

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

DATE

August 16, 2020

SPEAKER

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SERIES

Meaning(Less)

PART

13

TITLE

The Whole Duty Of Man

SCRIPTURE

Ecclesiastes 12:9-14



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It's always a joy to see your face in this room, and for those of you who are at home, we certainly miss you but we're so glad that you can also join us. I hope this time will be really important to you and to your week. I actually believe that this time can be exceptionally formative and for some of us in the room, this moment can actually change the rest of your life, and so I want to pray for us as we get started, okay? Father, I ask that you would do great things. Your word is just that, it's your word. We believe that the Bible is from you, that you inspired it to be written as it is. That you moved in the lives of people to incline their hearts to write down certain words, and that those words are words of life. Not only for that generation when it was written, but for every generation, as you have preserved your scriptures all the way down to us and we are so thankful.

And I pray father, as we read the end of this amazing book, I pray God that the words first written by Solomon, that were inspired by you, I pray that they would capture our hearts. Whereas I pray every week I ask that you would cause us to be incredibly interested in what you have said and written. I pray father, that you would give us the gift of belief and that that belief would propel a courage to put it into practice. And for some in the room, I pray God that you would bring them to life. For every one of us I pray that you would expand and grow our faith. For those who know you as savior and Lord, I pray God that you would expand our faith in your promise, in our understanding of who you are and that we would continue to live in the fear of God.

And I pray for those who have yet to make that decision, who are considering perhaps your claims, what the Bible claims about you, the things that you've said and the things that you've done and what that means for them individually, I ask that you would open their eyes and help them to see not only that their life can be transformed, but that you are supreme and utterly consequential for every part of our life. And so we look to you in faith, ask that you would speak through weakness once again, and we pray this in Jesus name, amen. If you have a Bible with you, I want to ask you to look with me at Ecclesiastes chapter 12. If you have been here the last three months or any of the last three months, you know that we've been walking through this book verse by verse.

And we happened to come to the last six verses of this book that was written a long time ago by a man named Solomon. And what we've found over the last several months is that this book proves that people have always hungered for what you and I have hungered for and do hunger for and that is purpose and meaning, to know why it is that we are on this earth, to know why we exist. And the Bible does not leave that vague. In fact, the Bible tells us things very specific that are true about us that are different than all the created order. And that there's four things that it says about us that is only true about humanity. It's not true about the animals or other things that God created. And that is this, is that the Bible tells us that you and I, that we were created by God and not only created by God, but we were created for God, for his glory.

And not only for his glory, but you and I were created to live in a relationship with God and ultimately that you and I will answer to God. Now, this is a pretty amazing thing because in each one of these cases, obviously God is the reference point. He's the fixed point by which all of life it begins to make sense, but here's

the reality. And that is that if we're created by something, for something to live with something as the answer to something, and we lose that something, or in this case, we lose God and we do not have a reference point, then what happens is we don't only lose God, we also lose very specific things that are critical to your understanding of how to live on this earth. For example, if you do not know that why you were created, what happens is, is that we lose our perspective of our origin, where do we come from.

And if we lose our reference point as to for whom, we lose our purpose. And if we don't understand who we live with then we miss out and lose our perspective of our distinction of all created things, why are you different than a cockroach or a piece of concrete, it's different. And not only that, but we lose our understanding of our destiny. Now this is what the Bible teaches and this is what reality affirms. And that is that if you and I, as individuals lose our perspective of our origin, our purpose, our distinction, and our destiny, we get lost. That's the word that the Bible uses for when we feel a drift, when there's no place where our boat is moored to, where there is no anchor. We get lost in what feels like sometimes this enormous, endless maze that seems to get nowhere.

And some of us today just like Solomon was at one point in his life, some of us in this room are lost. Some of us just like Solomon, perhaps the endeavors of your life, even the successes of your life have left you feeling like everything that you're chasing is like chasing the wind. Some of us, we get to the place in our life where we simply give up on answering the question of why we exist and we just move and we settle in on how to exist better. And so some of us, we do not have answers to these questions, but we're comfortable, and we look dapper and we're educated and we have technology, but we are empty. God has better for us. The end of the book is really interesting. When you think about the end of things, there's an adage save the best for last, which is exactly what he does.

Solomon wants to save the best for last and the best that he has to offer is actually an answer to the question of what is the purpose of life? What are we supposed to be doing with our days? We love to save the best for last. So you go to a concert, there's usually several bands, but the biggest band, the best band is usually the last band. Not always, but when it's not, you talk about it, right? It's like, you're not going to believe it, but like the entry band was a little bit better than the main guys. And what's interesting is they typically save their favorite song or the best song, or one of their most popular songs for last. We do the same thing with our food. We get all kinds of food on our plate. When we're young, we eat everything that we like and then we complain about the things that are bad.

When we get older, we're like, I probably need stuff that looks green. And so it's there, it's on the plate, I need to eat it and so we start thinking, you know what? That's not the last bite I want to eat though, I want something better than that for the last bite so we save the best for last. Well, this is what Solomon does. At the end of his life the last parting shot, his towering shot is he writes Ecclesiastes for us. And not only that, but he actually leaves the best of his best for the last and that he begins to talk about the purpose of life. But before he delivers his gold at the very end, what he wants to do in the end within these six verses is not only

the point of the entire book, he also wants to give us reason to trust him.

Now, every one of us does this, when we're about to tell somebody that we love deeply something really important, that we know it's really important. Maybe some of you, you had the opportunity to actually be with a grandparent or somebody who passed away, then right before they passed away they wanted to tell you something that was significant and important. Maybe some of you, a lot of folks here at state, we're so glad to see you and various other lots of schools in our city, but perhaps when your parents sent you away to college they wanted to say something to you of significance. And for the most part when we do things like that, we don't just drop the bomb. No, it takes a long time to get to our point. We have to give a lot of preface. We have to explain why this is important to me. We want to make sure, we want to build trust and this is what he does. He aims to fortify our trust in what he's about to say by telling us what it's been about for 12 chapters.

Now, I know some of you, you've missed a lot of this study, but many of us, even if you've missed the study, you've probably read a portion of this book. And you thought, man, what in the world was he up to? Why on the world would you ever write like this? What's interesting is at the end of his book, in four of his verses, he says, let me tell you what I was trying to do. And let me tell you why I was trying to do it so that you will listen to the big point. It says in verse nine, it says, "Besides being wise, the preacher," which is Solomon, is actually of himself, he's actually speaking of himself, he says, "Also taught the people knowledge, weighing and studying and arranging many proverbs with great care."

In other words, what he says in verse nine is this, is that if you've read this, your spirit confirms that what I've written is actually quite clear. I've written with clarity, oh, I've studied, I've weighed ideas, I've weighed experiences. And then I've compressed these huge life experiences into tiny nuggets called Proverbs. And then I have sought to arrange them in such a way that even you, my listeners and my readers would confess with your mouth, that this is consistent with reality. I've not talked for 12 chapters about Oompa Loompa's and trolls and unicorns, I've talked about justice and love and mercy. I've talked about heaven and hell and life and death. I've talked about important things. He says, so don't forget that as I'm about to tell you what matters.

Not only clarity though, he goes on in verse 10 and he says that, "The preacher sought to find words of delight." That means that he comes to it and he goes, I've tried to find words that are creative. I wanted you to be intrigued. I wanted you to ask the question, why did you write it like that? Why didn't you just say it the way that everyone says it? Why would you take the effort? What he's saying is look, I try to view myself like a builder, a master builder who goes out to a lumberyard and looks at the boards, finds the best one, the straightest ones in order to build the best house. He goes, in such a way I've looked at all the words and experiences, and I've tried to find the very best words that would ignite your imagination.

And so, instead of just coming to you and say, hey, you should be self controlled, I've talked to you about flies, little flies, dirty flies, that land in this bowl of expensive ointment and how little things can ruin big things. I've tried to be creative in order to pull you in and cause you to think what's he talking about? Then he goes on in verse 10 and he says, "And uprightly he wrote words of truth." What he's saying here is look, I've written what's true to reality and the spirit within you bears witness to that. You know that we're talking about significant things. You know, that even people who do not know Christ as savior and Lord, they read Ecclesiastes and they think, you know what? I don't know what he means, but that guy is speaking the truth. It's an amazing thing. It confesses reality in words that sometimes we don't have the courage to be able to say.

Solomon is saying, I shot straight with you. Even about my fears, my failures, my feelings, as I've sought to address life, I've risked my reputation for all time. I mean, some of us in this room right now, we think of Solomon as this pessimistic old bitter grandpa. And he says, I allowed myself to write in such a way that would lead you to say, you know what? I probably wouldn't want to hang out with him, but he has a lot to say that is true to reality. And he says, not only that verse 11, "The words of the wise are like goads." Now we don't really talk about goads a whole lot today and so let me tell you what it is. It simply means a prod, a shepherd used to carry a rod and a staff. A staff was longer, it was used to protect the sheep. And so it was longer so that it could keep a Wolf away so they wouldn't have to fight very close, but they would also keep with them a rod.

You remember the Psalm, Psalm 23, "Your rod and your staff," they what? "They comfort me." Now that's a really interesting thing because what the rod was used for was to correct the sheep. It was a prod, it was a poke. It was a discomfort that was meant to protect them from greater discomfort. Now, what Solomon is saying is this, is that I have had an intent to protect you in writing it this way. He goes, I know the things that I've written to you, I know some of them have been difficult to hear. I know some of them caused you to think who is this guy? Who is this old pessimistic guy? He's a dead guy, let's just leave him dead. I know some of you, you were convicted by what I said, you were made uncomfortable by what I said. He said, but I did this to protect you from a greater harm, a greater discomfort.

Then he says, verse 11, "And like nails firmly fixed are the collected sayings." What does this mean? Well, all of us have nailed something into the wall in the hope of hanging something, whether it's a hook and you hang a backpack on it or a nail, and all of a sudden you want to put a painting on or a mirror on it. And we've all had that experience where sometimes the nail gives way either because it wasn't all the way in or because the nail actually never hit the board, it was just hanging in the dry wall. And so you hang something up and suddenly everything crashes, because this is the reality of life. There's a lot of advice in the world today that it's not a firmly fixed nail, it's a loosely fixed nail and you put your life upon it and it's going to fall and your life will fall with it.

He said, but what I've written you here is like a firmly fixed nail. In other words, you can hang your life on this and know that there's some measure of security in what I'm telling you. And you got to ask the question. You're like, well, what a self absorbed dude this guy is, that he has the words that are going to protect and

truly preserve my life. And then he tells us why, he goes, because they're not my words. Verse 11 ends, "And they are given by one shepherd." The word shepherd, it's capitalized. He's not just talking about any shepherd, he's talking about Psalm 80:1, it says that, "The Lord God is the shepherd of Israel who feeds his people with his word." This is what he's saying. He's saying, what I've written is actually inspired by God, that early in my life, God came to me and he said, "What do you want?" And he said, "What I need more than anything is wisdom. So would you give me wisdom?" And God gave him wisdom.

So what he's saying here is this, is that what God has given to me is what I am seeking to give to you. Now, you look at this list and you think for a lot of us, when we began Ecclesiastes, this was not what we thought it was about. We didn't think there's this person who speaks with tremendous clarity and creativity, is true to reality, intent to protect and preserve and is inspired by God, maybe some of them, he says, but this is my intent. I'm about to get to my point, but before I get to my point, he says one other thing. It's really interesting, in particular in a room that is probably half filled with college students. Verse 12, he says this, all the students in the room are going to go and I get this first, right? "My son, beware of anything beyond these. Of making many books there is no end and much study is a weariness of the flesh."

What's he saying there? He's not saying the books, he's not saying chemistry, he's not saying textiles and physics and English and psychology and everything else that you might be studying. Everything else we might be reading about is insignificant, he's not saying that. What he's saying is this, is you're only ever going to be able to truly enjoy what you're studying so long as you frame that study in this book. Do you know why math makes sense? Is because God is a God of order. Do you know why when you study textiles or the creation of clothing and fabrics, why it's important? Is because God says that clothes are meant to confess to the innocence that we have lost when we rebelled against him. And so in mercy, he gave clothing to us. It should be comfortable clothing, but it should also be clothing that leads people not to wonder what's under that clothing, but what's not and that is innocence.

You see, when you start, in fact, we don't do this anymore in America, which is a sad reality. Sometime those of you who are in college, go and look at the rules and precepts of Harvard university when they first founded it. And one of the things they told all college students before they began their journey of education with them was this, is that Jesus Christ is the foundation of all truth and all of your learning will be built upon him. And your enjoyment in your learning will be based solely upon how well you keep him in view as you're studying, whatever it is you're studying. This is what verse 12 is saying. He's not saying don't read. He's saying, as you consider what you're studying, consider who created you and who created the things that you're studying. You see, there are many books, but there's only one divinely inspired book.

And now after he said this, he goes look, what I've given you, it's clear and creative and it's true. It's protective, it's a preservative and it's inspired by God. He goes, now, let me condense everything that I've learned in my life. All the experiences, all my findings, all my wisdom into one. And this is his best of his best. You ready? Sometimes it's so anti-climatic, you're like, oh, is that it? And I was there, here it is, fear God and keep his

commandments. For those of you who like sermon outlines, I got one point today and this is it, okay, so you don't have to save room, well I know he always has three points and there's three applications. And no, this is it. One, fear God and keep his commandments. This is what he longs for, for you and for me to know.

All 12 chapters have been aiming at this. In other words, Ecclesiastes could have been really short. He could have said this and said, yeah that'll do. That's what he's saying when he says these words, verse 13, "The end of the matter, all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments for this is the whole duty of man." This, fear God and keep his commandments, that's it, that's the whole duty. Why am I on the earth? To fear God and keep his commandments. Why am I married? To fear God, to keep his commandments. Why am I in college? It doesn't matter what it is, this is the frame, this is the reality. Fear God and keep his command. Now, he's not undercutting all other endeavors of life. He's not saying don't become a chemist or don't become a parent because this is it. It's the only fear God and obey his commandments. Now what he's saying is this, he's simply framing all of our endeavors inside reverence and obedience.

In other words, if you're married today and you wonder how to behave in that marriage, how to think about that marriage, well, it's supposed to be viewed through a framework of reverence for God and a consideration for what God has said. If you want to be a chemist or whatever job it is that you have, you go to that job and you think about that job and those people. And it's not just making money, I want reverence for who God is and I want to consider what he's said. And I want these two things to be the frame by which I look at my whole life. You see for ages, the erroneous belief was that the sun revolved around the earth. In other words, we thought that the earth was the fixed point. The reference point by which everything else circled. And we found out that that was not true, but what's interesting is there's still today, the vast majority of humanity live on this planet and live their entire life making the same mistake with God thinking that he revolves around us instead of us revolving around him.

We read the word of God and instead of saying, yes, we say, do I approve of what I just read? We view God, we think of God and treat God like a show pony, as though there's lots of ponies. There's one true living God and yet we line them up and really know, which one of these fits best for my life? Who's the reference point in that? Listen, if you're worshipping something that fits your life, that something is not worth your soul. You live on his terms, this is his world. He's the Holy one. So when you read something within the scriptures and it ignites anger, frustration, something within you say, I don't like that. Now, it may be an interpretation. You're just reading the Bible and you say, I don't like that about him, then you have to be the one that changes.

He's not the summation of our belief about him, he is who he is. He's the objective one. It's like the sun, there's one sun. You look up and you go, I don't like that sun. Well, too bad, that's the only one. There is one true living God and Solomon says, we need to fear him and keep his commandments. Now, some of you, you've been in church a long time and so you're sitting here thinking, now I know about fear. Fear doesn't mean being scared, so go ahead right now and tell them, the fear of God does not mean being scared. Actually it does, at least that's what Jesus said. And I know this Jesus because of his sacrifice on the cross that actually

led us for him to call us friends, we're like, no, we don't have to fear him because we're friends.

But this same Jesus who made us friends said this in Luke chapter 12, he says, "Do not fear those who kill the body and after that have nothing more that they can do, but I will warn you whom to fear, fear him who after he has killed, has authority to cast into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him." You see, it is so true that God is patient. Oh, he's so kind, generous, merciful. He's so benevolent. He's so good in so many ways, in every way. But Romans chapter one tells us that his wrath is being kindled and waiting in his patience for people to repent and one day it will be released. And so fearing God then is, it's an interesting thing. It begins with a detection of his personhood. This is what I mean by that. A lot of people in the world today, they view God like an idea instead of a person. They're like, oh, this is a set of truths. Now do I want to live up to those set of truths?

But an idea doesn't get offended, God gets offended. And so the first way that you begin to rightly fear the Lord is to not treat him like a piece of paper or an idea or a philosophy, but you treat him like a person who has emotions, who gets angry and happy and is pleased and feels honored. And he loves, feels mercy and compassion and pity towards people. You have to view him and see him as he is, and that is having personhood. And not only that, but there has to be a detection of his holiness, which means that not only is he a person, he's a person not like us. He's wholly different than us. He's set apart. He's perfectly pure, perfectly pure. And not only that, but there must be a detection of his power, his authority over all things. His ability to pull off anything that he wants to pull off whenever he wants to pull it off.

You see, and when there's a detection of his personhood, his holiness and his authority and his power, then what happens is we begin to orbit around him instead of expecting him to orbit around us. And Solomon recognized that since God, since this is a God who has spoken, he has given instructions within his word, then what he wants us to remember is that fearing God looks a whole lot like keeping commandments, obeying God. That this Holy one has spoken words, real words to us, spoken in love to protect us, to preserve us that are based in being creative and clear and true to reality. He says, God has spoken to us. And so to have a regard for this God when he has spoken means that we say, well, then I have to have a regard for what he said.

And so why care? And this is where he ends. This is his last sentence. He goes, I know some of you are going, oh, fear God, obey his commandments, who cares, whatever. And then verse 14 he says, let me just tell you why. He says, "For God will bring every deed into judgment and every secret thing, whether good or evil." Now these are important words, these every, every deed, every secret thing, is you don't get away with anything. Now, this is when, a holistic view, this is why studying the whole book is so important. If you remember in verse two, chapter one, if you don't, I'll put it up here on the screen for you. He begins the book if you remember, and he says, "Vanity of vanities, vanity of vanities, all is vanity."

Now, you see the word all? All and every, he's making a comparison. These are the bookends. This is what he's saying if you remember. Under the sun, if you remember was the interpretive key of the book, and that is that if you look out and all you see with your eyes is all that there is. Meaning, if you just look out and you

just see the world, this is all there is. And there is no God, and there is no Bible and there's no revelation. And there's no savior, there's no cross. There's no resurrection, there's no heaven, hell, justice. There's none of that, it's just this, it's just, we're just people, we live, we die, we're done, then all of our chasing in the world, all of our endeavors, no matter how successful they are, they all have this peculiar vanity to them. There's this peculiar futility to them.

And he gets to the end and he says, but actually all we see with the eyes is not all there is. There is a God, there is a Bible and there is revelation. And there is a son of God who came, a rescuer and there is heaven and hell. There is a cross. There is a resurrection. There is justice. There is judgment. And because of that, everything matters, everything matters. And so where Ecclesiastes tells us not to fear or to fear and obey God, what's interesting is the rest of the Bible tells us, we haven't. The Bible says, we've all sinned and fallen short of his glory. It says that we have a debt now that we cannot pay. And so what are we to do? Well, God knew we couldn't do anything. And so God acted when we couldn't. In first John this is what he says. In verse four, I'm sorry. Verse 10 in chapter four, he says, "In this is love, not that we have loved God, but that he has loved us."

Let me just pause there and say this, if you ever want a definition, a living example of love, he says, don't look at humanity and how a humanity loves God. That's not love. He goes, now if you want an example, then you look at how God loved us in return. What did he do? He sent his son to be the propitiation. This is a sacrifice that's made in substitution for another. We just sang about, he paid our ransom, that's propitiation. "For our sins, by this is love perfected with us." Now notice this, "So that we may have confidence for the day of judgment." Because of propitiation there's the possibility for confidence at judgment, even though he's going to judge all of our deeds, both good and evil. He goes, "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear."

In other words, God almighty sent Jesus Christ to this earth to be crushed in order to pay the price for our sin. When he rose from the dead, he extended an invitation that as if we would trust him that he would forgive us and justify us. Forgiveness is where he takes our sin, justification is where he gives us his righteousness and then declares us as being righteous. One of the clearest verses that tells the power of this, how important this is, is Romans chapter eight. This is the next text up here. Look, it says, "By sending his own son," this is God. "By sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh," means he looked like us. He had a body like us, "And he came for sin," in order to deal with our sin. How did he deal with it? "He condemned sin in the flesh." He died for our sin. Now, why did he do it? "In order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us." The law of this Holy God says, you must be perfect to enter heaven.

Jesus says it, Matthew 5:48, "You therefore must be perfect as my heavenly father is perfect." You know who gets into heaven? Perfect people. That's it. You think well, we're done. No, we're not done, there's hope and this is why. Because he came, what happens is this. See, there's a requirement and that is righteousness. Forgiveness is not enough. Forgiveness simply takes the sin out of the bucket and leaves the bucket empty. Justification then fills the bucket with the righteousness of Christ. And now all of a sudden we are fulfilling the requirement. Now we are, he did it for us, right? It's fulfilled in us that the righteous requirements of the

law they're fulfilled in us, God looks at you and he goes, you're innocent. You're obedient. All I see is the righteousness of my son that's just cascading over you because you've trusted in him. You are ... your home, welcome to heaven.

This is the only confidence there is in judgment. And I want you to know, a day of judgment is coming. God will open a book of life one day containing all the names of those who have trusted in him and those who are in the book will be granted heaven, their home, and all others will be sent to hell. And Romans three says, "On that day, there will be no appeal, for on that day you won't be comparing yourself to each other, you'll only compare yourself and view a Holy God. And on that day, there will be only one mouth that's speaking and all the rest of the mouth and all the history of the world will be silent before him." And I want you to know that you do not have to dread this day because you can trust Jesus this day.

You do not have to dread that day. You can be confident towards the day of judgment because you trust him today. And so applications, first let's trust God by believing his son. The proof that you fear God rightly is that you run to his provision in Jesus, instead of running away from him. First John three says, "This is his commandment that we believe in the name of his son." In other words, there is a commandment still to obey, and it is the commandment to trust Christ. First John 5:12 says, "Whoever has the son has life and whoever does not have the son of God does not have life." And so my question is this, have you trusted Christ? Is there a fear in your heart, a regard towards God that recognizes that the only hope you have is for you to run to his provision in his son, in Jesus.

If you see that, but have never trusted him, I want to give you an opportunity to do that right now. So would you bow your head, whether you're in this room or you at home, just bow your head. If you have already trusted Christ, then just pray for those who may be actually considering doing so. And for those of you who want to trust Christ, you can pray to God something like this. Father in heaven I am a sinner. You know that and I know that, and I believe that you sent your son Jesus Christ to this earth. And I believe he lived without sin. He was different than me and I believe he died on a cross for me. And I believe he was buried and I believe he rose from the dead. And I put my faith in him asking you to forgive me and justify me. Would you bring me home? Begin this relationship now as a friend, I pray in Christ's name. Amen.

If you have trusted Christ, I want you to know that once Jesus saves, he calls us friends, but the fear of God then gives gravity to this friendship. And so the second thing I would encourage you to consider is let's trust God and by showing preference to his word. The only way to show preference to his word, not only to keep it, first you got to read it. You got to be involved in it. You got to be engaged in the word of God. First John chapter 5:3 says, "For this is love for God that we keep his commandments and his commandments are not burdensome." You see, if you have a friendship with somebody and they have a certain preference. So, you know what? I would rather eat this tonight.

Friendship, what that does is this, oh, well, if that would please you, then it would be my privilege to be able to bend my will towards you and your will. And this is what obedience to God is. It's not to earn anything with God anymore, now it's because we have a relationship with God we're so mesmerized by his love for us, we keep looking at him saying, is there anything else that would please you? And because of our love, it's not burdensome. And I know that you hear from me like, hey, read your Bible, read your Bible. And so what we wanted to do is give you just a very brief testimony from someone in our own congregation, Val Clark, just to tell you the reward in her life that has been in just spending time in the word of God. So watch this.

My name is Val Clark, and I want to say for sure, reading and studying God's word has really given me wisdom. My mom taught me early in fact, the importance of knowing the Lord and knowing his word. And as it says in Psalm 111:10, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." And I truly can say that, that wisdom has helped me through many difficult times. In those first years, I was all about self gain and career advancement, career advancement and everything. And how can I please the boss and all that. But in growing in God's word, in his wisdom, I learned that the word actually tells us that we're supposed to work as unto the Lord and kind of wish I had known that better then, because I would have probably had a better attitude about my own job at the time.

And I remember those early years, when we'd get into disagreements as young married couples do, and for me, it would be all about how can I win this argument? How can I win this argument? I've got to win this argument, but I learned that it should be, am I having this conversation with my husband in a way that would be pleasing to God because it's not about me or him, it is about pleasing the Lord. Becoming a first time mother of twins, the first few months I had help really with my husband and we had in-laws also coming, that was such a blessing. But after everyone went home and my husband went back to work, it was just me and them. And I was like, I actually, there were days where I cried because I was thinking I can't do this, I can't do this.

Well, there's a scripture that helps me and is Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength." Its helped me enjoy life. Especially when things are happening in this world, all kinds of wild things. It can make you feel unsettled, anxious, fearful, but I know that my hope is to come from the Lord and that helps me have more peace to be able to enjoy even the small things. Also, just dealing with a different subject and that would be death. My father passed away when I was the only child and my mother passed away just after I had my own children. It was tough, but I found comfort in God's word and they were believers and I know from God's word that I'm going to see them again one day.

She's taught me so many things about God. Like she taught me to put God as a priority in my life and study his word and pray a lot. And we have the same beliefs, like we're in alignment on that. And so that's such a big blessing in my life and I'm really grateful and I love her so much.

And I can definitely say, I do not regret, I do not regret reading and studying God's word regularly because it has really helped me through many of the challenging times in my life. And especially these days when we're all going through quite a few challenges.

And so I commend you to the scriptures, I encourage you to read them. If you don't have a Bible of your own, you can stop by that main desk out and we will find a Bible for you. We want you to leave with one if you don't have one. It'll change your life if you engage in that word. In just a moment we're going to sing a song and it's the song, is he worthy? And the answer is yes, that Jesus indeed is worthy. He's worthy of our life. He's worthy of our worship. He's worthy of everything. There's one other application before we get there, I think is really important and it's very brief and it's this, is let's trust Christ and tell others of this good news.

There are some people maybe even near you where you're living on campus or in your neighborhoods, where you work and you know what? They dread the day of judgment because they don't know any other way. And so if you do not dread the day of judgment, because you've been justified in Jesus, you have something to share. You have something to tell. And so I want to encourage you, I want to encourage you to begin praying for people in your life who need to hear. I want to encourage you to perhaps meet someone you don't know in the hope that maybe they need to hear. And then I want to encourage you to begin a spiritual conversation with them, just to identify where they're at in the hope that you'll be able to tell them your story, which in essence is his story.

And so I encourage us as a church family to know all of this, the take in Ecclesiastes and not to be able to share, to share the heart of Jesus with other people would be an enormous mess, so let's tell the good news that we can be justified and we can stand before him in confidence because of Jesus. All right? So let me pray for us. Father in heaven, we love you. And we thank you for sending Jesus to us and for us. We thank you God for rescuing us and healing us and making us whole, and we confess to you that we are still in need of your labor in our life, to grow us and to give us the gift of belief, to continue to forgive us, to expand our love for you. To expand our love to worship you.

I pray father that as we consider the things that we have heard and that we have read in your word, God, that you would continue to speak to each one of us, words of life that would build us up and move us forward. Jesus, we confess that you're worthy. We're going to sing it, but we believe it. We want you to know that we believe it. We thank you Jesus for all that you have done for us or that you make life worth living. And so we acknowledge you and we think of you, we regard you and we sing to you now and we pray this in Jesus name, amen.



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