christian.

Now he's got something to weep about. He's got something to feel bad about. You see, we're not tough.

We're too soft. And because of that, we cannot believe that we could do something that would have consequences that were irreparable. For example, it's common for mothers to say to their children, you do that one more time and you won't get any Christmas presents.

Well, the mother knows she's lying. The kids know she's lying. Everybody knows she's lying.

But what does the child learn from that? That there never are really any irreparable consequences. You can always fudge in some way. There's always some action you can take.

And that's true of our whole culture. Something bad happens to you, look for somebody to sue. See, we've got that thing, nothing bad is going to happen to me.

Buster, if it does, I'm getting a lawyer and you're going to suffer. Because it's not going to happen to me. So just write it down and memorize it because it isn't going to happen.

We've got that in our culture. No matter what I do, it doesn't matter. I can always change it.

That's deep in our culture. That's because we don't suffer like half the world suffers. We don't realize, yes, the communists can come and stick chopsticks in your ears until they pierce your eardrums because you listen to the Lord's Prayer.

See, we're not up to that kind of thing that people suffer in Vietnam, for example. We're not into that. And we need to be warned because God is into it.

And when God tells you something, and tells you something, now look, this is the penalty for what you're doing, and you cross that line, there is no going back. Once God speaks, that's it, and there's a finality,

and there's nothing that anybody can do about it. You have decided your destiny.

And we need to know that in America because we're used to this. If you do that one more time, I'm going to tell you one more time, and boy, are you going to catch it. That's at 8.30, 9 o'clock.

I'm going to tell you one more time to go to bed, and if you don't go to bed, boy, are you going to catch it. 9.30. I'm telling you for the last time, you better get up there and go to bed. Well, you don't correct them.

The police will when they grow up. But even then, your lawyer will get you off if he can. Ah, what a culture.

Nice, soft, and synthy, but the problem is, now we're faced with God, and He isn't that way. I mean, when God decides to chastise you, then you go, are you alright, honey? I mean, He breaks your legs. You may be out of commission for 20 years wondering what in the world hit you.

You can say yes, amen, or oh me, I'm talking about what I've lived through. God is tough, tough, because He's forming character. Character is not formed in a powder puff.

It's formed by enduring hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ. Hardness. Hardness.

Hardness. You say that's not a very nice thing to say at Christmas time. Well, you're probably right.

It's not. We don't know whether we're going to be alive until Christmas. We might die before Christmas.

We almost did coming down. People are nuts on the highway with their presents and their Christmas stuff. Nuts.

Absolutely nuts. And you'll be fortunate to get home alive tonight. Just make sure that your heart is right with Christ.

And you can look and say, Lord, I lived that wire tight, and I'm here, Lord, I'm doing the best I can do. And you can't fool Him. You can't fool Him.

Boy, He'll know whether you're putting Him on or not. Okay, any questions? Well, this got serious tonight, didn't it? Well, it's true. It's true.

It really is. Hebrew says, speaking to the Christians, it's a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. Just a thought occurs to me as you were saying at Christmas time, you were talking about hardness.

When you think that Jesus, who is all mighty and powerful in heaven, and He let Himself go down as His baby, you know, typically relying on a mother and, you know, what do you have to say? So it is a little bit all about hardness, actually. That was a hard thing for Him to have to do. Hard beyond anything we will ever understand.

Gethsemane was harder than anything we will ever understand. Yes, it was hard. It was hard a million times because of where He came from.

And the only time that I can remember in the Bible, and you can correct me now, where the Lord said, Get thee behind Me, Satan, was to Peter, when Peter told Him, You don't have to go up to Jerusalem to suffer. Boy, He whirled on Peter. He said, Satan, get behind Me.

Peter was telling Him, no, it's too hard for you. Shall we stand?

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