

TRANSCRIPT 02-28-21 PASTOR DAVE'S SERMON "WHAT DOES JESUS EXPECT FROM ME?"

>> Pastor Dave: HELLO, EVERYONE.

I'M SO GLAD THAT YOU JOINED ME.

LET'S BEGIN IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER AND OF THE SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

WELL, I'M PRAYING THAT YOU'RE ALL DOING WELL.

THE COVID SEEMS TO BE IN RETREAT TO SOME POINT, ALTHOUGH IT DOES APPEAR, WITH ALL THESE NEW STRAINS OF IT, THEY ARE LEVELING OFF.

THERE IS EVEN A SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA STRAIN.

I DON'T THINK WE REALLY WANT TO BE KNOWN FOR THAT.

IN FACT, THERE ARE PROBABLY LOTS OF THINGS IN CALIFORNIA THAT WE DON'T WANT TO BE KNOWN FOR, BUT WE ARE.

BUT I'VE GOT TO TELL YOU, I'M FEELING PRETTY BLESSED LIVING IN THIS DAY THAT IS 70° OUTSIDE, WITH BLUE SKIES AND SUNSHINE.

I HAD MY SECOND MODERNA VACCINE YESTERDAY, AND I HAVE, SO FAR, NO SIDE EFFECTS. THINGS SEEM TO BE GOING VERY, VERY WELL.

THIS THING IS NOT A HOAX.

THIS THING WAS NOT POLITICAL.

MANY PEOPLE SAID WHEN THE ELECTIONS COME, IT IS GOING BE TO OVER.

BUT IT IS NOT.

THAT'S ALL HOCUS-POCUS STUFF.

THAT'S ALTERNATIVE REALITY.

THIS IS A REAL THING.

AND WE NEED TO TREAT IT LIKE A REAL THING.

SO TAKE CARE OF YOURSELVES.

DO WHAT YOU NEED TO DO TO PROTECT YOURSELF.

KEEP YOUR DISTANCE; KEEP WEARING A MASK; DON'T SPREAD IT TO OTHER PEOPLE.

SO, ANYWAY, ENOUGH ABOUT THAT.

LET'S PRAY.

LORD GOD, HEAVENLY FATHER, WE PRAY YOUR PROTECTION OVER OUR COUNTRY, OVER OUR WORLD, OVER ALL OF YOUR CREATION, AS A MATTER OF FACT.

WE PRAY FOR YOUR PROTECTION.

WE PRAY THAT YOU WOULD OPEN OUR HEARTS TO RECEIVE NOT ONLY THE SALVATION THAT WE GET FROM HAVING JESUS AS OUR SAVIOR, BUT HELP US TO FACE UP TO WHAT IT TAKES TO CLAIM JESUS CHRIST AS OUR LORD, THAT THERE ARE SOME THINGS THAT HE EXPECTS OF US. HELP US TO BE WILLING AND GIVE US THE STRENGTH TO MEET THOSE THINGS.

IN YOUR NAME WE PRAY.

AMEN.

AND THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT I'M GOING TO BE TALKING TO YOU ABOUT TODAY.

THE PRAYER WORKS RIGHT INTO OUR TEXT.

YOU MIGHT WANT TO BE OPENING YOUR BIBLES TO MARK 8:27 THROUGH 9:1. IN FACT, WE'RE EVEN GOING TO GO BACK TO MARK 8:22 AND 26, AND LOOK AT SOMETHING THAT SETS UP OUR READING.

AND THE NAME OF MY SERMON IS "WHAT DOES JESUS EXPECT FROM US?"

WE EXPECT A LOT FROM HIM, AND HE HAS DELIVERED EVEN MORE.

I WANT TO START OFF WITH AN ACCOUNT OF A COMEDIAN FROM RUSSIA.
HIS NAME IS YAKOV SMIRNOFF.
AND HE JOKES HE WASN'T READY FOR THE HUGE VARIETY OF GROCERIES WE HAVE IN THIS COUNTRY, AND NOT JUST GROCERIES, BUT INSTANT PRODUCTS.
HE SAID HE SAW POWDERED MILK.
JUST ADD WATER AND YOU'VE GOT MILK.
POWDERED ORANGE JUICE.
JUST ADD WATER AND YOU'VE GOT ORANGE JUICE.
AND THEN HE SAW BABY POWDER, AND HE THOUGHT, WHAT A COUNTRY.
WE KNOW IT DOESN'T WORK LIKE THAT, DOES IT?
A LOT OF US THINK THAT OUR FAITH WORKS LIKE THAT.
WE THINK THAT WE HAVE THIS INSTANT DISCIPLESHIP.
JUST ADD THE WATERS OF OUR BAPTISM AND WE'RE DONE.
JESUS CHRIST GIVES US FAITH THROUGH THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE WATER AND THE WORD, AND THAT'S IT.
WE JUST GET TO HANG OUT AND BASK IN THE SUNSHINE.
BUT THERE IS A LOT MORE TO THAT BECAUSE JESUS CHRIST CANNOT JUST BE OUR SAVIOR IF JESUS CHRIST IS ALSO NOT OUR LORD.
CAN I GET AN AMEN?
EVEN IF IT IS A RELUCTANT AMEN BECAUSE WE DON'T LIKE THESE DEMANDS THAT JESUS IS PUTTING ON OUR LIFE.
IN FACT, THERE ARE TWO DIFFERENT THINGS OF FAITH HERE: THERE IS JUSTIFICATION AND THERE IS SANCTIFICATION.
JUSTIFICATION IS OBJECTIVE.
IT HAPPENED OUTSIDE OF OUR BODIES.
IT HAPPENED WHEN CHRIST DIED ON THE CROSS TO FORGIVE THE SINS OF THE WHOLE WORLD.
AND THEN THROUGH THE HEARING OF THE WORD AND THE WATERS OF OUR BAPTISM, WHEN WE COME TO FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST, WE HAVE ACCESS TO THAT GRACE THROUGH FAITH.
THAT IS A GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.
THAT'S JUSTIFICATION.
BUT THAT DOESN'T -- THAT'S NOT ALL THERE IS.
THERE IS MORE TO THE PROCESS.
IT IS CALLED SANCTIFICATION.
AND SANCTIFICATION IS SUBJECTIVE.
ALL OF US ARE EQUALLY JUSTIFIED.
WE ARE NOT EQUALLY SANCTIFIED.
IN FACT, I'M NOT EQUALLY SANCTIFIED FROM HOUR TO HOUR OR DAY TO DAY.
THERE ARE SOME DAYS THAT I'M LASER-FOCUSED, RIGHT ON, BUT THEN THERE ARE MANY OTHER DAYS WHEN IT IS ALL ABOUT ME GETTING MY WAY.
NOT VERY SANCTIFIED.
SO THE FIRST PRIKOPE -- PRIKOPE JUST MEANS A CUTTING OUT OF SCRIPTURE -- IS IMMEDIATELY BEFORE OUR TEXT.
AND IT IS THE HEALING OF A BLIND MAN A BETHESDA, AND IT STARTS AT VERSE 22.

THEY BROUGHT TO BETHESDA, AND SOME PEOPLE BROUGHT A BLIND MAN AND BEGGED JESUS TO TOUCH HIM.

HE TOOK THE BLIND MAN BY THE HAND AND LED HIM OUTSIDE THE VILLAGE.

WHEN HE HAD SPIT ON THE MAN'S EYES AND PUT HIS HANDS ON HIM, JESUS ASKED, "DO YOU SEE ANYTHING?"

HE LOOKED UP AND SAID, "I SEE PEOPLE.

THEY LOOK LIKE TREES WALKING AROUND."

ONCE MORE JESUS PUT HIS HANDS ON THE MAN'S EYES, AND HIS EYES WERE OPENED; HIS SIGHT WAS RESTORED.

AND HE SAW EVERYTHING CLEARLY.

JESUS SENT HIM HOME SAYING, "DON'T GO INTO THE VILLAGE."

THIS IS THE WORD OF THE LORD.

SO CHRIST TAKES A TWO-STEP.

AND WE'RE GOING TO SEE THAT -- KEEP THAT IN MIND AS WE READ THE GOSPEL.

AND THIS READING IS ONLY IN THE BOOK OF MARK, THIS TWO-PART HEALING OF THIS MAN FROM BETHESDA.

IT IS ONLY IN THE GOSPEL OF MARK.

MATTHEW AND JOHN DO NOT HAVE THIS PARTICULAR HEALING.

SO WE'RE GOING TO PICK UP WITH OUR READING.

IT'S GOING ON TO VERSE 27, MARK 8.

"JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES WENT ON TO THE VILLAGE AROUND CAESAREA PHILIPPI.

ON THE WAY, HE ASKED THEM, 'WHO DO PEOPLE SAY THAT I AM?'

"THEY REPLIED, 'SOME SAY JOHN THE BAPTIST, OTHERS SAY ELIJAH, AND STILL OTHERS, ONE OF THE PROPHETS.'

"BUT WHAT ABOUT YOU," JESUS ASKED?

"WHO DO YOU SAY THAT I AM?"

PETER ANSWERED, "YOU ARE THE CHRIST."

JESUS WARNED THEM NOT TO TELL ANYONE ABOUT HIM.

HE THEN BEGAN TO TEACH THEM THAT THE SON OF MAN MUST SUFFER MANY THINGS AND BE REJECTED BY THE ELDERS' CHIEF PRIESTS AND TEACHERS OF THE LAW, AND THAT HE MUST BE KILLED.

AND AFTER THREE DAYS HE MUST RISE AGAIN.

HE SPOKE PLAINLY ABOUT THIS.

AND PETER TOOK HIM ASIDE AND BEGAN TO REBUKE HIM.

BUT WHEN JESUS TURNED AND LOOKED AT HIS DISCIPLES, HE REBUKED PETER.

"GET BEHIND ME, SATAN," HE SAID.

"YOU DO NOT HAVE IN MIND THE THINGS OF GOD BUT THE THINGS OF MAN."

THEN HE CALLED THE CROWD -- AND WHENEVER JESUS DOES THIS, IT IS NOT JUST SOME ESOTERIC REVELATION.

THIS IS NOT A MESSAGE THAT IS JUST FOR THE FEW CHOSEN DISCIPLES.

THIS IS A MESSAGE FOR EVERYONE: THE DISCIPLES, THE CROWDS, YOU AND I, EVERYONE.

AND THEN HE CALLED THE CROWD TO HIM, ALONG WITH HIS DISCIPLES, AND SAID, "IF ANYONE WOULD COME AFTER ME" -- THIS IS WHAT JESUS EXPECTS OF US.

"IF ANYONE WOULD COME AFTER ME, HE MUST DENY HIMSELF AND TAKE UP HIS CROSS AND FOLLOW ME.

FOR WHOEVER WANTS TO SAVE HIS LIFE WILL LOSE IT.

BUT WHOEVER LOSES HIS LIFE FOR ME AND FOR THE GOSPEL, WILL SAVE IT.

WHAT GOOD IS IT FOR A MAN TO GAIN THE WHOLE WORLD AND YET FORFEIT HIS SOUL?

OR WHAT CAN A MAN GIVE IN EXCHANGE FOR HIS SOUL?

IF ANYONE IS ASHAMED OF ME AND MY WORDS IN THIS ADULTERESS AND SINFUL

GENERATION, THE SON OF MAN WILL BE ASHAMED OF HIM WHEN HE COMES IN HIS FATHER'S GLORY WITH THE HOLY ANGELS.

AND HE SAID TO THEM, 'I TELL YOU THE TRUTH: SOME WHO ARE STANDING HERE WILL NOT TASTE DEATH BEFORE THEY SEE THE KINGDOM OF GOD COME WITH POWER.'"

THIS IS THE GOSPEL OF OUR LORD.

SO JESUS ASKED THE DISCIPLES, "WHO DO PEOPLE SAY THAT I AM?"

AND HE GAVE AN ACCOUNTING OF THE OPINIONS OF THE DAY.

AND THEN HE LOOKED AT THEM, JUST LIKE HE LOOKS AT US, AND SAYS, "WHAT ABOUT YOU?

WHO DO YOU SAY THAT I AM?"

JESUS SPOKE UP FOR HIS DISCIPLES, AND HOPEFULLY FOR YOU AND I, TOO.

I HOPE WE CAN JOIN IN THAT.

IN FACT, LET'S SAY IT TOGETHER.

WHO DO YOU SAY JESUS IS?

YOU ARE THE CHRIST.

HE IS THE MESSIAH.

YOU SEE PETER GOT IT RIGHT, BUT YET HE WAS WAY WRONG.

HE THOUGHT HE HAD IT RIGHT.

HE HAD IT IN HIS OWN MIND WHAT IT WOULD BE FOR THE MESSIAH TO COME.

HE WAS THINKING THAT IT WAS GOING TO BE LIKE ANOTHER GENERAL PATTON, LEADING THE TANK BRIGADE TO DESTROY THE ENEMY, TO WIPE THEM OUT, AND EVEN THOUGH THEY ARE OUTNUMBERED, GOD IS WITH THEM AND THEY WILL PREVAIL.

AND THEN THEY WILL BE IN A POSITION OF POWER AND GLORY.

WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?

WELL, JESUS POPS HIS BUBBLE.

HE POPS IT AND TELLS THEM WHAT IT MEANS, THAT HE IS NOT THAT KIND OF MESSIAH.

HE IS THE SUFFERING SERVANT.

NO MATTER HOW PASSIONATE YOU ARE ABOUT YOUR BELIEF ABOUT WHAT THE MESSIAH SHOULD BE, GOD HAD ANOTHER PLAN.

AND AREN'T YOU GLAD THAT HE DID?

BECAUSE IT WASN'T JUST FOR THAT TIME.

IT'S FOR ALL OF ETERNITY THAT CHRIST WENT TO THE CROSS, SUFFERED AND DIED FOR US.

BUT THEN DON'T FORGET THE REST OF THE STORY.

DON'T FORGET THE GOSPEL.

BECAUSE HE WAS RAISED AGAIN BACK TO LIFE.

PRAISE GOD.

SO PETER HAD ANOTHER IDEA.

SO JESUS STRAIGHTENS HIM OUT, AND HE SAYS, "GET BEHIND ME, SATAN."
YOU SEE, IT IS A TEMPTATION.
I TALKED ABOUT TEMPTATIONS LAST WEEK.
JESUS WAS TEMPTED IN THE WILDERNESS TO DO SOMETHING TO SAVE HIM FROM THE CROSS.
HE SAID, JUST BOW DOWN TO ME AND I'LL GIVE YOU ALL OF THESE KINGDOMS.
AND HE SAID, TURN THESE STONES INTO BREAD AND EAT.
YOU'VE BEEN FASTING FOR 40 DAYS.
HE SAID, THROW YOURSELF OFF THE HIGHEST TEMPLE BECAUSE THE ANGELS WILL NOT ALLOW
YOUR FOOT TO BE DASHED AGAINST THE STONE AND GOD WILL PRESERVE YOU.
YOU WILL BE FAMOUS.
ALL OF THESE TEMPTATIONS THAT JESUS RESISTED, AND NOW HERE IS ANOTHER ONE: TAKE
THE GLORY WITHOUT THE CROSS.
PETER WAS SAYING, LET'S GO BACK TO GALILEE.
LET'S NOT GO TO JERUSALEM.
THEY HATE YOU IN JERUSALEM.
THEY WANT TO MURDER YOU IN JERUSALEM.
LET'S GO BACK TO GALILEE, WHERE THEY LOVE YOU, WHERE YOU'RE A BIG HIT, WHERE WE CAN
JUST BE COMFORTABLE.
GO BACK TO GALILEE.
BUT I THINK JESUS WENT TO JERUSALEM BECAUSE ALL OF US WILL HAVE TO GO TO JERUSALEM
AS WELL.
SOME DAY WE WILL GO THERE, TOO.
WE MIGHT NOT WANT TO GO THERE, BUT WE'LL END UP THERE.
IT MIGHT NOT BE WHAT WE SIGNED UP FOR.
IT'S LIKE THIS STORY ABOUT GEORGIAN JOHNSON, WHO WAS GOING TO TURN 42 YEARS OLD
AND DECIDED SHE WAS GOING TO DO EVERYTHING SHE COULD TO KEEP HERSELF FIT.
SHE GOES, IF I'M GOING TO BE 42, I'M GOING TO LOOK A GOOD 42.
SO SHE STARTED TO RUN.
SHE STARTED RUNNING FASTER AND FARTHER.
AND SHE DECIDED TO ENTER A COMPETITION.
SO SHE SIGNED UP FOR THE CLEVELAND 10K RUN.
SHE GOT THERE A LITTLE EARLY AND WAS STRETCHING WHEN ALL OF A SUDDEN SHE HEARD,
RACERS TO THE STARTING MARK, AND BAM, AND OFF THEY WENT.
SHE WAS SURPRISED AT HOW MANY PEOPLE WERE THERE.
AND AS THEY'RE RUNNING, SHE GETS TO MILE FOUR, AND SHE THINKS, THIS IS A 6.2-MILE
RACE, FOUR MILES IS OVER HALF OF THAT, AND WE HAVEN'T STARTED TO TURN AROUND YET.
SO SHE WENT TO TALK TO A RACE OFFICIAL.
AND THE RACE OFFICIAL SAID, OH, MY, THIS IS THE CLEVELAND MARATHON.
YOU'RE RUNNING 26.2 MILES.
THE 10K STARTS A HALF HOUR AFTER THE MARATHON.
SO WHAT DO YOU DO?
NOT THE RACE YOU SIGNED UP FOR.
BUT TO HER CREDIT, SHE FINISHED THE RACE.
SHE DID IT.

SHE COMPLETED IT.

SHE LIVED UP TO THE CHALLENGE.

AND SOMETIMES IT IS NOT THE RACE THAT WE SIGN UP FOR, IT'S NOT THE LIFE THAT WE SIGNED UP FOR, BECAUSE WE SIGNED UP FOR GALILEE, AMEN?

WE SIGNED UP TO THE PLACE WHERE WE LEARNED OUR FAITH, THE BEGINNING OF IT, OUR BAPTISM, THE SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES, THE YOUTH GROUP CAMPHOUSE WHERE WE HAD S'MORES AND SAT AROUND THE FIRE AND TOLD BIBLE STORIES AND JOKES AND SANG SONGS AND JUST FELT GOOD IN EACH OTHER'S PRESENCE AND IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD.

AND THEN AS WE GREW UP, IN BIBLE CLASSES, WHERE WE GO AROUND THE ROOM AND EVERYBODY SHARES THEIR BLESSINGS AND THEIR CHALLENGES, AND WE GET TO KNOW PEOPLE AND IT IS COMFORTABLE; IT'S SAFE.

THAT'S FINE.

THAT'S STAYING IN GALILEE.

BUT JESUS CALLS US OUT OF GALILEE.

WE MIGHT THINK WE'RE RUNNING A 10K RACE, BUT WE END UP IN A MARATHON, AMEN?

IT'S NOT THE RACE YOU SIGNED UP FOR, BUT IT IS THE RACE YOU GOT.

YOU GO TO THE DOCTOR'S OFFICE, AND THAT LITTLE PAIN THAT YOU HAD IN YOUR STOMACH IS PANCREATIC CANCER.

YOU'RE IN JERUSALEM.

YOU DIDN'T ASK FOR IT.

YOU GET MARRIED, AND YOU NEVER EVER EXPECT ANYTHING TO GO WRONG.

YOU MAKE YOUR VOWS TO DEATH DO US PART, BUT THEN DESTRUCTION COMES INTO YOUR MARRIAGE; YOU'RE AT EACH OTHER'S THROATS.

YOU CAN'T WAIT TO GET AWAY FROM EACH OTHER AND TO DIVORCE.

ALL OF A SUDDEN YOU'RE IN JERUSALEM.

IT'S NOT WHAT YOU HAD PLANNED.

YOU'VE GOT A JOB FOR A MAJOR COMPANY.

YOU'RE MOVING TOWARDS RETIREMENT.

YOU HAVE YOUR EYE ON THIS BEAUTIFUL PENSION.

BUT, WAIT, YOU'VE GOT FIVE MORE YEARS TO GO BEFORE YOUR PENSION STARTS AND THEY LAY YOU OFF AND OUTSOURCE YOUR JOB TO CHINA OR MEXICO OR KOREA OR INDIA, OR ANY OTHER PLACE.

THEY OUTSOURCE YOUR JOB, AND NOW YOU'RE LEFT OUT IN THE COLD.

YOU'RE 60 YEARS OLD, YOU'VE DONE THIS JOB FOR A LONG TIME, AND WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?

YOU'RE IN JERUSALEM.

YOU WORK YOUR WHOLE LIFE, YOU AND YOUR WIFE, AND YOU'RE PLANNING YOUR RETIREMENT DAY.

THE YEAR OF RETIREMENT DAY ONE OF THE SPOUSES DIES, AND NOW WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?

ALL THAT TIME WHEN YOU COULD HAVE BEEN TAKING YOUR VACATIONS TOGETHER, BUT INSTEAD YOU WAITED UNTIL THE END, UNTIL YOU RETIRED, WHEN YOU CAN HAVE THIS BIG NEST EGG AND YOU CAN TRAVEL AND DO WHATEVER YOU WANTED.

BUT YOU DIDN'T.

YOU WERE SAVING IT.
AND THEN ONE OF THE SPOUSES PASSES AWAY.
YOU FIND YOURSELF IN JERUSALEM.
YOU FIND YOURSELF ALONE.
YOU FIND YOURSELF WITH A BIG HOLE IN YOUR HEART.
YOU FIND YOURSELF QUESTIONING YOUR RELIGION.
HOW COULD GOD DO THIS TO ME -- HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT THAT, HOW COULD GOD DO THIS TO ME?
YOU KNOW WHAT, PEOPLE?
GOD DOESN'T DO IT TO YOU.
GOD DOESN'T PROMISE EVERYTHING WILL COME UP ROSES, NO.
JESUS SAID, "IN THIS LIFE THERE WILL BE TROUBLE, BUT BE OF GOOD CHEER, I HAVE OVERCOME THE WORLD."
WHAT GOD PROMISES IS THAT THERE IS A RESURRECTION AT THE END OF THIS LIFE.
WHAT GOD DOES PROMISE US IS THAT GOD WILL WALK WITH US THROUGH EVERY STEP THAT WE TAKE ON OUR WAY TO JERUSALEM AND OUR TIME IN JERUSALEM, THAT CHRIST WILL BE PRESENT WITH US.
"I WILL NEVER LEAVE YOU NOR FORSAKE YOU.
I WILL BE WITH YOU ALWAYS, EVEN UNTIL THE VERY END OF THE AGE."
SOME PEOPLE SAY IN HARD TIMES THAT THEIR RELIGION HAS LET THEM DOWN.
THE TRUTH IS: RELIGION SHOWS US THE WAY THROUGH.
A RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS CHRIST, HE WALKED THAT PATH AND HE CALLS US TO WALK THAT PATH WITH HIM.
NOW WHAT DOES JESUS ASK OF US?
FIRST OF ALL, HE SAYS TO DENY YOURSELF.
SAY NO TO SELFISHNESS.
BE A LITTLE LESS PRIDEFUL.
IT'S NOT ALWAYS ABOUT YOU.
IT'S NOT ABOUT ME.
SAY NO TO YOURSELF.
DENY YOURSELF.
PICK UP YOUR CROSS AND FOLLOW ME.
NOW, THE CROSS IS NOT SOMETHING THAT I WENT TO THE DOCTOR AND I GOT PANCREATIC CANCER -- YOU DIDN'T ASK FOR THAT.
THAT IS JUST SOMETHING THAT YOU GOT.
THAT IS JUST LIFE THAT YOU BEAR.
PICKING UP YOUR CROSS MEANS LIVING OUTSIDE OF YOURSELF.
IT MEANS LIVING FROM THE INSIDE OUT.
IT MEANS WE TAKE SERIOUSLY WHAT PAUL WROTE, "WHEN WE RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT, WE WILL NO LONGER BE CONFORMED TO THE PATTERNS OF THE WORLD, BUT WE WILL BE TRANSFORMED INWARDLY BY THE RENEWING OF OUR HOLY SPIRIT."
IT IS LIKE THIS GUY WHO HAD A TREE THAT WAS GROWING CLOSE TO HIS DRIVEWAY AND IT KEPT LEANING CLOSER AND CLOSER, AND HE WAS AFRAID THAT ONE DAY IT MIGHT FALL OVER WITH SOME WINDS.

SO HE CALLED AN ARBORIST. THE ARBORIST CAME AND CUT IT DOWN.
AND WHEN HE CUT IT DOWN, HE DISCOVERED THAT THERE WAS ONLY ABOUT AN INCH OF
BARK ALL THE WAY AROUND IT HOLDING IT UP.
THE WHOLE INSIDE HAD BEEN ROTTED OUT.
THAT IS A PICTURE OF US WHEN WE LIVE FOR OURSELVES.
THE NEXT THING HE DOES IS, HE SAYS, IF YOU'RE TRYING TO SAVE YOUR LIFE, YOU'LL LOSE
YOUR LIFE.
BUT IF YOU LOSE YOUR LIFE FOR HIM, YOU WILL FIND IT.
PETER HAD IT BACKWARDS.
HE WAS CONNECTING JESUS TO HIS OWN HOPES AND DREAMS.
WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?
LIKE I SAID BEFORE, THAT'S SATAN'S TEMPTATION TO US ALL: WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?
I'M NUMBER ONE.
AFTER ME, YOU COME NEXT.
JESUS IS NUMBER ONE.
WE'RE SOMEWHERE AFTER THAT.
AND THIS ISN'T ABOUT A SACRIFICIAL LIFE THAT IS GOING TO LEAVE US EMPTY AND WANTING.
IF YOU'RE JUST GIVING UP STUFF TO BE GIVING UP STUFF, YEAH, YOU'RE GOING TO FEEL LOST,
YOU'RE GOING TO FEEL EMPTINESS.
BUT IF YOU'RE GIVING UP STUFF BECAUSE CHRIST HAS SEIZED YOU, BECAUSE THE LOVE OF
JESUS HAS COMPELLED YOU, IT IS GOING TO MAKE ALL OF THE DIFFERENCE IN THE WORLD.
YOU'RE NOT GOING TO FIND ANY EMPTINESS IN THAT.
YOU'RE GOING TO FIND WHOLENESS.
YOU'RE GOING TO FIND SATISFACTION.
YOU'RE GOING TO FIND PURPOSE.
AND YOU'RE GOING TO KNOW HOW MUCH YOU ARE LOVED BY GOD.
WHAT GOOD DOES IT DO TO GAIN THE WHOLE WORLD AND LOSE YOUR SOUL?
FOR WHAT WOULD A PERSON GIVE IN EXCHANGE FOR THEIR SOULS?
I SAW A BUMPER STICKER ONE TIME THAT SAID, "WHOEVER DIES WITH THE MOST TOYS
WINS."
YOU WIN NOTHING.
YOU WIN NOTHING.
SOLOMON WROTE IN THE BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES, "EVERYTHING IS MEANINGLESS UNDER THE
SUN."
AND "UNDER THE SUN" IS A METAPHOR FOR APART FROM GOD.
WHEN YOU'RE CLOSE TO GOD IN THE TEMPLE, YOU'RE IN THE SHADE.
BUT EVERYTHING UNDER THE SUN IS AWAY FROM GOD.
HE SAYS, WHAT DOES IT MATTER IF I GAIN ALL OF THESE THINGS AND THEN I DIE, WHO IS
GOING TO GET WHAT I WORKED SO HARD FOR?
IT IS MEANINGLESS.
IT IS MEANINGLESS.
AND IT IS TRUE.
JESUS SAID THIS GREAT ADVICE TO US: "DO NOT STORE YOUR TREASURES HERE ON EARTH
WHERE MOths CAN EAT AND RUST CAN DESTROY.

RATHER, STORE YOUR TREASURES IN HEAVEN, WHERE MONTHS CANNOT ATTACK AND RUST CANNOT DESTROY."

HE SAID, "SEEK YEE FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND ALL OF THESE THINGS WILL BE ADDED TO YOU."

YOU SEE HOW IT IS PUTTING HIM FIRST?

AND THESE THINGS ARE GIVEN TO US.

YOU KNOW, I'VE TRIED MANY YEARS TO BE HAPPY.

I TRIED TO HAVE A GREAT CAR.

I WAS HAPPY FOR A LITTLE WHILE.

I HAD A BEAUTIFUL CAR.

THE BEST LAWN, I WAS OUT THERE WORKING ON IT ALL OF THE TIME.

I TRIED TO HAVE MANY THINGS, AND IT ONLY LASTS FOR A LITTLE BIT.

AND HAPPINESS IS VERY FLEETING.

BUT YOU KNOW WHAT I DISCOVERED?

THAT TRUE HAPPINESS IS A BY-PRODUCT OF LIVING RIGHT WITH GOD.

IT IS JUST SOMETHING THAT HAPPENS WHEN I GIVE IT UP, FOCUS ON CHRIST, AND THEN I LOOK AROUND AND I GO, MAN, I AM SO HAPPY.

WE WANT TO GET IT RIGHT BUT SO OFTEN WE HAVE IT UPSIDE DOWN.

IT IS REALLY NOT ABOUT YOU.

I EXPERIENCE FREEDOM UNDERSTANDING THAT IT TRULY IS NOT ABOUT ME, ABOUT WHAT I ACCOMPLISHED, HOW I CAN BRING GLORY TO MYSELF.

PUT THAT ASIDE AND JUST LIVE FOR MY LOVING, MERCIFUL, KIND, BEAUTIFUL SAVIOR.

WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?

THAT'S OUR DAILY QUESTION ABOUT OURSELVES AND THE CHRISTIAN FAITH.

SINCE CHRISTIANS SEEM WILLING TO ANSWER OUR QUESTION, LIKE THE PROSPERITY GOSPEL -- SOME CHRISTIANS ARE WILLING TO OFFER US A VERSION OF CHRISTIANITY THAT FOCUSES PRIMARILY ON OUR OWN GAIN.

SOME CHRISTIANS JUST SAY DONATE TO THIS MINISTRY AND YOU'LL BE PROSPEROUS.

IF YOU JUST DO THIS AND THIS AND THIS, YOU'RE GOING TO BE COMPLETELY CURED.

SOME CHRISTIANS OFFER US ONLY GAIN WITH NO LOSS.

SOME CHRISTIANS OFFER US ONLY VICTORY WITHOUT THE CROSS.

WE ARE TEMPTED, AS JESUS WAS TEMPTED, TO REACH OUT TO THIS CROSSLESS VERSION OF OBEDIENCE TO GOD'S WILL.

WE NEED TO SAY TO SUCH A TEMPTATION WHAT JESUS SAID TO PETER, "GET BEHIND ME, SATAN."

GOD TURNS OUR QUESTIONS AND OUR EXPECTATIONS OF LIFE UPSIDE DOWN.

AMEN?

GOD IN JESUS CHRIST OFFERS US PERSONAL VICTORY THROUGH TAKING UP OUR CROSS.

IT IS IN TAKING UP OUR CROSS, IN TAKING UP A SYMBOL OF DEATH, THAT WE FIND LIFE.

IT IS LOSING OUR LIVES FOR THE SAKE OF THE GOSPEL THAT WE FIND OUR LIVES.

IT IS UPSIDE DOWN.

IT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE BUT IT WORKS.

IT IS IN GIVING THAT WE RECEIVE.

IT IS IN LOSING THAT WE WIN.

IT IS BY DYING THAT WE ARE BORN TO ETERNAL LIFE.
AND SO WE TAKE UP OUR CROSS.
WE GIVE OUR LIVES AWAY AS WE WALK THE PATH OF SUFFERING WITH JESUS.
AND OUR LIVES ARE GIVEN BACK TO US FOR ALL ETERNITY.
THAT, MY FRIENDS, IS WHAT IS IN CHRISTIANITY FOR ME AND FOR YOU.
AND MAY THE PEACE OF GOD THAT SURPASSES ALL HUMAN UNDERSTANDING GUARD YOUR
HEARTS AND MINDS IN CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD.
AMEN.