

LIVING FOR ETERNITY

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1. PRINCIPLES FOR ETERNITY

This morning we begin a new series called Living for Eternity. We have taught series on principles of success on this earth. Finally total success not only in terms of what happen on the earth but what happen in eternity. After we are born again we realized that we have an eternal home in heaven. God has a tremendous storehouse of blessings for us to enjoy, to participate in eternity for thousands and thousands of years in eternity we are going to live with God. Jesus did say a few statements here that we want to read as we introduce this subject.

In the book of John 15:19 “If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but **I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.**”

Jesus says that although we are in the world but we are not of the world. So there must be a difference in our goals, in our principles that we adhere to that will cause us to rise to please God. We also want to read II Cor. 5:9-11 “Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. Knowing therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men, but we are well known to God, and I also trust are well known in your consciences.”

There is a judgment of believers. We know that there are different types of judgments. There is a judgment of believers, the judgment of the saints, not for salvation but for reward. For as long as we are born again, we are saved, but the question is whether we are rewarded up there.

Sometimes Christians may not be rewarded in heaven although they maybe saved. They may lose all of their reward, as we will see in I Corinthians later on. But there is a reward up there and those who build their works on hay and wood in the judgment of believers will find themselves without any reward. The reason for this series is that we do not want any single here or those who hear these worlds reach the shore of eternity and find out that you have no reward. It will be the most awesome, embarrassing moment of your life in eternity. You will not know what to say. You will not know what to do; you can't change what has been established for there is a judgment of believers that we must live for, that we must live conscious of that. But many times as we live our lives on this earth we get caught in the affairs of this life. We forget to have eternity in our hearts or live for it in eternity. There are four basic areas of principles that we want to focus on as we look into this series this morning “Living for Eternity.”

First of all, we want to consider the book of I Cor. 3:10 onwards to verse 15. He is not talking about the unbelievers. There are different types of judgment. There is a judgment of believers. There is a judgment on nations and there is an eternal White Throne judgment. There are judgments of believers that are referred to in verse 10 onwards.

“According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. For no other foundation can anyone lay that that which is laid, which is

Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it."

Now that Day is the judgment of believers. Sometimes the word Day or judgment day refers to the judgment on nations. Sometimes it refers to the eternal White Throne judgment. Why doesn't it refer to the White Throne judgment because the White Throne judgment is not going to judge the works but going to judge whether a person has received Jesus Christ or not. For all the works of a sinner are unrighteous, but here is a judgment of believers where everyone's works will be judged, will become manifest for the Day. Now its not that everyone did not do some work but is that everyone has done some work but it's the quality of the work. The wise man and the foolish man in the book of Matthew 7, both built houses. It was not that the foolish man was lazy. He worked as hard as the wise man to build a house. Of course the wise may work a bit harder because he built on the rock and may need harder foundation. But basically the foolish man also did a lot of work to build the house. It is the foundation that makes the difference and not just the absence of work.

It says "every work will be revealed by fire and the fire will test each one work or what sort it is." The quality. Verse 14, "If anyone's work which he has built on endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss, but he himself will be saved." Notice he is a believer he will be saved but he has no reward. Yet so as through fire.

Howard Pitman, the man who wrote 'Demons and Eye witness account' lived his life as a nominal Christian and reasonably successful but when he met Jesus Christ in a sort of encounter and vision, the first thing that happened was a fire that came out from Jesus Christ and burned his entire life's work. And there naked before the Lord, he said, 'God! I have visited the poor. I have done charity. I have done this.' And as he said that all those works appeared before him and in a moment of time fire came out and burned all of them. He stood stunned not knowing what to answer God. What is our answer to Him when that happens? From that day forward, he **learned that many of what we qualify to be success is not success in God's sight**. He examined his life and the Lord gave him a chance. He came back and that's how he started his ministry. But here we see that is the quality of work. Whether it be silver, gold, precious stones or wood, hay, straw, how do we determine the quality? That's principle number one. It is not just what we do, but it's why we do it. If it's our motivation that determines our reward in heaven. Something outwardly can look nice, even charitable, even benevolent, but if the motivation is not of love, is not for the sake of Jesus Christ, its wood and hay. Its of no value and has no power to stand in eternity.

The book of I Corinthians 13:3 "And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing." There is no reward. There is no profit although on this earth such works like giving your body to be burned is very noble. If we all realize how much God value the reason why we do our things or do the things we do and not just what we do we will be more careful about it. We will not just jump into something just because it is good. We want to examine ourselves in the sight of God. "God examine my heart, search my heart O God, know my heart, try my way." Why am I doing the things I do? What is my motivation for doing all those things? Whether there be good works, whether

there be works in society, whether there be areas in our career, why do we do those things we do? May God change our hearts, motivate our hearts so that the only reason that we do whatever we do is born out of a desire to love, out of a desire to help, out of the desire to show the manifested Christ in our life, out of the desire to bless humanity but never out of the desire to be selfish or out of the desire for attention or out of a desire for recognition. All the works that are done for recognition are burned. For recognition is pride and self covered in sheep clothing.

Paul says in I Corinthians 13:13 “And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.”

God wants a divine flow of love to come forth in our heart that we be able to be motivated by it all the time. Pursue love in verse 1 chapter 14. “Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.” We always see the second part desires covet after spiritual gifts. But notice the first part, it says pursue it. Pursue means it’s something you got to chase. It’s something you have to make an effort, to love people, to sacrifice, to follow the flow of love in our heart. There will always be a divine flow of love after we are born again. Roman chapter 5 tells us that the love of God has been poured into our hearts and that will from time to time want to flow forth in different ways. We need to be sensitive to that flow of love.

Let me read Romans 5 again. The day that we are born again God has placed His love in our hearts, we need to be sensitive to that love. Verse 3, “We also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.”

Now notice why does he say in verse 5 hope does not disappoint? What sort of hope is he talking about? The hope of meeting Christ even though the judgment seat of Christ is not mentioned. The purpose in Romans 5 is that the love of God in his heart will flow forth, whatever he did flow from love. And then the love helped him to overcome tribulations, developed his character and it produced hope. Hope knowing that even though Paul said on this earth he had tribulations. A lot of things that he did born out of love were not accepted. A lot of things that he did born out of pure love for humanity. A lot of sacrifices he had made were not recognized. All these things, Paul said, in tribulations his character grows because he knew he did it for the love of Christ. And as he grew in his life, there is a hope for he knew one day everything he did out of love that has not been accepted by the generation that he lived in, one day he is going to meet face to face with Jesus and that hope will not disappoint. That hope came out of that love that was shed abroad in his heart.

We need to be sensitive to the divine flow of love. There will be times in your life that the love of Jesus bubbles forth. Sometimes He may say I want you to do this for this person. But if you say, ‘God! I am busy.’ But the love flows forth and the divine flow of love says ‘I want you to do this. I want you to do that. I want you to call this person. I want you to write to this person and encourage him/her. I want you to show love here. I want you to do this.’ There is a flow that bubbles forth. We need to be sensitive to the divine flow of love for that is where our eternal reward lies. It’s not a question of just what we do but why we do it. Whenever you do anything for God, whether it be out in the secular world or whether it be in the spiritual ministry, we need to examine our motives. Why do we want to preach? Why do we want to

minister? Why do we want to lay hands on the sick? Why, why, why? Because sometimes the motivation may not be what it is.

I know many young ministers as they launched forth, they prayed for signs and wonders but the motivation for signs and wonders is not to bless humanity, not because of the love for the sick but it is to establish their own ministry. And as a result it never happen. They did everything according to the formula of faith but it never worked. It didn't happen exactly the way they wanted. Why? Because God works through our motivation. Many people desire Kathryn Khulman's anointing. They want the same kind of establishment of recognition but there is a difference. When Kathryn Khulman moves in the gifts of the Spirit, she did it because of the love she felt for the sick, for the dying and for the Lord. You read her book 'A Glimpse of Glory'; it mentioned that before the miracles happen, she used to visit other ministers who are having healing ministry. She sees them doing all kinds of weird thing. She sees them selling pieces of the tent, doing this and doing that, giving gimmicks to try to promote their ministry but the sick was never healed. Every night she went back and she cried. She said 'Lord, where are You?' Those who work close to her know that after the healing service she used to go back and cried. One day somebody found her and said, 'Why do you cry, there are so many miracles?' She said, 'she cried for the others who were not healed.' And all her life she had the desire to see everyone healed in her services and she never got it. She wanted to reach that stage in that level. Perhaps it's for some of us here to move into that. But all her life she wanted that and although she saw many miracles after the miracle service, Buckingham found her crying. Why did she cry, because she performed miracles not to establish her ministry. She performed miracles because it started from her heart that cries for the sick. Her motivation was the love of God. In the book 'Glimpse of Glory' she said every time when she sees a sick person, she felt if she could, she would die and give her life to that person to live. That's the kind of love she moved into. I believed she had her reward up in heaven.

It's important for us to establish that. I say this because I feel it's necessary to say it in our day, in our time, in our move of God up to this day. Sometimes ministers push people. They do things to gain attention. Slain in the Spirit has come to a stage where people have begun to push it to gain attention. It has become almost acceptable among ministers. I want you to know if people move into that and continue to do so, and people excuse them and they excuse themselves but God won't excuse them. They will finally move in a way that the anointing will disperse and disappear. Why do people push? Because they want to establish themselves. That's their only motivation. They want people to say, hi, there is something happening. Let God demonstrate that something happening. Not you or I. We want to follow the strictness in the Spirit. I know in my spirit, if you were to be faithful to draw forth the anointing of God, to draw forth from the reservoir from our heart, God will manifest the fullness of the miracles that He wants to. We will see signs that we have never seen before. We need to have the right motivation. That is point no. 1: Why do we do it.

Point no. 2 is related and it's important. Besides why we need to what I call have a sense of duty or obligation to what He has given to us. That works with the why. Point no. 2, Matthew 25:14 onwards. "For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each

according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey. Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents. And likewise he who had received two gained two more also. But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord's money. After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them. So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, 'Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.' His lord said to them, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord. He also who had received two talents came and said, 'Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them.' His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.' Then he who had received the one talent came and said, 'Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours.' But his lord answered and said to him, 'You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest. Therefore take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents.'

The first is our motivation. Why we do the thing we do. The second is what I call faithfulness to His gifts and talents in our life.

Living for eternity means that we have to discover what talents and gifts that God has asked you to be faithful with. The talents here can represent spiritual gifting in your life. The talents here could represent a natural talent in your life and what God is asking of us if we want to live for eternity. We are to understand what we are supposed to do with the gifts or talents in our life and be faithful to it for the rest of our life. Whether we accepted or rejected, whether we are recognized or not recognized, we are to discover it and be faithful in public and in private. In times of cheering, in times of jeering to be faithful on to God. That means business talent, that means natural gift talent. That means spiritual gifts and offices. Point no.2 is faithfulness. Which means that if there is a gift or talent that God has placed in your life, you have been too busy about the things of this world to develop, in eternity you will have regret. You will lose some rewards for your lack of faithfulness to those talents God has for you. If you will realize that the talents we have and the gift we have in our lives is not just for an organization, is not just for pleasing some people, is not just to gain attention from the world but is that God requires it of us for the day He made us. The day He created us He has given us talents. Notice here that even though the talents may be different in proportion but every single one has some talents. Some one, some two, some five and some ten. Every one of us has talents in our lives. Those talents have been given by heaven and we are required to be faithful to heaven on those things that God has placed on our lives. Sometimes you may feel like being faithful. Sometimes you don't feel like being faithful but we have to be faithful. Which is why if God has a call on your life come what may you have to stick to it. If God has a direction in your life and He has spoken to you about certain area or talent in business, then you have to be faithful to it to develop it. Not so that you will reap on this earth but so that you could answer before God when God says, 'My son or My

daughter, I have given you this talent. What have you done with it? Have you used it? Have you done something about it?' If your answer is Lord, I have been faithful. Then God will say, 'Enter thou into the joy of the Lord, for you have been faithful with a few things, you will have much more.'

In order to be faithful we need to know what our talents and our gifting are. It's not as easy to put into practice as it sound. You just talk about it because I do know that to develop a talent, to develop a gift in your life, it takes discipline too. It's not just that you have it and you just flow with it. You could have a gift and be lazy about it. Notice what cause faithfulness. The Lord says here in Matthew 25:26 "You wicked and lazy servant." Wickedness has to do with spending time on the wrong things instead of developing the talent. This servant must be spending the time on all the wrong things. He can not be spending his time just sleeping. He must be doing something on this earth. There are a lot of things on this earth that will rob you of your time. All of us have been given twenty-four hours. There are a lot of things that rob our time. We need to realize that there are robbers not only of goods and material things. There are robbers of time. There are things that take our time away from developing our talents. We need to guard ourselves against robbers. Everyone here is careful about robbery. Although we know Psalms 91 will protect us yet you do a little bit of minimum thing. Like for example, you normally do lock your car. You normally do lock your house. You normally do the small little precaution. You don't want to put sign on your door 'welcome thief' and say I am alright, I am protected because Psalms 91 says so. Do you know that I do not lock my door, etc? You are not going to announce it. You do your minimum requirement. But have you ever consider there are robbers of time? Sometimes other people who are undisciplined will rob you of your time because they themselves do not know how to use their time carefully. We need to realize that time is your most precious commodity. It's the most precious commodity. With that time you could develop the proper talents that God has placed upon your life. It will make a difference to the reward that God brings into your life.

Here, the first is wickedness. Spending time on the wrong things. The second is laziness. Pure laziness is a lack of discipline. If God has called you to the business world, discover all the principles in that area. Meditate on those principles in that area. If God had called you to the music ministry, you got to spend time developing that gift in your life. If God has called you into a preaching ministry, spend whatever you can the time developing the gift in your life. If God has called you into the healing ministry then you got to do everything you can to look into the ministry gift of healing that God has placed upon your life. We need to be faithful. Faithfulness means three areas. You will do it even nobody does it. You will do it even nobody tells you to do it. You will do it even nobody recognizes that you do it. That's faithfulness. Faithfulness no.2 means that you will do it above in priority to every other thing in your life. It means that you will budget your time. It means that you will choose priority to develop that area rather than other areas that may eat up your talent. The third faithfulness means that you will seek out books, tapes, people who will help you into those areas. The five talents man did it. The two talents man did it. Only the one talent man didn't do it. It's not easy in these areas. It means discipline. That's no.2, faithfulness in the gift and talent that God has for you.

In order to develop the ministry of God or the talent of God, there will be many times I have had to choose above other things to do something rather than other things. We

have to make a choice because all our times are limited. Twenty-four hours is all God gives to each one of us per day. I will say that there are a lot of temptations to take time off from developing those gifts and talents that God has given to you. We need to resist that and overcome it and chose to do those things that God has called us to. Then one day when you meet Jesus face to face you will be thankful for every sacrifice you made to develop your gift and talent. It does mean that anything that doesn't develop your gift and talent you are not interested in. That's what living for eternity is like. They can call you an odd ball. They can call you strange but if you live for eternity your only motivation is that you chose to live those things and spend your time on areas that will develop your talent and your gifting. Other things you just don't have any interest and you will not want to develop interest in those things. Only when it enhances and helps your gift and talent then you give your time to it. Otherwise you say no thanks. That is not easy. It's easy to just float along in life and let life do what it wants with you.

There have been times when I find it hard to say to people and say look here, I have got to excuse myself. I have got this thing to do. Especially when things are going on. But when you realize that if you spend every night going out and you spend every night fellowshiping, you will not be able to develop some of the things that God wants you. You have got to spend your time in prayer. You have got to spend your time in the things of God. Of course we want to be balanced. We don't want to just have vertical relationship without horizontal relationship. But yet if all the time it's horizontal you are flat. We need to prioritize both sides. The horizontal is measured in terms where it helps you vertically. Where it doesn't help we need to cut off those horizontal areas.

The third area in Mark 10 is to realize as you live for eternity that you are rewarded twice. Your greatest eternal reward is in heaven. But God will also reward you on this earth. But if you live only for temporal for this earth, you maybe rewarded just once.

In Mark 10:29-31 "So Jesus answered and said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time – houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions – and in the age to come, eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last first.'"

Remember that the rewards in this life do not guarantee the rewards in the other life but the rewards in the other life do guarantee rewards down here too. So if you live for eternity don't have the impression that if you just go around living for eternity and confessing this world is not my home. I am just a passing through. My treasures are laid up some where beyond the blue. All the time if you are living for the other world, that on this earth although you have a mansion in heaven, your glorious rewards are up there. But on this earth all you have is a little plastic hut right next to the Federal Highway breathing in the carbon monoxide. Living off all the rubbish dumps. Remember when you live for eternities you have temporal reward as well as eternal reward. But if you live only for earthly pursue you may have earthly rewards.

Matthew 6:1 Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount. Matthew 6:1 "Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven."

Do you notice that? If you seek only a reward down here, what are the rewards? We are not talking about dollars and cents and material blessings. If you only seek for recognition on this earth, fame and fortune, you lose your reward.

If for a reward up in heaven, He says, I will give to you in Mark 10. Lands, houses, mothers, brothers, sisters, etc. What does that mean? That means you will have people drawn to your life as well as material blessings in this time and in the age to come eternal life. But here the Pharisees have a different motivation. The only reason for doing what they did is religiously and also in the sense of a social way. They were doing all those things for social benefits.

In verse 2, this is what normally they do which Jesus says not to do. “Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.”

Jesus said that they already have their reward. So the next time you are not recognized don’t say, “Hey, why am I not recognized?” Are you going for this earthly reward or you want heavenly reward. Choose you this day. Now if you chose the heavenly reward, you will have heavenly reward. But if you chose the earthly reward you will not have any heavenly reward.

He says in verse 3, “but when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing.” Some people not only let their left hand know, they let the left ear, the left eye and other people left hand and left eye and every other things know what they are doing. “Let your charitable deed be done in secret.” Now here He says, the reward on earth, “Your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly.” Now these are principles Jesus Himself teaches in His life. This is in the early days of Jesus’ ministry. He has to motivate His disciples and tell His disciples, look here; I am not here just to do something on the earth. He says, if you don’t do it out of love you are wasting your time. If you do your ministry, even if you did it for forty years because of recognition and so forth, not out of the love for God, you lost the whole thing. It’s a waste of time.

In verse 5, “And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men.” Which is why we believe in giving honor where honor is due. But there is a limit to that. The church or society or any organization can end up as a place where all people do is get an early recognition or early reward, which won’t be right. We need to understand that Jesus is trying to change people’s life. When He says here you shall not be like the hypocrites for when they pray in the synagogue and in the streets they pray that they may be seen, that men may recognize them. That man will say, oh, how wonderful they are. Jesus says, look at the conclusion in verse 5, “Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.” They have already received their reward. So in heaven its zero. When you pray rather hide so that your Father sees you and the Father will reward you.

So Jesus is strong on those areas and in verse 16-18 “Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.” Notice three times Jesus mentioned. When they gave alms, when they pray, when they

fast, the only motivation they have is recognition by man. Anyone who has a goal to be recognized by man is losing his or her reward. It's most dangerous because people who do that are not living for eternity. They are living for this earth only. In this life like Peter says, it's just like a vapor of smoke. Jesus says, "when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly."

So we see here in the third area that when we live for eternity, there is eternal reward and temporal reward. When we live for only earthly reason, we only have earthly reward. So don't feel short changed, don't feel jealous of the unbelievers who may put their goals only on this earthly things because in the long run they are the losers. And at the same time don't feel that to place your goal on eternal reward means that there are no earthly rewards. It is also the devil's wrong teachings. God knows. Jesus says, He knows. He knows you need food, clothing and shelter. He knows you need material things. God is saying you will never be short-changed. If you understand His principles, then living for eternity and being heavenly minded is not being without earthly things but rather is the better way to live.

Fourth and last area in Luke 6:22-23 "Blessed are you when men hate you, and when they exclude you, and revile you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Man's sake. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy! For indeed your reward is great in heaven, for in like manner their fathers did to the prophets."

The fourth area is that the things that bring heavenly reward are sometimes considered failures or unacceptable to people on this earth. In other words, in this fourth point that there are a lot of areas which bring heavenly reward are the total opposite and a total contradiction to what we think will produce an earthly reward.

See you have already past point 3, which says heavenly reward produces earthly reward. But not vice versa. But the fourth area is important. A lot of what is called things or works that bring reward is not the things that heaven accept. But the very opposite of what the world does not accept as things that are valid and genuine that will bring a reward are what Jesus says that will bring a reward. What are some of those things He mentioned here? Blessed are you when men revile you. Men persecute you. Men cast your name out as evil. These are the things that nobody wants. These are things that people called failures. What happen when you are rejected? What happen when you are cast down? What happen when your opposition comes into your life? What happen? Does it mean that you are a failure? The things that bring heavenly reward but not normally acceptable to man. Your value system changed. But when you are living for eternity you are prepared to do something that the world consider failure. That the world consider unacceptable. It's contradictory to their version of success. For you, you are going after heavenly success and what you will do is contradictory to what the world qualifies to be world success. You are willing to pay the price for it. Jesus said, when all these things happen look up and leap for joy because your reward in heaven is great.

Notice here that He said, in verse 23, 'Your reward is great.' The greater it is that sometimes men do not value something the greater God considers those things to be great reward. Now there are some things that you do that the world will pay attention to. There are some things that you do that nobody will even give a look or attention on

what you are doing. But deep in your heart you know that God asked you to do. Deep in your heart you know that, that is what heaven wants you to do so. Surprisingly there is a proportion that is measured. It's in worst proportion, that the worst to the world, the greater the reward is. So when we live for eternity, we are people who are willing, but Paul says, to be considered the dumb, the dust of this earth, so that he could be faithful to God and receive the heavenly reward.

Four areas, which we consider when we live for eternity:

1. Why you do those things you do?
2. Only what you are faithful to in what God has placed in your life will be rewarded. If you are faithful to some other things that God has not placed in your life, it is wickedness and laziness.
3. Heavenly reward brings earthly reward but not vice versa.
4. The things that man consider unacceptable, failures or rejection are considered great in heaven. That brings great reward. May our perspective change as we consider those things that God has placed in our life.

2. THE LOVE FOR MONEY

We have started a series called Living for Eternity. It's to instill into our hearts and lives the understanding, the experience and the awesomeness of how this life on earth is only preparatory for the other life to come. Even though on this earth it looks like life could be quite long. Seventy, eighty, ninety to one hundred and twenty years. Yet when measured on or in heavenly terms, they are comparatively short. The bible in the book of first period even compared it to just a vapor that is now and then it pass away. We need to instill that into our hearts and into our spirits, otherwise living on this earth can cause us to be stuck to the needs of this earth, without realizing that we are in the world but not of the world. We pray that through this series the truth of what Jesus said that you are in the world but not of the world may gather more momentum and be established in our hearts.

I Tim. 6:10 “for the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.” And Paul continued, “but you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life.” Verse 17;

“Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share.”

Now verse 10 is a powerful summary of what we will face on this earth. Of course we know that it did not say that money is the root of all evil. In fact God wills prosperity in the life of His people. He promised them prosperity is a part of Abraham's covenant. The part of the New Testament covenant that Jesus was made poor that we might be made rich. So God is not oppose to riches but yet there is a certain thin and fine line between the ability to possess riches and between riches possessing us. The difference is where the word the love, the desire. The love for money is the root, not just of one evil but it says of all evil. You could think of any evil on this earth. Paul says that's the root. That means the beginning, the start of that evil. We know that there are many sins on this earth. There are the sins of the flesh. There are the sins of all kinds of manner of sin. But behind it is the love of money. It's not possible to do the wrong thing if you don't have available reason. Paul says the love of money has lured many away from the faith. What we are preaching is talking about what Paul gospel is. He reasoned about righteousness. He reasoned about temperance. We preach a balance gospel and we want to preach this part of the gospel where Paul commanded Timothy to warn, to tell, to proclaim to the people that the love of money is the root of all evil. We are going to see how in the bible there are many examples, but we are going to pick some examples of the fall of people who had great potential. Each one of them fell because of the love of money.

Lets look at the book of Numbers 16. When we live only for this earth, money becomes overwhelming. There's a man named Korah who wanted position. Verse 1, “Korah the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, with Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men; and the rose up before Moses with some of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty leaders of the congregation, representatives of the congregation, men of renown.” In other words, powerful figures, leaders and men of influence. Verse 3, “They gathered together

against Moses and Aaron, and said to them, ‘You take too much upon yourselves, for all the congregation is holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the Lord?’”

So here if you read just from the book of Numbers, it looks as if Korah was just after position but the background of Korah needs to be studied. Korah was actually a rich and powerful man. Let me read to you from the traditions of Jews. Let me read to you something he said that about this Korah from The Jewish History called ‘Antiquity of the Jews’ by Josephus, the most famous Jewish scholar and historian. He says when Moses came out from Egypt, Korah a Hebrew of principal account, both by his family and by his wealth. One that was also able to speak well. One who could easily persuade the people by his speeches, saw that Moses was in an exceeding great dignity and was uneasy about it. He envied him on that account. He was of the same tribe with Moses and of kin to him was particularly grieved because he thought he better deserve that honorable post on account of his great riches. And not inferior to him that is Moses in his birth, so he raised a clamor against him among the Levites who were of the same tribe and especially among his kindred. Now in both the other Jewish and the Mohammedan version of this Old Testament, it also speaks about Korah as a man of great riches. What he actually did was that he wanted the position of power so that he could acquire more riches. To him riches were his entire goal. Riches with dignity and with the honor that comes with it.

So we see how the root of all evil has to do with the love of money. The love of money can sometime come in the form of the love for position because we know that, that position will bring influence and finances. The love for money can come in the form of a desire to get a better job or to change into a better position in the secular sense. Now we want to be very balance about it. We realize that God did say you shall be the head and not the tail. It is a promise of God to His people that when we walk with Him righteously with Him, He will promote us from step to step until you are the head and not the tail. But I will guarantee to you this fact that unless we die to the desire for riches we actually can not receive it nor can that promise be activated for us. Sometimes God allows us to enter a situation where we are tested. Perhaps to get that new job, to get that new position, to get that new promotion, you may have to compromise some principles. You may have to lose your time with God. You may have to stay many hours away from your home and family and you may pull away from principles that you hold dear in your life. It’s not worth it. That is what I mean by people who don’t live for eternity, live only for this earth. We Christians are caught in a situation where at the same time we want to succeed in this world and have abundance in God so that we could enjoy God’s goodness as well as being instruments of blessing others. Yet at the same time we need to understand that there is a danger when you handle riches. It has to be handled prayerfully at all times. Sometimes a man may be a very spiritual man who loves God and praises God regularly and at all times. But one change of his job that takes him from his family, requires another four hours extra per day. You begin to see that personality change. That man began to be drawn to live only for this earth and not live for eternity. So we do not judge the value of a job based on the pay cheque that comes at the end of the month. We judge the value of a job based on the total well-being. Your family, your time with God, your spiritual life in God as well as the pay cheque.

Korah allowed the love for money to be expressed in the love for position. That's one of the way the root of the love for money works its work in Christian life where they want more and more. Many multi-millionaires have had enough if they retire right now for the rest of their lives. Yet people want more. Many multi-millionaires are still earning more and they got more money that they can use. They are living only for this earth. We need to instill into ourselves that we live for eternity. Now that love for position, which is one of the roots of evil that comes from the love of money can also creep into a minister's life where the minister would do anything to get recognition. To do this and to do that. That is also living for this earth. It makes a minister unwilling to give place to another, to count other more worthy than himself and give it up. We need to watch that.

Sometimes that is in it seed form. For example, we were in a church camp sometimes back, it's good to see everybody have fun and fellowship as well as spiritual food. Then there is a game time. Although I didn't join in the game but as I watched the people playing the game, I realized everybody's personality came up in the game. If somebody is quite aggressive in their work and in the way they discipline their life, in the game it's the same. I mean you could see the aggressiveness. If someone who just takes life easily, lets say you are playing volley ball and the ball comes, hi brother its yours, its yours. You could see all the personality come out. You could see those who want personal benefit, when the ball comes to them and every time the ball comes, they will say, get away, it's my ball, my ball. You may not know I was observing but I was watching everybody's personality. It comes out even in the way we play games. Yet these are the things that we need to fine tune in our lives. There is a difference whether we live for others or we live for ourselves. No doubt when we are in something, we are there to win. That's a good attitude but then at the same time it balance with participation for the people. In other words, you can win and yet help others to win.

In life we realize on this earth out there in the world, people think that to be a winner you got to pull people down; you got to step over their heads. Sometimes you got to trample on some of them in order to get to the top. Come what may, by hook or by crook, by any way possible. But in Christ it is possible to climb up to be the number one and along the way be a blessing all along the way. And help others who are climbing up all along the way. If you win, they win too. So this kind of attitude that has to do with living for eternity where you do not desire things unless they help you to be a person who could be a blessing to others. In other words, if you desire something if it helps the others, then you take it. If it doesn't help others, then you won't take it. So when you are negotiating a new job or your new promotion, you are thinking in the end does it really helps all of us in the family. Does it really help everybody or is it just I wanting to possess more finances. So all these evaluations come in our life and many people are persuaded to pursue after position to the neglect of all other important values that can not be measured by dollars and cents. Finally when they grasp the whole of the money, which they love, they turn around and there is nobody to share with. There's no home to go. There's no love ones to comfort them. There's nobody to share with. The higher they go they found out that the lonelier they become. In the end all they have is a lonely life. The last days of life are passed in loneliness and torment. It's not worth the millions dollars. So the love of money leads people like Korah to go after position but he is very clever. He hides behind the mask a spiritual mark. He never said that he loves money and position. He

said, 'Moses you take too much for yourself. Everybody can hear God like you.' What he wants is, he wants Moses' position. Somehow, he influenced all the rest. It looks like he was looking for spiritual position but actually he was after a natural position.

The second area where the love for money can hit a person is when you already have the position. How you got it that's in your past. But you already got the position. The temptation to abuse your office comes as a result of the love for money. In the book of Numbers chapter 22, the story of Balaam the prophet. Now Balaam was already a prophet unlike Korah, who had no position. His only position was to help carry the holy things of God as a Levite. He was not allowed the priesthood, which he wanted. He was not allowed the prophetic office, which he wanted too. Moses had and Aaron had. Now Balaam is a different case. He had already got a kind of spiritual position. He was a prophet who had an encounter and experience with God. But here comes the love of money unto his life. In the form of a king called Balak who was the king of the Moabites.

Verse 4 "So Moab said to the elders of Midian, 'Now this company will lick up everything around us, as an ox licks up the grass of the field.' And Balak the son of Zippor was king of the Moabites at that time. Then he sent messengers to Balaam the son of Beor at Pethor, which is near the River in the land of the sons of his people, to call him, saying, 'Look, a people has come from Egypt. See, they cover the face of the earth, and are setting next to me. Therefore please come at once, curse this people for me.'"

In verse 7-8, so they sought Balaam to divine or to be able to draw forth an anointing to curse the Israelites. To abuse his position when Balaam should not even have asked God. There are some things you don't even have to ask God, you know His answer. When Balaam came before God, God said, 'No, don't go with these people.' So the next morning Balaam came to Balak and said in verse 13, "Go back to your land, for the Lord has refused to give me permission to go with you."

So they went back and verse 15 Balak increased the pay. "Balak sent princes more numerous and more honorable than they." I mean Balak sent greater influential figures with greater rewards. It is the love for money that started drawing Balaam's attention. Balaam said, alright let me seek God to see what God would say. He didn't have to seek God because God already told him don't go with them. But yet he sought God. And it was like God saying this way as you read the story. Which if you insist go ahead, God gives a kind of permissive yes. He went along the way and he nearly died if not for his donkey.

When he reached the place where he was to curse the Israelites in chapter 23:1-2, they had seven altars built and then Balaam heard from God and instead of cursing he blessed the people. Then in verse 13 they tried again. They built all those altars again he blessed the people. Third time in verse 27, Balak said to Balaam, let us go to another place. Chapter 24, the whole part of it, again Balaam blessed the people. Balak was highly displeased in verse 10. "King Balak's anger was aroused against Balaam, and he struck his hands together; and Balak said to Balaam, 'I called you to curse my enemies, and look, you have bountifully blessed them these three times.'" So Balak angrily strode away. Balak said he used the name of God in vain, that is in verse 11, "Now therefore, flee to your place. I said I would greatly honor you, but in fact, the Lord has kept you back from honor."

No! The Lord never wanted him to have that kind of honor. There are some honors the Lord wants you to have but there are some honors the Lord never wanted you to get involved with. When we live for eternity, there are some honors that you say no to. Not all honors are from the Lord. Some are just a distraction. That's the second area where the love of money leads a person to, the abuse of position. Because they love money they would trade their position for more money. I could imagine Balak filled with anger walked away with all the silver and gold and the reward and all his princes and Balaam was left there. It looks like the end of the story, Balaam couldn't curse, Balaam couldn't bypass his office. But as the money started walking away, Balaam had a sinking feeling. That was his golden opportunity to make a million buck and he just missed it. Then as Balak was going further and further away, Balaam had this sinking feeling. I mean he just missed a million dollar opportunity. Opportunists need to be sanctified because not all opportunities are from the Lord.

Finally this is the story, that is not in the bible but you can see the ending that must have happened. Balaam must have regrets. I mean he has great regrets. Finally he must have called back Balak and said I want the gold and I want the silver. Balak said you could curse them like I told you to. Balaam use his carnal crafty mind and said, although we can not do it, there is another way that you can cause them to fall. All in exchange for gold and silver. He had so many roadblocks along the way. When he asked God, God said no. When he rode the donkey, the donkey protested against him. He got so many roadblocks. He tried to function in the office of a prophet and curse. He could not. He went past all God's roadblocks. Finally he taught Balak how to cause the Israelites to fall. Balak followed and Israel fell. Balaam got rewarded and this is recorded for us in the book of Numbers chapter 31 verse 8 and verse 16. "They killed the kings of Midian with the rest of those who were killed – Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur, and Reba, the five kings of Midian. Balaam the son of Beor they also killed with the sword." Sadly Balaam was among those who had to be killed. Verse 16, why was he killed? "Look, these women caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to trespass against the Lord in the incident of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the Lord." In other words, Balaam valued gold and silver above his position.

A position given by God is an eternal position. Some of those positions God give include natural position, whether in the business or secular world in the spiritual kingdom of God. They come from God and they are bought with the Precious Blood of Jesus. We must recognize that a position that comes from God must be guarded. Must be valued above silver and gold. Let not the love of money cause anyone to abuse his or her position. Otherwise the end of Balaam will also be their end.

The third incident is a story of destruction because of the love for money. The book of Joshua 7, this time is a man named Achan. Achan was the foot soldier as he was used for eternity. There is a balance that we need to understand. For example, if you are praying or believing God for a house, ask for a house that you could manage. Don't ask for a huge mansion with about one hundred rooms and you will spend sixteen hours cleaning that everyday. Or you say that you are rich enough to hire people, it will cost you twenty thousand dollars per month to hire people. It's a waste of money. See there are ways some where along the line and there must be a balance in our worldly possession. We must make sure we must not be distracted.

Sometimes it comes in a different way. Some people are so hard up about these things of this world. It is a kind of childish attitude going after brand names. People will go all the way. Drive two hours just to go after a brand name. Now everything you wear has a brand. We are talking about a balance. We need to understand that as long as things are usable and if they are good enough, there is no necessity to purposely go into wastage just for brand name. If you ever buy a car because it's prestigious, you are worldly. If you ever buy a house because it's prestigious, it's worldliness. If you ever do wear clothes because it's prestigious rather than its practical and you feel that it suit you and look good, then it's going to worldliness. Of course that doesn't mean that we all have to wear slippers to church, wear shorts to church because that will save us a lot of money. We want to have a balance here. At the same time we don't want to go to the other extreme of saying the world is not ours. It all belongs to the devil. We will just eat plain rice and live in an wooden hut and let the devil have all the good things in this world. That is the other extreme. I am not talking about that. But yet the other extreme is to spend so much time on worldly things. You spend two hours planning your shopping, three hours shopping and five minutes on prayer. Then it has become a distraction. When purchasing a car takes three hours per day, doing all the research, examining the car engine, car color for six months, it has become a distraction.

We live in a world where we live on a fine road. We need to understand of being distracted and not being distracted. Using those things that are there and those things that are not. So this pursuit of brand name is an unnecessary burden that one places on one's life. Usually young people go after it because young people are insecure. Just like advertisers advertise cigarette smoking by using famous people smoking a particular brand. These advertisements are based on identification. Just because a famous guy uses that so you also use that. You can be like him. It's a false identification. It says do not be conformed to the things of this world. Yet at the same time we are not saying all of us must look as shabby as possible in church. The more shabbier the holier you are. You buy thing that suits you. Buy thing that you could wear and it's reasonable but let it not be such a distraction. If you stand two hours every morning in front of your mirror before you go off, there is something that is slightly off balance.

In the book of Joshua 7, he says that he saw this beautiful mantle and he took it. He dug a hole and hid it then went back to fighting. Extra time involved and he thought nobody knew. God saw it. God knew about it and God will deal with it. The third aspect of the love of money manifests in a distraction upon someone's life. In the gospel of Mark 4:19 those that fell among the thorns, the seeds that fell among the thorns, Jesus interprets as this: verse 19 "the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful." When it becomes time consuming to manage your finance resources; something must give, something must be surrendered. I mean some people busy themselves so much. Handling hundreds of thousand and millions of dollars but it takes them so much time. It's much easier cut down all those excessive ones and minimizes it so that you could have more time for eternity. It would be a more balance approach. Because in this world you could keep yourself occupied until you got no time. This is a very busy world. A world that fills you with all its thrills, glitters and attractions. If we live for eternity, we got to watch no. 3 the distraction that is actually the love of money. If you ask someone, do you love money? He/she will never say I

do. Unless the real hard nut unbeliever says, yes, I love money. But if you ask the average Christian, do you love money? No, no, I love the Lord. But they go about their lives looking for position. They actually love money. It's hidden in form. Then if you ask a Christian, do you love money? He/she says no. Then they use their position in the secular world to get more money. Side job here and there. A little here, a little there. Just to get extra money. But it's all illegal. You ask them do you love money. No, no, I go to church on Sunday. I love the Lord. They will never deny but they are abusing their position for money. That is the love for money. That's what we want to clarify. That's the third area.

You are the Christians, are you worldly? They say, no, no. I am not worldly. I don't put make-up. I don't use lips stick. I don't use earring. I don't wear gold chains. Using or not using doesn't make any difference. That means it's alright for you to use make-up. Better don't go too far. I was telling my wife, I said, do you know the secret of putting make-up? She said, I don't know. Do you know anything about make-up? I said, it must be such that it looks natural. If a make-up looks artificial, it's no more real make-up. Make-up is to make you look more natural and fresh. But some people's makeups make them look like a clown. So all those things are not wrong. But you ask them, are you worldly? They say, no, no. Do you love money? They say, no, no. But they are highly distracted by things of this world. They can not walk pass a shop without looking. Are you worldly? No, no. Tongues talking, Spirit filled, demon casting, bible carrying but never read. We need bible reading not just bible carrying. You ask them are they worldly? They say, no. But they are actually living for this world. Not for eternity. Because they are distracted. Distracted by the things of this life. It occupies their lives. I mean hunting for furniture, hunting for this and that and all these things take so much time. But when you talk about looking for a good version of bible, they say any version will do. Just go and buy. Then we called ourselves Christians. We called ourselves the most spiritual people on earth, unworldly in the world but not of the world. But actually we are of the world and in the world when we are distracted.

Test no. 3. These are three tests whether you really love money or not. Test no.3; go back to I Kings 21:1, this is the story of Ahab. "It came to pass after these things that Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard which was in Jezreel, next to the palace of Ahab king of Samaria. So Ahab spoke to Naboth, saying, 'Give me your vineyard, that I may have it for a vegetable garden, because it is near, next to my house; and for it I will give you a vineyard better than it. Or, if it seems good to you, I will give you its worth in money.' But Naboth said to Ahab, 'The Lord forbid that I should give the inheritance of my fathers to you.' So Ahab went into his house sullen and displeased because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him; for he had said, 'I will not give you the inheritance of my fathers.' And he lay down on his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no food."

Look at him king of Israel. He asked for his neighbor's vineyard, the neighbor said can not for good reason. I mean it has been his family inheritance for many years. Who wants to sell that? I mean it's their life's blood. Their descendants and their ancestors are supposed to continue on that plot of land. Ahab said I want it. I will give you a better land. Even if it's a better land, that land has more sentimental value to them. Ahab fell into an emotional state of distress. He fasted and he prayed but for the wrong thing. His wife who is also as bad, in verse 5 said, "Why is your spirit so sullen

that you eat no food?” Verse 6, He said to her, he didn’t give me the vineyard. I want the vineyard. And of course Jezebel was more cunning than Ahab. She plotted a murder. Got Naboth killed and then said to Ahab in chapter 21:15 “Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, which he refused to give you for money; for Naboth is not alive, but dead. So it was, when Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, that Ahab got up and went down to take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite.”

The fourth test: Are all your prayers centered on your need? When you don’t have your needs met, will you turn your face from Jesus Christ of Nazareth? A lot of Christians will love Jesus only as long as He supplies their needs. He will of course. But there are times when He will want to watch whether you love Him because He is the giver or love Him because of who He is with or without Him giving you anything. When you were asked, do you love money? No, no, no. But 99% of your prayers have to do with Father God who are in heaven, give me this day my daily bread. Give me a good job. Give me all my needs for all my house. Give me all these things. Give me food on my table. Give me this. Give me that. Thy kingdom come on earth. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Amen. 99% of their prayers have to do with their needs. When if their needs are not met, they will be bitter at God. Bitter at the institution of the church. Bitter at Jesus. Bitter at the bible. They say God didn’t meet their needs. Don’t want to read the bible. They behaved like a spoiled child. They behaved like Ahab.

When Ahab went out to collect Naboth’s vineyard, his archenemy Elijah the Tishbite, came to bite him. Came to teach and bite. ‘teachbite’ that is not his real name. When he saw Elijah in verse 20, “Ahab said, ‘have you found me, O my enemy?’ And Elijah said, ‘I have found you.’ Verse 21, he pronounced a judgment on him. I want you to notice this fact. When Ahab was worshipping idols he was bad enough. He did a lot of other evil things, which were bad enough. But it was only when he killed Naboth for the love of money that the real judgment came. The real judgment came not just because of Baal. His heart was like a divided heart. Sometimes he trust Jehovah, sometimes he trust idols. But it was when he yielded to the love of money to the extent of no. 2 abuse and compromise principles to murder that it affected his entire life. He can not sleep without money. He can not sleep if he does not have what he wants. It’s only when he became crooked to possess the real judgment came on him. Because it was a wicked thing to steal, to rob, to murder, to possess, that’s the extent that the love of money brought him to. But the point that we see here is how emotionally affected he was. Would you if today, you see God will not steal, God will not kill, God will not destroy, but God will only say would you be willing to give up. If today God would to say give up your house, which you have slogged, you have worked your sweat out; you have saved and invested for thirty years. God said, ‘give it up.’ Would you be able to say yes without a struggle? If you can not, you are not living for eternity.

Now I realize that somehow while we live on this earth, human being first get tied up and sentimental to the things that they have to work for. To the things they possessed. To the things they accumulated in their short life. But the test of whether you are living for eternity is if you don’t have those things, would you still love the Lord? If you don’t have a roof above your head, would you still love the Lord? If you have to walk from place to place without transportation without any car or any vehicle, would

you still love the Lord? If you have only one tee-shirt and two pairs of pants, would you still love the Lord? Or would it occupy your mind so much that 99% of your prayer is to get that?

Let me give you a powerful key. We are not against prosperity, but we are giving you a powerful way to receive true prosperity. If only Christians will realize that when they occupy their time, for example, you live in a small little hut place in a squatter area, you have two pants, one pair of shoes and one tee-shirt, but instead of praying, 'O God, give me all these needs,' you just say, 'Father, I have needs and you know about it. I ask for you to supply above all my needs. Thank you.' And then the rest of your time you are praying, 'O God, I thank you for Jesus. How wonderful He is. How wonderful salvation is. Thank you for the mansion in heaven. Thank you Lord that I could be a blessing to many. Thank you for your bible. Thank you Lord for the time in Your word.' You spend 99% of your time thanking God for those spiritual gifts you have received from Him. Thank Him for the spiritual blessings. That man will receive prosperity. He will receive probably a new job. He will receive finances such that he can not dream about above his expectation. We are not saying that you don't ask for your daily bread because it's in the Lord's Prayer. But it's one of the items in the many things in the Lord's Prayer. Those of you who had exercised faith for cars, house or finances realize this. It is only when you come to the point where it's not really important to you whether you get it or not then you get it. But when it is very important to you, you are still attached too much to it. It's not surrendered to God. When you surrender it to God then it comes. So God deals with our heart's attachment.

Perhaps you believe in God for a car. You are so attached. I mean always praying on that area. Its high full concentration. But perhaps you have been praying for six months, it didn't turn up. Twelve months, it didn't turn up. After sometimes you are happy as you are. You praise God. I mean that you do the best you can on your little bicycle. You are still praying for a car but it's not so important to you now. You still remember your request. You still would like to have it. But it is not so important to you. Lo and behold it suddenly appears. But when it was important to you, so important that to have it was the only thing in life. Most important thing it will never come because God knows our hearts. He says that when you love Him above father, mother, family or any area above all else and you give up all for Him, then He bless you a hundredfold in this life and in the life to come.

God is not against your prosperity but God is against worldliness and covetousness in our hearts. God will deal with your covetousness until it is not important and you praise God and you worship God as you are. It will come to you. Seek ye first the kingdom of God and all these things shall be added unto you. That's point no.4. If you ask somebody, he/she says no. But how much of your time do you spend praying about the things of this life. 99% they are worldly. They love money above God. Of all Paul's prayers, Philippians chapter one, Romans chapter one he prayed briefly. I Corinthians one, Colossians one and Ephesians one and three, of all Paul's prayers surprisingly you will find none of them were for physical needs. Indirectly they applied to physical needs but one of them was for physical needs. Philippians one prayed for love to grow in judgment. Ephesians one prayed for the Spirit, more of the spirit of wisdom and revelation. Ephesians three prayed for the love of God to be established in our lives. Colossians one prayed that we might do the will of God.

None of them were for physical needs. How worldly are we are judged by the extent of our prayer in God. Then we say we are not of this world. We are so occupied that it occupied all our prayers. Set yourself free. With every little you have, with whatever much you have, be faithful. Thank God as you are. By all means believe God for the best. Believe God for abundance. But be separated from them. Don't be attached to that and God will bless you beyond what you asked.

No. 5 II Kings 5, all these are because of the love for money in different forms. Naaman was healed by Elisha and he told Elisha in II Kings 5:15-16 "Indeed now I know that there is no God in all the earth, except in Israel, now therefore, please take a gift from your servant. But he said, 'As the Lord lives, before whom I stand, I will receive nothing.' And he urged him to take it, but he refused."

Can you imagine being persuaded to take something and you don't want. Some people don't even have to persuade. You just have to put the money out and they will grab it straightaway. Naaman wanted to give a gift to Elisha, Elisha said no, thanks. He is satisfied living in his cave like house with his table and desk as compared to Naaman's standard. He was satisfied as he was. And Naaman said, 'take.' The bible says, he persuaded. He urged him to take. Elisha said 'no'. All the servants were watching. There is another man of God who also did that. Abraham after he had conquered and freed Lot from captivity and also freed the king of Sodom and all his people and won the battle, the king of Sodom said to Abraham, 'Give me all the men servants and the people, you keep all the gold.' Abraham said, 'No, you take back all the things. If any other servants want to have anything let them have. I will not even take one shoe's lace from you.'

Blessed be the man and woman of God who say no to silver and gold. Much less if man and woman of God ask for money. They have compromised their principles. It is better to starve and to go without food than to ask for money because the integrity of your character and the respect for your position is something that money can not buy. By compromising it the respect that you have can not be build up again. Which is why the fifth test of worldliness here is the ability to say no to something that could rightfully be yours. Something that you could have earned it. Something that is a gift could you say 'no'. Some people can not say no to a gift. Some people can not say no to a better offer. Some people can not say no if something glitters like gold. Free this. Free that. Everything free. In this world, advertisement attracts people by free. You see those huge advertisements in the papers or anywhere; they say free gift and everybody rush for it. That is the spirit of the world. They can not resist something free. Now Abraham and Elisha did not even receive something free. It was something that could have been rightfully theirs because it was through their gifting, their works and their sacrifices that they had paid and the other person got blessed. Yet they could say no. But his servant can not say no. His servants disagreed with Elisha's principles.

In chapter 5:20 "But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, said, 'Look, my master has spared Naaman this Syrian, while not receiving from his hands what he brought, but as the Lord lives, I will run after him and take something from him. So Gehazi pursued Naaman. When Naaman saw him running after him, he got down from the chariot to meet him, and said, 'Is all well?' And he said, 'All is well. My master has sent me, saying, 'Indeed, just now two young men of the sons of the prophets have come to me from the mountains of Ephraim. Please give them a talent of silver and two changes of garments. So Naaman said, 'Please, take two talents.'

And he gave him two talents of silver. Two changes of garments, and handed them to two of his servants; and they carried them on ahead of him.”

Gehazi told a lie. Gehazi was someone who could not say no if there is a free offer. Usually if you see a free offer, you see the small print there, a lot of other things. That’s how they advertise today. If you could not resist something that is free, there is a spirit of worldliness there hanging in your closet. The only time I buy anything is really useful. Like sometimes these books on the wars on the whole world, that to me is good research because I was researching on the wars and the famine. See the connection to see its fulfillment. In the book of Genesis it says, if blood is shed there will be the earth will not produce. So I did research. Then only I will buy those books. If buying those books they give some other things like free watches or some other things then take it. Take it and then give it away again. But I will not buy anything just because the free gift is there dangling. Sometimes in supermarket it attracts you. You buy \$500 worth of goods and you get this thing free. You go and you spend. But the \$500 is spent on unnecessary things. That free gift cost perhaps RM50. If you count it’s not worth. You over spent your budget. This is where a lack of temperance of self-control comes. You can not say no to something free.

Perhaps it says the first 200 customers will receive a free gift. I tell you, you never got up for early morning prayers but when it says the first 200 customers will get a free gift, from 8.30am before the shop open at 9.30am you are already there lining up. You are customer number one. But when the church doors are not opened, you never line up early to go in to pray. You say church starts at ten; let me be there at eleven. Free gift starts at 9.30am, 8.30am you are there waiting. Then people ask you, do you love money? You say, O no, no, I love the Lord. But look at what happening. You couldn’t say no to something free from the world. It’s a test. Every one will be tested. Abraham was tested, whether he want to have something free. He said, ‘no.’ Elisha was tested with something free. He said, ‘no.’

There are the five other tests for the love of money. They are hidden behind all these areas. Test no.1 for the love of position. Test no.2 for the abuse of position. Test no. 3 was distraction with worldly things. It takes a lot of your time. Test no. 4 prayers for earthly needs occupy 99% of your time. Test no. 5 is where you could not say no when some carrot is dangling right before your eyes. So all these five tests reveal a person’s love for money.

Then we look at the importance of being able to handle a relationship with money all through our life. Some people do it well in their early stages but they fall in the middle or a later stage. But we must be able to handle a good relationship with money. For that we want to look at the book of I Samuel. You notice that these are the statements always made at the conclusion of people ministry in bible. To you how important the final test of a ministry at the conclusion is whether you have lived in an unworldly life, whether you have lived a life that is tempered and balanced between spirit, soul and body.

In I Samuel, we see here in chapter 12:3 “Here I am. Witness against me before the Lord and before His anointed: Whose ox have I taken, or whose donkey have I taken, or whom have I cheated? Whom have I oppressed, or from whose hand have I received any bride with which to blind my eyes? I will restore it to you.”

Samuel at the conclusion of his public ministry said, if there is anyone who says I have taken anything I will repay. If I have taken any donkey, you say it, you could bear witness and if it's true, I will repay. In other words, Samuel at the end of his life could wash his hands and said he stayed clean from the love of money. Since the love of money is the root of all evil. If you could stay clean from the love of money, you would be free from the root of all evil. You will be free from all evil if you could stand with a clean heart and live for eternity.

Paul in the book of Acts 20 makes this statement at the conclusion of his public ministry. Always conclusion must be a good one. Acts 20:33-34 He says, "I have coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel. Yes, you yourselves know that these hands have provided for my necessities, and for those who were with me."

I want you to know that is the kind of reputation that money can not buy. Something that we must hold true. That I pray that I could deposit that into your spirit. Even though in life and in early ministry we have a lot of persecutions in different areas but after we have reconciled with many of them. Not a single one of them could say that we have ever compromise when it comes to the finance. Which is the integrity we have built over fifteen or sixteen years. We intend to keep it that way. We pray it could be built into the life of each one of the minister here and each one of those here in the secular world. It is an integrity that money can not buy.

I remember my seminary professor, after we got acquainted, after the fellowship, years passed by and things became more amicable and I heard this indirectly. They said, even though he is not the typical Baptist, and even though to us in the Baptist church, he is extreme in his practices, they were talking about me. One thing we know, he said, he loves the Lord. Then later on when we were having hard times with the Full Gospel fellowship and then later when we restored, we heard word from some of them, it was whatever disagreement, whatever there was, but one thing they can not find fault is this; one of them said, though all the seven years we have been working together, they know that not one time I asked for finance. Even though they were very rich. That was the clean relationship we have with people. That's the kind of reputation we need to build. Not just here but also we need to build to the completion of the entire ministry. What we are encouraging all of you here is that in Samuel's ending, in Paul's ending and it's our goal in our ending of public ministry and it is a goal we need to set.

You see sometimes even in the business world, some of you say why I am not in the ministry. Isn't it sad in the business world, after you have accumulated all your wealth, all your finances, you are just freshly retired, you are just about to enjoy your wealth, your past catch up with you because of the crooked ways you accumulated your wealth. You compromised with godly principles in your business and now your past catch up with you and you lose all your wealth in your old age. You got nothing to show after that. You are brought into a situation where you got no money in your bank account, no money in your pocket. Isn't it terrible that kind of legacies that can come, where from a multimillionaire you can be reduced to rags? Instead of rags to riches, you have riches to rags. I want you to know that on this earth as Christians we need to leave a legacy behind. We confess to people we have a mansion in heaven and yet at the same time we must show forth a life that is unworldly, unaffected by this world, unaffected by the rumors, by the word or anything like that. That we could stand clean before people.

Jesus could stand up and says, if there is any sin among you. Jesus said, I have no sin. Paul could stand although he could not say about the sin area because he being human may have fallen here and there in words or any area. But yet in this area of practice and handling the love of money, he said he is clean. That's the legacies we must have if we want to live for eternity. Prove it and be free from all those areas and be determined. Sometimes we hear of ministers who compromise on those areas, my wife and I are grieved because we said when we had not a single cent for bus fare we walked. We walked with twenty cents in our pockets. We walked all the way from the railway station, from the bus station. We walked all the way to town on our legs. And even when somebody picked us up and happened to pass by and gave us a lift right to the place we were going, they said, why are you walking? We could not say anything. We said, praise the Lord. We want you to know that, that's the kind of relationship we must learn. If you want prosperity, you must have it under controlled. But if prosperity controls you, the love of money comes. All other evils will be opened up like a Pandora's box. May God preserve us.

I Tim. 6:10 "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil." Then the love of money is something we must be able to handle and overcome in our life. If you can overcome money and finances and the love of it, you can overcome all other evils because the love of money is the root of all evil.

I will close by reading Hebrew 11 and show you how others have lived for eternity successfully. Why was Abraham able to say no to finances? Because in Hebrew 11 says, verse 8 onwards, "By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

His eyes were on the heavenly reward. Do you know why Paul never gives up all his life?

Do you know Paul was not moved by silver and gold and apparel because Paul says, 'I seek for the reward up there.' He lived for eternity/

In chapter 11 verse 23, "By faith, Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's command. By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward."

These people lived for eternity. He could have been called the son of the daughter of Pharaoh but he refused. He could have the riches of Egypt but he refused because he was the kind of person who lived for eternity.

3. THREE HIGHER PRINCIPLES

This morning we are on the third message on the series of 'Living for Eternity'. The first was an introduction. The second was about how we must handle finances properly and how we must wrestle with the love of money. Today we are going to look at three higher principles above all other principles and what I called high principles that must guide our life in the walk and high law of eternity that governs this natural life that we have.

So this morning we will look at the higher laws of God. Why we are talking about this series is so that we realize that on the one hand as we grow in faith principles, as we excel in the things of this life, as we have worldly success, spiritual success, yet we need to have our success tempered with a vision and a heart for eternity. Like the book of Ecclesiastes says that man is born with eternity in his heart. Success in this life is temporal but spiritual success is permanent. Sometimes they both go together. Sometimes they are both contradictory.

We look first at Matthew 23:23 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law, justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone."

Jesus is speaking to the Pharisees saying that they have obeyed certain commandments and among them are the commandments of tithing, offering, etc although their attitude was wrong on the obedience in spite of their obedience to the laws of their traditions. Jesus is not saying we do not obey those laws like tithing and offering and many others sub-law. He said here in verse 23, not to leave the others undone. In other words all the other commandments are as important. But then we realize that there are some that are higher than others. Some laws are higher than others. The Pharisees in obeying the other laws have neglected what Jesus says and is the phrase He used: the weightier matters of the law, the more important that carry more weight. Those are higher, supreme and more powerful than all the others.

We know in life, there are different degrees of authority. For example, a case decided in a lower court maybe over turned in the higher court. Then people can appeal right up to the highest court in the land, the Supreme Court. What is decided in the highest level makes all the judgments of the lower courts null and void. In a similar way in the natural scientific world, we have the law of thermodynamics and there are the laws of heats that cause an airplane to bypass or surpass or overcome the pull of the law of gravity. So we know even in the natural world, the higher law can overcome the lower law. We realize that electric power or mechanical power can overcome the law of friction that prevents all things from moving perpetually. So there are higher laws and lower laws in the natural life. What about in the spiritual world? As we study the Word, as we gain knowledge in all kinds of manner of commandments, laws we need to bear in mind that there are some laws that are high above all laws because these laws affect our reward, lack of reward in eternity.

Now there is something mentioned about the Pharisees. Luke 16:14 "Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, also heard all these things, and they derided Him."

We just talked about the love of money last week. And of all people, the Pharisees especially were lovers of money. They were supposedly the most religious and spiritual people in Jesus' time. They held the laws in their hands. They have both religious authority and natural authority in the time of Romans under the Romans jurisdiction. Here comes Jesus and He rebuked the Pharisees. The whole chapter 23 is the utterance of one woe after another. Now He did not immediately come to that confrontation. But remember that every Christian, if they do not watch out have a potential to become a Pharisee. It is impossible for one who is neither religious nor experienced in spiritual matter to ever be a Pharisee. All they will be is a publican because they do not know God. All they want is to know God. The only possibility of Pharisees being made in our modern era in a Christian world is for Christian who has come to know God. They know some of the Word and then move into a Pharisee attitude. Any move of God can end up as a new Pharisee of the next move. That's dangerous. That is why we need to have this kind of message although sometimes it's hard to teach this kind of message. So we have to teach it the gentlest way we can. If you think we are talking about you, well, look up and praise God and say that may be me and that may not be me. But all illustration will not be from here. As we look it is a sort of warning to us. As God move from move to move and as new things began to come up in the forefront, we realize that every old ministry, every old experience, every old Christian has a potential of adopting the same position as the Pharisees unless we know that antidote for that.

The antidote for Pharisaic attitudes is found in Matthew 23:23 and in what we are talking about, Jesus said there are three things they neglected: justice, mercy and faith. Now in a cross reference, He speaks about it differently in Luke 16. He speaks about it in a different manner.

Luke 11:43 as He was rebuking the Pharisees He makes almost similar statement but He says here in verse 42-43 "But woe to you Pharisees! For you tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass by justice and the love of God."

So that tells us that the love of God and mercy are related as one point in our cross reference here. But our text will be from Matthew 23:23 those things are the same. No.1 Justice. No.2 Mercy or the love of God. No.3 Faith. Why are those three areas important? In I Cor. 13 Paul says it in a different manner. For there are three things, there is hope, there is faith and there is love. And he says the greatest of the three is love. Do you know that Paul also says about those three things? But he says them differently. Love ties up with mercy. Faith ties up with faith. Hope ties up with justice. The eternal hope of judgment to come and how we will do in the judgment. So these three points are key antidote to prevent those in the old move from being the new Pharisee of the new move. Every move of God faces its own set of Pharisees and Sadducees. The sad thing was the Pharisee was once upon a time a bright eye believer.

So these three cures are important. Justice speaks about correctness in methodology; whether the methods or patterns that we use in applying the principles, precepts and the laws of God are correct or not. Mercy or love speaks about correctness in motive. Faith speaks about correctness in the source of power or the source of energy. These three must balance up in our life.

For example you could do the right thing with the wrong motive. It makes it wrong. You could use the right method and have the wrong motive. It makes it wrong. On the other hand, you could have the right heart and right intention but you use the wrong method. It makes it wrong. We are talking about perfection in those three realms. However you could also get your motive correct, your method correct but the source of power incorrect. So you end up doing by your own might and your own strength with a pure motive to God and with a right method but with the wrong power. You didn't depend on the power of the Spirit. You didn't depend on faith; you depended on your own strength. You could depend on your own strength to do the right thing and it makes it wrong. So if you are wrong in any of these three, you are wrong.

How do we define a Pharisee? A Pharisee is someone who is wrong in either of these three or all of them. That's our modern definition of a Pharisee. A Pharisee is someone, a Christian who may have the right motive and of course if you use the wrong method you obviously have the wrong source. If you have the right motive but uses the wrong method you are a Pharisee. Or if you have the right method, you are doing the right thing but you are having the wrong motive of doing those things you are a Pharisee as far as the bible definition is. We have three simple definitions in Pharisee. If you are wrong in method, wrong in motive or wrong in source of power you are a Pharisee. Having a form of godliness but without its power. When we apply these three to our modern Christianity, there are a lot of Pharisacism going on. We need to check ourselves so that we would be in the move not against the move, where we will be flowing along the way and standing in the way in what God wants to do. Jesus encounter with the Pharisees was gradual and progressive and we will see seven encounters that Jesus had and develop from there and see how they were wrong in one of these three all the time. Always wrong in one of these three. Or sometimes wrong in all the three areas.

Matthew 9:9 "As Jesus passed on from there, He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, 'Follow Me.' So he arose and followed Him. Now it happened, as Jesus sat at the table in the house, that behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to His disciples, 'Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?' When Jesus heard that, He said to them, 'Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.'" Then look at what Jesus said, "But go and learn what this means: I desire mercy and not sacrifice. For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."

Jesus was just having a good time with those who have turned to Him. Matthew the tax collector, sinners and publicans and all these tax collectors were friends of Matthew. So Matthew gave a feast. He gave a party. I didn't know Jesus attend parties. He does. But make sure you have as much feasting as fasting. If all you do is eat, drink and be merry something is wrong. Sometimes you have to fast, pray and intercede. It balances up. He was just having a good time and here was Jesus joining those folks there sitting down and just making Himself at home. Here come these Pharisees who do not mix with tax collectors. Tax collectors are considered unclean. In fact the Pharisees had a long book call the 'Talmud' that has all the details of what to do, what not to do. They follow them very strictly. Some of them go outside of God's Word. They ask how can Jesus being so spiritual mix with these people. How

can it be? They also tried to imply that Jesus also must be like them. On what basis are they making the judgment?

See we are talking on the first level. There are three: justice, mercy and faith. Justice is not from the normal word justification or justify. The word justification or justify is from the word dikaiosine; dikaiosune actually means righteousness. The word justice is not from the word righteousness. The word justice in Matthew 23 is not the word dikaiosine, it's the word krisis, which comes from the root word krino. This means to make the correct judgment on the method to be used. This is why we tie justice to method. Whenever you use a method you exclude other methods. Methodology has to be determined by our knowledge and our ability to judge. All methods derive out of knowledge. All knowledge derives out of judgment. So as far as they are concerned, it is wrong to mix with the tax collectors. It's not right. It will pollute their lives.

What happen is, of those three areas the Pharisees may be partially correct in method. They have a point. What they say has a point. But they were without mercy and therefore without faith in God. All they want is to keep themselves pure and holy. Maybe originally it started all right. Many hard yokes that man put on another as tradition started out well. Maybe originally the tax collectors were a bad influence on the spiritual people. So somebody came out with a judgment that says it's better not to mix with them. Then through the generations, it developed into a sin just to mix around with the tax collectors. Maybe that method started out well. But now that method had no mercy in it, and it became unacceptable in God's sight. It detached faith from its action. The correct method is that when we are with the sinners, we should have faith that the power of God is enough to keep us from sin. See it's a lack of faith and a lack of mercy. They got one right and got the other two wrong. Therefore the whole action was wrong.

Jesus said, you folks should go and learn what it means to have mercy and not sacrifice. I mean you sacrificed your fellowship. You sacrificed parties. You sacrificed this and that but there is no mercy in your heart. You don't love the tax collectors. You treat them as enemies of God. You don't have compassion anymore on people because of your laws. You have gone to the extreme in your method.

Now this is important in living for eternity. Some of us are struggling in our lives with decisions. Take for example, supposing that you have a rule to keep and there are different types of people. There are some people who will follow the rules strictly that they forget the purpose of the rule. Why the rule was made. And as a result by holding on to that rule, without making special cases on ground of compassion or mercy, their rules end up oppressing people. I mean you could be a stickler of the rule and be very nasty about it. It's just like for example, a general rule that says that only properly dressed people are allowed into the sanctuary. But what if a prostitute who is used to dressing scantily, suddenly felt the urge to come to church? She comes right off the streets to church in her street clothes; do you could apply the rule without mercy? The woman was seeking the Lord in her heart, but you chased her away and she is lost for all eternity.

Do you remember there were many times that people wanted to come to Jesus and the disciples tried to prevent them from coming to Jesus? Bartimeus wanted healing, he cried, 'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me.' Poor man, he can not see. Jesus was walking along the way with His group of disciples. Poor Bartimeus shouted, 'Jesus,

Son of David, have mercy on me.’ Some of His disciples looked and just passed him by. Jesus just kept on walking. But this man couldn’t stand it. He shouted even louder. Then the disciples came and told him to keep quiet. They followed the rules but they don’t have mercy. Finally he must have made a nuisance of himself. He became so loud that Jesus stopped and said, “Bring him to Me.” I wonder how the others thought who has stopped him from coming to Jesus. Wouldn’t they feel embarrassed? Wouldn’t they feel ashamed? Now we are talking about real principles. Out here in the life that we live, whether we live for temporal or eternity, those who only see the leaves but don’t see the forest are people who tend to be like the Pharisees. They are sticklers to the rules and forgot what is the purpose of the rules. Sometimes we got to educate these people.

Like for example, I go to Singapore almost every week to teach in a church. Every week I see the same staff in the hotel. It is their rule that they must see the passport and I must fill up the forms. For the first six months I kept doing that until I told the staff, “Look here, if I were your boss, I wouldn’t want you to do this. Because your rules say, you got to see the passport but you see my face every week. You could practically memorize my passport number. Why do I have to keep showing you my passport?” I said, “If I were your boss, I wouldn’t want you to just know the rule, I would want you to know the purpose behind the rule.’ The reason behind that rule is so that you don’t have people or criminals or all these kinds of foreign elements staying in your hotel and bring a bad element on the society. You want good people and not crooks. That is the valid reason, which I could think of for that rule. I said, “You know me. You saw my face for six months.” From that time onwards they never ask for my passport. It’s a practical application we are talking about.

Perhaps some of us are facing a decision. Perhaps somebody cheated you. Perhaps somebody robbed you. You got a point here. You said, “Alright I could see that guy and get back my money. I could do this and get back all my money. I could make life difficult for that person.” But wait, are you living for eternity or are you living for this earth? You may get back your one thousand dollars but lose your soul. Which is more important? See here we are talking about living for eternity. There are many times we come across decisions like that. To the world you look like a dumb fool. You said, “Never mind, I know this person is having hard times and if I press every cent out of this person, his wife and children will go without food for a month. I will cause him greater suffering. I would rather forgive the debt.” Somehow you would ask God to bring back the money to me, which I too need. So then you make a decision based on living for eternity not living for this earth. It brings greater reward. You bring a smile on the face of our Father because blessed are the merciful for they shall receive mercy. So we are talking about living for eternity. Making decision like that is based on understanding how all the laws fit together. Not just seeing the leaves without seeing the whole forest. So here we have the Pharisees who were extreme in their methods.

Their next encounter is again in Matthew 32-34. This is the second encounter Jesus had recorded. He may have many encounters but there are seven recorded in the book of Matthew before the climax of Matthew 23. He says, chapter 9 verse 32 “As they went out, behold, they brought to Him a man, mute and demon-possessed. And when the demon was cast out, the mute spoke. And the multitudes marveled, saying, ‘It was

never seen like this in Israel.’ But the Pharisees said, ‘He casts out demons by the ruler of the demons.’”

That is a very hard word. Cross reference also to Matthew 12:24 “Now when the Pharisees heard it they said, ‘This fellow does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons.’”

Now Jesus is being accused of being demonic. They may not be against the casting out of demons but definitely throughout these seven incidents; they never had any mercy at all. So that is definitely something out for them.

Secondly, their motives were always wrong. Their motives were always to get money out of the people. They were lovers of money. Like Luke 16:14 says, Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, also heard all these things, and they derided Him.

But in the third area of faith the Pharisees didn’t believe. They don’t have faith that the supernatural God can still manifest today. They are only limited or bound by the natural world and natural methods. As a result if anything exceptional comes outside of their religious thinking, it is of the devil. That’s the Pharisee’s attitude. If you don’t do things my way it’s the devil. It’s wrong. That’s a Pharisee mind at work. Jesus was very strict. He doesn’t associate the Pharisees’ way of thinking. Jesus of course pronounced a terrible judgment upon them for judging the Holy Spirit. In other words, they question the source. They themselves had no source of power like Jesus. Is there any other form or source in that area?

For example, sometimes you have a minister who is very effective in soul winning. Then another Christian will say that his ability to win souls is due to his kind of character and training. That is a Pharisee’s thinking. Don’t you acknowledge the gift of God on that minister’s life? Can’t you see the grace of God and maybe an anointing to win souls working in his life? But you try to explain everything away by natural means. Or perhaps a person has an influence on other lives and their life having an impact on others. You say that it is just natural charisma. You are on the borderline of trying to explain away the source of a person’s power and gifting from God. It is dangerous.

Korah and all the rebellious folks in the Old Testament said Moses, “We can do the same like you.” They never recognized that Moses had special gifting. They said, ‘we are equal to you.’ They never acknowledged that source of power that Moses had. They thought they could have the same thing that Moses had, the Holy Spirit. But they must learn to get the Holy Spirit the same way he got it. So it’s a Pharisee’s thinking that does not associate faith with the power of God. Their faith is in themselves and in their own methods. That was the second encounter.

Third encounter Matthew 12:1 onwards. “At that time Jesus went through the grain fields on the Sabbath. And His disciples were hungry, and began to pluck heads of grain and to eat. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to Him, ‘Look, Your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath!’”

These Pharisees had been following Jesus everywhere. I don’t know why they were with Jesus. Because it says in verse 1, Jesus went to the grain fields and His disciples

were there. They were very hungry. They seldom stop to buy food. Jesus was that busy in the ministry and any way Jesus did not eat much. And so as they were walking across the grain field the disciples began to experience what many new Christians in our church have. When they are new and our church services go past 3 pm on Sundays, they look around and find there is no eating shop around, they are forced to eat whatever they have or stay hungry. The disciples only found fresh corn and no eating shops were open since it was a Sabbath day. So they just went over and pluck some of the corns and started eating. The Pharisees jumped up and said, 'Look! He broke the Sabbath's law.' The disciples just plucked one corn, and the Pharisees said that was work and that they have broken the Sabbath's law. Jesus in verse 3 talked about exception. We must have the ability to obey and apply the commandments of God. We must also have the ability to discern when the exception is.

Now I love books. I read all kinds of materials. Almost in every field whether it be in science, in math, in arts, in almost every field, every rule I have found has some exceptions. Every rule has a small little place somewhere where there is an exceptional clause that excludes some. Even some of your most basic mathematic formula that you learn has exceptions. So there are exceptions even what you learn about circles. Being a 'pi r square' the area of a circle. It doesn't apply exactly anymore when you go to the higher math. You find that is not exactly pi r square. There is still a small little clause when you handle it in a full circular sense. Almost in every field when you began an expert in that field, you find those exceptions are there. We need to be a master to learn the general rules and then you learn the exceptions. You could never learn the exception until you learn the general rules. If you have no comprehension of the general rules the exceptions look meaningless to you.

So in every field of studies there are exceptions. That is why even in the spiritual world every exception is not the breaking of the law. Every exception is the operation of the higher law. Every exception is not breaking the law. It's not just negating the law. You can't negate the law of gravity. You overcome it through a higher law. We know that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. All men must die. But then we have Enoch who didn't die. Elijah didn't die. Why didn't they die? Not because they don't need Jesus. It was through Jesus' power that they were resurrected but they didn't die. They didn't follow the bible rule that says all men must die. I am trying to show here that the spiritual world had such laws that come in at a certain point and bring out the higher law that at first look like it contradict the normal law but it's not. Higher laws operate at times when weightier matters step in. We need to most of all harmonize these three:

Justice, love or mercy and faith. When we have all three harmonized then you are in the flow of God.

Jesus replied to them in Matthew 12:3, Jesus said, alright, if you want to go by the rule's book about breaking the Sabbath, let me give you scriptures where people broke the Sabbath. Verse 3, "But Jesus said to them, 'Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him: how he entered the house of God and ate the showbread which was not lawful for him to eat, nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests?'" They couldn't answer. David was not a priest. But David ate the priest food. Exception. Yes, any other people who ate it would have died. There was an exception that took place. A higher law was operating.

It says in verse 5, “Or have you read in the law that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are blameless? Yet I say to you that in this place there is One greater than the temple.” And again He repeated to them, verse 7, “But if you had known what this means, ‘I desire mercy and not sacrifice’, you would not have condemned the guiltless.”

They had their method right but their motives were wrong and their faith was also wrong. So they were in a ministry of condemnation, which Jesus doesn't condone or accept. This law of the Sabbath has nothing to do with the original plan of the Sabbath law that God made. They kept the leaves and forgot the forest. They forgot why God made the Sabbath. We must make a qualification here. No lower law can be broken with principle involved. In other words, you don't just overcome the old law. There are principles in exception. I mean if you make an exception everybody will take this truth half bake. In other words, you say everything has exception. I am always the exception. Exceptions are based on principles. What are the principles that you based your exceptions on? For example, every other person who sees President Bush in the White House must come through proper procedures except his wife and children. Why are they exempted? It is because of their flesh and blood relationship with him. Don't tell me that when Barbara Bush wants to go to White House she makes an appointment to go and stay there. Of course not. There is an exception made. Exception is not without reason. Exception is because of the law of flesh and blood relationship. So every exception is not unprincipled. Exceptions must come with principles. An unprincipled exception is only a false application of a law.

Jesus keeps on encountering these folks. Here in chapter 12:9 the opposition He had because of the Sabbath day still continues. “Now He had departed from there they went into their synagogue. And behold, there was a man who had a withered hand. And they asked Him, saying, “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?”

Again they got their rules all messed up. They are so hard on keeping the Sabbath that they had no more mercy left. They don't care for that man. They don't love that man anymore. You see when you are so occupied by what you want that you forgot compassion, love and mercy. You are a bone fide Pharisee. Just think about the parable of the servant. The king forgave the servant a great big debt. Later on this man had another servant who owed him some money. He grabbed this servant and said, “Pay back my money or I'll put you in prison.” He is more interested in his money in return. He did not care what happen to that person's soul. Whether the person dies in paying the debt or lives miserably in paying him the debt, he did not care. He was selfish. He was living for this earth and not living for eternity.

What about the rich man and the poor man Lazarus? There is a poor man who comes to eat at the rich man's table. The rich man had so much even the crumbs were given to the dogs. The poor man wanted the crumbs badly but even that he could not have. The rich man lived for this earth not for eternity. We need to examine our lives. We are preaching principles that if we would obey them will bring us into the higher realm so that we have more reward in heaven, so that we won't be so worldly, so carnal, and so revengeful, so like the people of this world. So that we can be a new breed of people. A new creation. A people of love. A people of worship. A people of power. A people of compassion. A people full of mercy. That is what God wants to build in these last days.

So Jesus spoke to them in verse 11. Jesus said, “What man is there among you who has one sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift it out?”

If a donkey or one sheep happened to fall into a pit on the Sabbath, the Pharisees themselves would have helped and taken the sheep out. But when a man was sick and needed healing, they wouldn't allow healing taking place. What's the nature of a Pharisee? They have double standards. They tell people don't cheat but they cheat. They tell others not to bribe but they themselves pay bribes. Don't do this, don't do that but they themselves do. Double standards. Jesus pointed to their double standards and said, “Don't you have mercy?” Remember this; don't give others rules, which you can not keep. Before you give a rule to somebody, ask yourself, ‘Am I able to keep the rules?’ If you can't then don't have double standards. When we live for eternity, we live for love and for compassion and for mercy. So Jesus confronted them and He went ahead and healed the man. The Pharisees in verse 14 were angry with Him and sought to destroy Him. All because He healed on the Sabbath.

When a person has a Pharisee's mind and thinking a lot of good things look like crime in their own eyes. It becomes a crime to show mercy. It becomes a crime to forgive rather than to take judgment. It becomes a crime when judgment and punishment are not meted out but rather forgiveness is given. In their eyes it become a crime. That's dangerous thinking.

The next encounter in chapter 12:38, “Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, ‘Teacher, we want to see a sign from You.’ But He answered and said to them, ‘An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.’”

Here the Pharisees wanted Jesus to show them some demonstrations of supernatural power but all His other demonstrations they would not accept. They wanted it on their terms not on His terms. Jesus said there would be no sign given under your terms. The only sign given is the sign of Jonah where the Son of Man will be crucified for three days and three nights. He will be in the center of the earth and then He will be raised. That's the only sign that will be given to you. To those who believe there are many signs. But to the Pharisees He said, no other sign. If you can not believe in the Son of Man, you can not believe anything. If you can not believe that Jesus is the Messiah, you can not believe in any other thing. See there was a law they couldn't fulfill.

Now cross reference to the book of John chapter one when Jesus talked to Nathanael in verse 45, “Philip found Nathanael and said to him, ‘We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote – Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.’ And Nathanael said to him, ‘Can anything good come out of Nazareth?’ Philip said to him, ‘Come and see.’ Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, and said to him, ‘Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!’ Nathanael said to Him, ‘How do You know me?’ Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.’ Immediately Nathanael believe and he said to Him, ‘Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel.’”

Verse 50, “Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Do you believe because I said to you, ‘I saw you under the fig tree. You will see greater sign than these. Most assuredly, I say

to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.”

Jesus promised him a greater sign because he believed the first sign. In other words, Jesus was saying to the Pharisees, if you don't believe in Me, there is nothing else. But when Nathanael believed in Him, there were some other things and signs that he got. So in Matthew 12:38 it shows that the Pharisees had no faith in God.

I think of many ministries and ministers of God who were struggling in the various places. Many of them are called to denominational churches. Then sometimes when they want to do something in their churches as a result of some discovery from the Word, they are hindered because the people around them lacked faith. So when they want to do something like healing and deliverance, they are told, “Don't.” They want to launch out into some ministry but the others say don't. Lets see the money first then we rent the place. You say we must go by faith and then we rent the place. It's just like arguing with Joshua. They are standing before river Jordan. If there was a Pharisee, the Pharisee would say, ‘Don't cross the Jordan until it's parted.’ Joshua says, ‘No you must enter in while it's full. Then it will be parted.’ No, they say seeing is believing. Joshua says, ‘No believing is seeing.’ They lived in two different worlds. Those who live for eternity say, believing is seeing. Those who live only for this earth say, seeing is believing. I don't believe it until I see. Two different worlds. Two different personalities. Two different philosophies. Two different concepts producing two different types of people.

Our fifth encounter is in Matthew 15. The pressure is now building up. In verse 1 again Jesus and the Pharisees battled. It looks like they are just crossing swords all through the gospel. The only problem Jesus had is with the Pharisees. In fact Jesus didn't have any problem with the Roman government. The only problem He had was the religious folks called the Pharisees and the Sadducees.

In Matthew 15:1 “Then the scribes and Pharisees who were from Jerusalem came to Jesus, saying, ‘Why do Your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread.’ He answered and said to them, ‘Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition?’

Jesus pointed out to the tradition that was contradictory to the Word. So the next thing they did here is that they put their tradition above the Word. When you began to move into methods minus mercy, minus faith in God, your methods will end up as traditions that are so heavy that no man can carry. Not only that Jesus says there are methods and traditions have become so strong like quick-sand and like the mud that it said here in verse 6 your traditions have made the commandment that is the Word of God of zero power. Jesus says you have made the commandment of God of no effect through your tradition. There is no more power. Which is why we need to understand justice. See all the time their justice was wrong. Their judgment was always wrong.

The basis of judgment was given by Jesus in Matthew 7:1 onwards “Judge not, that you be not judged.” Do not try to cast the speck out of your brother's eye, unless you remove the beam out of your own eye. So the basis of justice is this: unless we judge ourselves we are in no position to judge others. Unless we have done something ourselves we are in no position to help others. That is why when someone has a suggestion, someone has something, I would ask, “Have you done it yourself?” When

someone has a comment on how to dance, I would say do you dance yourself? Just in the room. Well, dance physically and let us see. When someone says, this is the way to do a prophecy, I would ask, “Do you prophesy yourself?” Do we charismatic go to the non-charismatic and ask them whether tongues are right or wrong? Never. You will never go to someone who has never prayed for the sick and ask, “Can you tell me something? What are the rules about praying for the sick?” No, we never do that. In a natural, would you go to a doctor who has never operated anyone and in fact is a fresh graduate and you are just to be operated for a sickness, you will never let him put the surgeon scalpel on your flesh. Would you give your company account to a person who is not a qualified accountant? In the same area, would you in the spiritual basis make a judgment on something that we lack experience?

It is important to learn when it's right to judge and when it's not right. There are many times in our lives that we withhold judgment. Sometimes people ask me, “What do you think of this man of God?” I say, “I haven't come to his stage, so I can not say anything.” We need to know the limit of how much we can go forth. That's where we learn to live for eternity. So here we have in Matthew 15, they have gone so far out from the Word. By Matthew 15 Jesus says in verse 4, “For God commanded, saying, ‘Honor your father and mother; and he who curses father or mother, let him be put to death. But you say, ‘Whoever says to his father and mother, ‘whatever profit you might have received from me has been dedicated to the temple is released from honoring his father or mother. Then you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your traditions. Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying, “These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips but their heart is far from Me. “ It was a tremendous encounter.

Now His sixth encounter in chapter 19 verse 3, “The Pharisees also came to Him, testing Him, and saying to Him, ‘Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for just any reason?’” And He answered and said to them, ‘Have you not read from the beginning what is so and verse 7, “why then did Moses command to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?’” He said to them, ‘Because of the hardness of your hearts.’” Did you notice in Matthew 19 the Pharisees now misinterpret the Word of God? They apply the Word only when it's suitable for them. When it's not suitable they don't apply. I mean you read about the woman who was caught in sin. They brought the woman to Jesus and said, “This woman was caught in adultery in the very act.” But the bible laws say both the woman and the person who committed the adultery with her must be stoned to death. They only kept the part that suited their purposes but allowed the man to go scot free. We don't know what happened. Perhaps the other person was known to them or paid them some money or whatever. We are not sure. But we are going to see afterward how they love money above all else. Anything with money will do. Money will buy their way in power. Although they are religious money was their god. Maybe the other person escaped because he was in a prestigious position. Or because that person had some influence on them. They could give some money and the Pharisees will excuse them. That was the way they were.

In Matthew 23 it says in verse 16, the Pharisees say “Whoever swears by the temple, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple, he is obliged to perform it.” This is the kind of people they were. The gold is more important than the temple. “Whoever swears by the gift that is on it, he is obliged to perform it but swears by the altar, it is nothing.” Jesus says in verse 19, is the altar or the gift more important. See

this is the kind of people they were. So here they were bringing a law not because they were interested to help the people. Not because they were interested to help marriages. Not because they were interested to help broken marriages or broken lives. They were bringing a law to try to catch Jesus and to get Him to be accused. Their purpose to ask those questions was not to help anyone. They had no mercy in their hearts.

Sometimes we have Christians who pick one portion of the scripture and try to run another person down with that scripture. Have you ever seen Christians quoting bible to shoot another person down. The bible is never meant that way. I mean Christians argue with the bible. That's the sad thing. Christians argue with the bible in the flesh, quote enough scriptures to satisfy themselves. But they will never quote scripture that will be against themselves. This kind of argument has no end as long as you are on this earth. A person who chooses to walk like a Pharisee there is no end to their arguing until Jesus comes and let God Himself argue. Which is why Paul says put away all these fables; forget all these kinds of nonsense arguments.

Remember in Mark 9 when the disciples couldn't cast out the demon and Jesus came down from the mount of transfiguration? It's found in Matthew 17, Luke 9 and Mark 9. Jesus came down and His disciples couldn't cast out the demon. Jesus found the disciples and the Pharisees arguing. Probably arguing about why the demon couldn't come out. The demon possessed boy and the father were ignored. No money. This is called living for this earth but not living for eternity. They forgot the weightier matters of the law and they are so focused on the lighter matters of the law. They are so concerned about the dot and the dash that they forgot the purpose of the law. The law is not for the every dot and every dash for argument sake. Because human beings are so clever, we could argue until Jesus comes. Do you know that every good intellectual person of reasonable I.Q. can argue until Jesus comes? There is no end. The person who believes God and does not believe God can argue until Jesus comes. In the end the solution is both have to have faith. You have faith that there is no God. I have faith that there is God. I can bring proof that there is God. You can say those proofs are subjective. Both ways. You can always argue until Jesus comes. That's why the bible says the natural man can not understand the things of the spirit. They are foolish to them.

So here we have the Pharisees and they misquoted the bible, one after another. At first you can see the progression. They started in Matthew 9 and they started by being extreme in their methods. Then slowly became more and more. They began to associate God with the devil by calling Jesus Beelzebub. Then slowly they reached a point where their tradition becomes more important than the Word. Now they come to the point where the Word is only used for their own end. Not even for profit to bring to God or to bring someone closer to God. That's the extent of their depravity.

Finally the seventh, last encounter in Matthew 22:35 "Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, 'Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?'"

I want you to know that is a very difficult question because in the presence of the Pharisees and the Jewish custom, there are thousands and thousands of laws. No one could have believed Jesus could have given such a simple answer. I mean it's just like somebody asking and saying, 'Well, in all your life in the ministry, what is the

greatest principle?’ It’s very difficult. You could try to summarize but it’s difficult. To summarize it the way Jesus summarized it so powerfully. But here He says of all those principles, which is the most important. Now if Jesus give the wrong one He had it. But Jesus said, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’”

In these commandments Jesus covers the three points: Justice, mercy and faith. Because when you love God and you love your neighbor, you will have faith in God and you will be able to believe God in your neighbor. If you have love for God and you have love for your neighbor, you won’t be as judgmental and so quick to condemn. If you have love for God, you will be like God. You will be merciful and you will be merciful to your neighbor. What a fantastic answer Jesus gave them. What we see here in Matthew 22 is that they had knowledge without relationship. So what Jesus is bringing forth is the principle. If you live for eternity, relationship is more important than knowledge. To be able to love another person is more important than to get your own way. So we have to make decision in this life. Sometimes it could be your employees. Sometimes it could be your employer. Sometimes it could be in your family’s situation. There are plenty of decisions you make. Every decision is either for eternity or for this earth. When you are moved by eternity, you will think about love and relationship and not just that un-right. Do you know some people love to be right? And they love to be right in the eyes of people so much that even if they lose all their friends, they won’t mind. That is living for this earth.

It’s important to be right and to love people. We do not want to let the lighter matters undone. But lets remember it’s important to love our enemies than to condemn our enemies. This is the higher law against lower law. The law of revenge and vengeance verses the law of forgiveness and love. The higher law must win and be a better law. Living for eternity means to make choices in these three areas: Justice, mercy and faith. All these three must be equal. You must have the correct method, the correct motive and the correct source of power to fulfill.

Finally the climax was in Matthew 23, Jesus summarized every encounter He had with the Pharisees. Everything you find in Matthew 9, 10, 11, 12 rights up to 22 is there. In Matthew 9, when the Pharisees say why do you sit with tax collectors in Matthew 9:11, but they themselves in Matthew 23:6, they love the best places at feasts. The best seats in the synagogue. They themselves go for all this kind of positions and when Jesus had a position with the tax collectors they got jealous. Jesus pointed to the inconsistency. Then in Matthew 9:34 when they talked about calling Jesus the Beelzebub, we see here that Jesus pointed to them the source of the power that is in verse 33, they themselves are serpents, broods of vipers, how can you escape the condemnation of hell. They themselves were the evil ones. But they made Jesus look like He is the evil one. Casting Jesus in the villain role and they the hero. Actually Jesus was the hero and they were the villain. So all these things they encountered with Jesus.

Jesus summarized in Matthew 23:3-4 “Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do. For they bind every burden, hard to bear, and lay them on men’s shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.”

So justice, mercy and faith, principle one: do unto others what you want others to do unto you. Don't do unto others what you don't want others do unto you. Don't require of others what is not required of yourself.

Principle two: Lets read on verse 5. All these are principles living for eternity. Verse 5-12, "But all their works they do to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments. They love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogue, greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called by men, 'Rabbi, Rabbi.' 'But you, do not be called 'Rabbi; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren. Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. And do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ. But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

Principle two: Humble yourself at all times. Seek those things that may be invisible to the world but they are visible in the eyes of God. Principle no.2 is humble yourself in the sight of God. Humble yourself in the sight of man and God will exalt you. That's living for eternity. So there will be many decisions where your decisions will make you more humble in the eyes of man. You feel more humble. You feel like a fool. You feel like a fool saying sorry. It makes you look small. That's alright. That's the cure against being a Pharisee. Or perhaps out there in the world it means to forgive somebody or something against you. Or perhaps your company did things to you and all kinds of things and you are in a position to sue the company. Then you ask yourself, "Shall I operate by the higher law or lower law? The lower law says to sue. The higher law says to forgive." Go by the higher law and you live for eternity. But your friends will call you a fool. Your friends will call you stupid. Your friends will call you all kinds of names. You will be humbled in the eyes of man. That's principle no.2, humble yourself in the sight of God for the higher principle. Humble yourself in the sight of man and God will exalt you. That which is in secret God will reward you openly.

Lets read on to verse 13 onwards, "But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. Therefore you will receive greater condemnation."

I want you to know verse 14, there are some men of God who befriend only the rich. They befriend only widows hoping that the widows die and they get all the inheritance. Evil folks, they are living only for this earth. They are so conscious about building their ministry that they forgot to build their reward in heaven. This is what I tell people saying that it's important for us to discern and realize that the people are needing help. Many times people are concerned about so many thousands of other things that they forget the most basic thing. Remember, no matter how organized the church is, how organized we become, if somebody comes and break every rule, perhaps they may behave in a way, which is not normally accepted. Perhaps if someone comes and breaks every Sunday service rule; they wear slippers to church and men wear hair long right up to the shoulder. They haven't bathed for the past few months. What's the most important thing here? Isolate them? The most important thing is to love them. Forget all those rulebooks. Forgive. What happen when a new

usher come and doesn't know the rules. They may damage some young Christians and lose them forever. I mean if we want to be harsh on every rule, it would be possible. That's why sometimes when there are certain events and help is needed but the people don't respond to the appeals for help, we always exercise mercy and forgiveness. Why, because the higher law is more important. You could exercise the lower law and scold them for their lack of responsiveness but in the end these people may be hurt and lose their walk with God. Maybe these people are not at the level where they are able to flow along at the higher law. But as for us, the higher law is important.

It says in verse 15, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourself. Woe to you, blind guides, who say, 'Whoever swears by the temple, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple, he is obliged to perform it. Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that sanctifies the gold? Fools and blind! And, 'Whoever swears by the altar, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gift that is on it, he is obliged to perform it. Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that sanctifies the gift? Therefore he who swears by the altar, swears by it and by all things on it. He who swears by the temple, swears by it and by Him who dwells in it. And he who swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God and by Him who sits on it."

Principle no.3: The origin and the rule of the source of all commandments is our main guideline. This is the principle of principles. There are many sub-principles. Jesus says it's not the gift that is important but the altar. So our third principle is that the altar is more important than the gift, the temple is more important than the gold and heaven is more important than this earth. May we live our lives for our heavenly Father through the higher law of mercy, the higher law of love, justice and faith. The altar is more important than the gift, the temple is more important than the gold and heaven is more important than this earth. That is the third major principle. Heaven is more important than this earth. Make your decisions accordingly.

We continue here. Jesus says in verse 24, "Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisees; first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish that the outside of them may be clean also. Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness. Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous and says, 'If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.' Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers' guilt."

The fourth principle: What goes on inside a person is more important than what goes on outside. What goes on inside a person's heart in life is more important than what goes on outside. That speaks a long way. If you can do everything outwardly to a person but you can not help them on the inside, there is not much help. But you could help them on the inside, you could put peace into their hearts, you could put joy into their hearts, you could put love into their hearts, all these are more important. What

goes on in our hearts, in our lives is more important than what we outwardly can show and can do the invisible more than the visible. So of all these three principles, justice, mercy and faith, remember correct method, correct motive and correct source will bring about a balance and prevent us from becoming a new Pharisee in the new way.

I will conclude by looking at I Corinthians 13. Paul says Verse 1-2, “though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become a sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.” Verse one, empty words. Verse two, empty works. Verse 3, “And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.” Verse three, empty sacrifice. Empty words, empty works and empty sacrifice. No point in giving all your body to be burned if you don’t have love. Then he tells us “Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hope all things, endures all things. Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away.”

We have these questions to ask you that you may search yourself.

Verse 4, love suffers long. Can you suffer long with people or are you impatient? If you are, love is not working.

Love is kind. Are you very rough, harsh or are you kind? The root word is gentle.

Love does not envy. Do you look at another person and get jealous at what they have? Love does not do that.

Love does not parade itself. Are you someone who always wants to show yourself, be recognized, and be accepted? If you are, love is not operating.

Verse 5, love does not behave rudely. Are you someone who likes to run people down just to get your own way, and your rudeness is beyond people’s limit? If you are, then love is not working. You are not living for eternity.

Love does not seek its own, is not provoked. Are you someone who gets irritated easily, angry easily, upset easily and then vengeful? If you are, love is not working. You are not living for eternity. You are living only for this earth.

And it says, love thinks no evil. Are you someone who question another person’s motive or try to look for the best in a person? Are you someone who suspects someone’s motive or someone who give him or her the benefit of the doubt? If you are not someone who gives them the benefit of the doubt, then love is not working and you are not living for eternity. You are living for this earth.

Verse 6, Love does not rejoice in iniquity but rejoices in the truth. When your enemy falls and when someone whom you don’t actually like very much has something bad happen to him/her, are you grinning from cheek to cheek? Do you secretly relish that

moment of pleasure because your enemy has fallen? If you are, you don't have love. You have only normal carnal nature that wishes the worst for his or her enemy. But love is not like that. Love weeps when the enemy falls because you have lost someone who you could have won to God. You know of their punishment in eternity that they will have to face and you weep for them.

Verse 7, Love bears all things. Are you someone who is enduring to the end? Are you some one who can be trusted? Are you someone whom others could depend on? Are you the tower of strength to others because you can bear anything? Are you someone who others could share their hurts? Are you someone who others could lean on? Are you someone whom others who are weak could look to you for strength and encouragement? Are you a tower of strength for them? Are you someone whom people could put their head on your shoulder and lean on in times of discouragement and despair? If you can not bear all these things, love is not working in your life.

Love believes all things. Love seeks to believe the best in others. Love seeks to believe what people say. Love seeks to see the best in another person. Not someone who question all things.

Love hopes all things. Love looks beyond this life. Love sees someone who fall, someone's problem, someone's weaknesses and someone's failure and says there is still hope for this person. Love hopes all things. Love sees the possibility of good in every person. Are you someone who gives up on people easily? Are you someone who shut off people easily? If you are, love is not operating. Love hopes in all situations and all things.

Love endures all things. Are you someone who year in and year out could be a loyal friend and help? Or are you someone who is only there when it's to your advantage? Are you someone who could endure through the thick and the thin or are you someone who is there only in the thin and not in the thick at difficulty? Are you the friend that stick closer than a brother or are you who run at the moment of danger? Love endures all things. Love is there when someone is rejected. Are you someone who shares in another person's tribulation and not just in his or her glory? Love endures all things.

Paul says, finally "We know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away. When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known. And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love."

May we live for eternity. May we live for love. May we live to love God. May we live to love our neighbor as ourselves.