

# A Wonderful Fear

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**Bible Verse:** 1 Peter 1:17-19  
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I just wanted to take a moment to figuratively speaking, take all of your faces in my hands and draw them close and be able to see you in affection and with the sense of gratitude that I have to the Lord to be with you to open the word, and with gratitude for the many memories of many relationships here. I remember when I first started attending Grace Life, long before I was the co-pastor, and I would come on a day like this rather new to the fellowship group and someone from the further past would come and speak, somebody that had maybe had been prominent in Grace Life in years before that, and I remember thinking who is this old fogey and why can't we get somebody current in here to speak? And now here I am, the old fogey with the precious privilege of opening God's word this morning. It's very special for me, for friends old and new, thank you for being here. It's special for Nancy and my daughter Marissa to be here with you here today.

Open your Bible, if you would, to 1 Peter 1. I did not bring my watch. I realize everybody is on a timeframe here and that's too bad. I'll do what I can. But in 1 Peter 1, the text that was just read earlier will be my text for this morning and I want to read it again as we begin as we see a text that gives us a fundamental disposition about how to approach life and how to think rightly about the unsettled and difficult world in which we live, as we look out horizontally in light of a vertical relationship that we have through the Lord Jesus Christ with our heavenly Father. 1 Peter 1, beginning in verse 17.

17 If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth; 18 knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, 19 but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.

Now before we dive too deeply into the text, I want to point out something very important to you in the text to show you the central command and the central purpose of what Peter is saying here in this particular text. He says there in the middle of verse 17, "conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth." What he's talking about here is a fundamental way that you view all of life, and as you walk through this pilgrim pathway that we're all on journeying as Christians toward our place in heaven, in that interim, during that parenthesis of time, Peter tells us to conduct ourselves in fear

during the time of our earthly walk. Peter is addressing how we live. Peter is giving us biblical thinking for a biblical life and that is very important to understand. This is how we are to think, how we are to live, and it's especially encouraging in the unsettled days in which we live, to understand the circumstances in which Peter was writing. He was writing to people who were suffering, who were undergoing hardship, and knowing that that's the circumstance of many of you today, this is a text that is especially pertinent for us that are walking with broken hearts, with challenges that we don't know the outcome to with uncertain days in the world around us, all of this is fitting for us. We realize that on this earth we are standing on unstable ground and there's always trembles underneath our feet, and how are we to think as we walk on a shaky pathway through this life. That's what Peter is addressing and telling us to do.

Now Peter wrote this to encourage Christians, to encourage Christians who were living then in what's now the modern day area of the country of Turkey there in Asia Minor, and they were suffering in many ways and I want to just show you a few texts to help set the broader context of what we're seeing here in what Peter says.

Look at chapter 1, verse 6. Again, we're just wanting to see the theme of suffering here. "In this you greatly rejoice," chapter 1, verse 6, "In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials." All kinds of trials are distressing you, Peter says, I'm mindful of that as I write. And as, you know, today's speaker, I'm mindful of that as I speak to you today and, you know, it brings in my heart whether it comes out in my tone or not, a certain sympathy and tenderness in my attitude toward you as we say these things here this morning.

Look at chapter 3, verse 14. Peter says, "even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed." He's recognizing the theme of suffering.

Look over at chapter 4, beginning in verse 12. He says, "Beloved," I love the way the apostolic writers write with affection toward their readers. They're not giving a lecture here. These were men who loved the people that they were writing to and it came out naturally in the way that they addressed them. Beloved. Little children. My brothers. This is the spirit in which Peter writes as well. He says there in verse 12, chapter 4, "Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing." Then in verse 14, he says, "If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you."

One more in chapter 5, verse 10, as he's wrapping it up and giving them a parting benediction, you might say. He says in verse 10, "After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you." So he says while you're suffering in this earthly life, he says, keep in mind that God has an ultimate goal here. You can live by the outcome. The outcome is that God is going to perfect you, strengthen you, and establish you in Christ. While the horizontal aspect of living is difficult, there is this overriding,

invisible, unseen hand of God accomplishing purposes both in you and through you and to you in order to bring about his purposes. So it shapes the hallway that you think about the sufferings that you go through in this life.

And when Peter wrote this very near the time of Peter's letter, the city of Rome had burned in A.D. 64, and the Emperor at that time, Nero, falsely accused Christians of setting the fire to deflect attention from his own failed administration, and he was utterly sadistic in what he did to our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. I use the word sadistic advisedly here. He burned them alive. He would coat Christians in wax and set them on fire on crosses in order to light his gardens. He would sew them in the skins of wild beasts and then turn wild dogs upon them to tear them to shreds. The momentary earthly terror of that is just unthinkable in a day when, you know, we put capital punishment to the extent that it's even practiced, we practice it in sterile rooms behind walls where no one sees it, Nero made a spectacle of inflicting the most degrading torture upon men and women in Christ just like you and me. So they were suffering, our brothers and sisters in Christ, when Peter wrote this.

Now it's not entirely clear whether Peter wrote just before those things started to happen and it was a preparation providentially for them as they went through it or, you know, whether it was just while those things were occurring. The whole point, though, is this, is that they were undergoing serious severe testing in a time when it would be easy to, in the carnal man, to question how is God letting this happen? Where is the God of comfort for this in me? Where is God in this time? I make no bones of acknowledging publicly that there have been times in my past, especially early in my Christian life, where I asked that question severely under the weight of great affliction. I needed a message like this back then and so this is real. One of the things that I love most about Scripture is that it is a realistic book about the nature of life in this fallen world and it comes to believers not to chastise us, not to wag a severe finger at us for not having more faith, but to give us rather instead a mindset by which we can go through these things conscious of the presence of God with us, and knowing that whatever happens around us, that God is pleased with the way that we are responding. Peter wants to impart that to us.

So what mindset is it, then, that helps you walk through a hostile world from this text that is in front of us. Well, let's go back there. 1 Peter 1:17, he says, "conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth." In fear. Now that's not the word that you often hear and not a word that's often expressed to people that are in the midst of suffering. We promise them God's comfort, God's love, the presence of Christ, and it's all well and good that we do, but what we see in this text is that that's not a complete counsel. If we're going to give the full counsel of God to ourselves and to others, we need to understand that Scripture says there's a place for fear of God in the midst of these things.

Now what does he mean by that? I thought we were reconciled. I thought there was no condemnation for those of us that are in Christ Jesus. Why would he be talking in terms of fear? Well, he's using fear in this sense and this brings the mindset clearly to us, he's using fear in the sense to just put it in very common terms of a sober-minded respect for God. To have a sober-minded reverence for him, a loving fear, a loving fear that issues in

glad obedience to him. We're not afraid of hell and damnation if we are in Christ because we understand that Christ has paid that price on our behalf, but that doesn't eliminate the need to walk before God in a sober-minded respect for him that is oriented toward obedience. And here's what we need to remember, Peter points this out as we'll see in just a moment, God is a transcendent God. He is an all-knowing God to whom we will one day give an account of our lives. We are all marching to an appointed date with God before his throne where we will give an account of the way that we have lived, even as believers as I'll show you in a moment. So that sobers us up and helps us realize that there is more to what we are doing, there is more to what is happening to us than simply the circumstances or pain of our suffering just now. We realize that there is a greater purpose at work and one day we are going to stand in the presence of God, we're going to stand before the judgment seat of Christ and there will be a review of sorts by which we give an account, and he holds us accountable for the way that we've lived and how we have lived in light of our salvation.

So how are we to think about that? Well, keep reading there in verse 17. I actually have points and headings for this message but we just haven't gotten to them yet. He says, "conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth." That's a reminder to us that life on this earth is temporary. It is passing. We are pilgrims walking down a path to another destination. This is not our home and that is fundamental to having a right mindset is to think deeply and meditate deeply on this, that our earthly life here is temporary. It's gone in a moment. Scripture says that we're a vapor passing away, that we're like the grass that rises up, shrivels under the heat and then is seen no more.

So we must remember that the life that we are living here is temporary and Scripture often makes this point. I only want to quote two passages to you both from the book of Hebrews. In Hebrews 11 it says that those who died in faith confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. Do you ever feel that way? I feel this way more and more. I look around at life and relationships and the things that are happening that are just so bizarre and irrational, I just feel it in my bones, I don't belong here. The things that this world loves and the things that this world does and the way that it thinks is utterly alien to me since Christ saved me and, you know, has been working desperately to try to sanctify me to some degree. I can't relate to the things that these people love and the philosophy that guides their lives. It's strange to me. I don't belong here. This is not home. Then two chapters later the writer says here we do not have a lasting city but we are seeking the city which is to come. So at the starting point, Peter is telling us remember the time of your stay on earth, it's passing, it's temporary, it's transient, and that shapes the way that you view everything else. And because it's transient, because it's passing, because we're going to stand before God in judgment, it loosens our attachment and it loosens our affections on this world and transforms our mindset into a recognition that there is something greater at work, there is something greater to come, and it lowers the temperature on the way that we respond to everything else around us, particularly in light of who our God is.

And these two perspectives that I'm going to give you this morning, inform your view of life in this passing world. We are commanded to think this way. We are commanded to

have a worldview anchored in our mind that shapes everything else the way that we view everything in the world around us, and in context of the entire letter, the mindset by which we understand the suffering that we go through in this life. And what are those two things? They both revolve around the word "fear." First of all, we need to understand this as we're walking through this passing world suffering as we do, we need to fear God in light of our future judgment. And this is not just a collective "we," this is an individual "you." You need to fear God in light of your future judgment. Peter, as I said, is addressing true Christians and he is helping them shape their worldview, you might say.

Look at verse 17 now as we finally get more deeply into the text. He says,

17 If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth;

There's a warm reminder of how we address our God as those who are in Christ. Peter is writing to believers as you see in the opening two verses of the epistle, and as believers we pray to God as our Father, as our heavenly Father. Jesus taught us in Matthew 6:9 to address God from that position of trust, that position of confidence and rest when he said, "Pray then in this way, Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name." And that word "Father" is an expression of trust, of implicit trust. You know, there's nothing more special to a parent than recognizing their children as they're growing, growing not simply in obedience but there is a growth in trust, a growth in confident love and a settled security that, "My father, my mother, they care for me legitimately," and they understand that and it starts to shape the way that they interact. It's special that way. Well, multiply that by infinity and understand the way that that is the way that we are to address God as Christians. We trust him. We love him because he is near to us. By his Spirit, he is dwelling within us. He loves us as shown in an undeniable way at the cross of Calvary. "God so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son so that whoever believes in Him might not perish but have eternal life." Well, that kind of uninitiated, unprompted grace and love causes us to respect him and it causes us to well up with love for him so that we address him as Father. "Father, You are good to me. You are kind to me." And your prevailing mindset as a Christian, I can't emphasize this enough, your prevailing mindset of a Christian should be somewhere in your own words like this, "God through the Father of my Lord Jesus Christ, is my good Father. He will bless me as I come to Him." Your mindset as you pray is, "My Father hears me. My Father welcomes me. One way or another it will be well with my soul because of who God is. He sovereignly reigns and He cares for me and He's going to work things together for my good and for His glory." So that whatever is happening, our view is not determined by what we see on cable news, our view of life is not determined by the uncertainty of world events, it's not even determined by the difficulties or the joys that we find in our human relationships; there's something far more stable, far more enduring, something far more immutable, unchanging, and that is that our Father loves us. So we speak to him and we address him in that way from that position of trust, and what's very interesting in the context of what Peter is saying, that yes, that perspective of trust is crucial for proper prayer and proper

living, but Peter here injects a balancing consideration that is often a little bit undercooked in modern Christian thinking.

Look at what he says there at the end of verse 17. He says "conduct yourselves in fear," and he says even earlier he says, "If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work." He introduces that element of personal judgment that will come, and here's where our mindset needs to grow, we need to expose our minds to this aspect of the light: God is a Father to us and we thank him for that, but God is more than a Father to us, he is also our judge, and Scripture makes this abundantly clear as it speaks about Christians standing before the judgment seat of God. In a context of addressing Christians, Paul says in Romans 14:12, each one of us will give an account of himself to God. And in 2 Corinthians 5:10, again the context is Christians, it says we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ. And for those of you that teach and aspire after teaching, it's even more sobering for us because Scripture tells us that we're going to face an even stricter judgment as we give account for the responsibilities and opportunities that have been given to us in the handling of God's word. On a church campus, I love this church, I'm grateful to this church, but on a church that houses a seminary campus, seminary professors, seminary students, future pastors, future missionaries, the accountability that rests upon this place is great. So all of a sudden we realize, "Oh, I need to pay attention here to what's going on."

And what Peter says here as you "address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work," we're going to give an account and there's going to be no favoritism to us. As intimate as our relationship is in Christ with our heavenly Father, as perfect as our union is with him, there is still an element that we need to understand that there will be no favoritism. Scripture again makes this point repeatedly. There is no partiality with God, Romans 2. God shows no partiality, Galatians 2. There is no partiality with him, Ephesians 6.

What is the point of all of that? What is Peter saying when he says, "If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work," what's his point? What's he saying to us? How is that supposed to impact the way that we think? Well, it's this and it needs to be emphasized, is that we should not and cannot presume on the grace of God. Grace is not a license for you to live in an ungodly way. Grace is not an excuse, is not a reason for you to coddle your pets sins. It is not a reason for you to say, "Well, it doesn't matter because everything has been covered by the blood." Well, look, if you've been covered by the blood really and truly, your attitude is not one of casual indifference to your sin, you realize that you have been saved in order to be delivered from sin so that sin might no longer reign in you, so that it becomes a motivation to holiness, not to godlessness and carelessness in your spiritual life. There will be consequences for unrighteousness in Christian living, not the eternal consequences of hell and damnation because Christ has paid that for us, but as Christians we're going to give an account for the tenor of the way that we have lived our lives. We're going to answer for that and our reward from Christ eternally will somehow be based on that in ways I don't pretend to understand. I'm just going to leave that to his sovereign omniscience but somehow the

way that we live matters for the way that we give an account, and that sobers us up. That makes it serious.

So because of that, because we recognize that, because we understand that God on one wing of the aircraft, that's a horrible way to speak but I've got to make some kind of metaphor here, on one wing of the aircraft God is our Father, on another wing he is our judge, he will impartially judge us, and both of those perspectives are necessary for us to walk with balance through a hostile world, otherwise Peter wouldn't have even said this. So we trust him, we trust him because he is our gracious Father, and yet we do not trifle with him because we fear him. In the same way that a child rests in the love of a parent, the love of a father, the love of a mother, and yet does not use that as a justification for a defiant life toward the parent, there is also a sense of respect, well, that earthly thing that we understand is giving us a window into the way that we are to think about God, and we fear him in light of our future judgment.

Look at 1 Peter 4:7, "The end of all things is near." You see, he's looking forward to the end of time. "The end of all things is near; therefore," as a consequence of that, "be of sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer." More and more as the days go by, it's being forced upon us that this casual, you know, kind of funny way of approaching Christian living, it doesn't work in times like this, does it? We see that. We understand that. And the men who act like clowns in pulpits are utterly irrelevant to the purposes of God. The men who only want to make people laugh as they speak from a pulpit, it is a crime, it is a spiritual crime what they are doing to their congregations and to the people who hear them and follow them. It is a spiritual crime because they are teaching them not to take seriously God, life, and their future judgment. Peter says, by contrast, "Be of sober spirit."

There's a church back in Cincinnati that put together, they've got a big auditorium and they put together a horse rodeo of some kind to try to bring in people, and it's always in the name of attracting unbelievers. You know, let's just ask a prior question before we do such foolishness: is that consistent with sober fear of God? Does this teach the unbelieving that God is a God to be feared? You know, we're destined to die once and after this comes judgment, where is the fear of God in any of that? And we remember that Scripture speaks definitively that the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom, the fear of God is the beginning of knowledge. It is by the fear of God that we turn away from evil. It's a cosmic crime. I will have no part of it.

Peter goes on and says in verse 17, look at it with me here, and this wraps up the element of fearing God in suffering. He says in verse 17, he says, "For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? And if it is with difficulty that the righteous is saved, what will become of the godless man and the sinner? Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right." "God, I lay aside my questions and my accusations against You. In light of Christ, I couldn't possibly accuse You of being unloving. I don't understand how all of this fits together. My heart is breaking. I am lonely. I feel abandoned. I've been

betrayed by my friends but, God, in the midst of all of that, I entrust my soul to You. I fear You. I respect You. I'm grateful for You. I trust my soul into Your hands." That's the spirit that Peter is calling for when he tells us to fear God in light of your future judgment.

Now secondly, Peter goes on as you go back to chapter 1, he tells us, secondly, to do this: he tells us to fear God in light of your redemption. To fear God in light of your redemption. So again there's just this exquisite balance in biblical thinking. There's this exquisite balance in the apostolic writers balancing security with fear, balancing redemption with the way that we respond to that, and so we fear God in light of your redemption. Yes, we will stand before Christ and give an account for us but we will stand before him ultimately in security because he has redeemed us from our sins. And so, second point here: fear God in light of your redemption, if you're taking notes. More than God's impartial judgment that undergirds this holy fear by which we respond to him as we go through life, now we get to the sweet part, there is also this sense of profound gratitude to Christ. Profound gratitude for Christ.

Look at verse 18. He said "conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth," verse 18, it's to be grounded by knowledge, grounded by an understanding of right doctrine, of sound teaching, so that he says in verse 18, he says,

18 knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, 19 but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.

Peter is making a contrast in order to point out the precious nature of redemption.

Now I know and understand that most of you know that the word "redemption" comes from the language of the slave market of the first century. To be redeemed was a word that spoke to the fact that a slave or someone on his behalf could purchase his freedom. He could go to the master, pay a price, and the slave would be free and out from under the bondage of the one who owned him, and the price that was paid for that freedom was called the redemption price or the redemption cost.

Now stay with me here, follow with me along here. Scripture describes unsaved people, Scripture describes you in your former state before you were saved, you were a slave. You were dead in sin. Jesus said in John 8, "Everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin." And his point is this, is that unsaved men spiritually are prisoners to their sin. They do not have the power or even the desire or will to effect their own escape. We're dead in trespasses and sins. We are held captive by the devil to do his will, it says in 2 Timothy. So both by inner corruption and by spiritual enslavement by the devil, we were captive in our unsaved condition to a life of darkness that issues ultimately in eternal death. And for those of you that are not in Christ, I just gave you your personal biography of who you are right now. You're dead in trespasses and sins. You're dominated by the devil and you are doomed to suffer the wrath of God unless God has mercy on your soul and brings you



to Christ and you cry out for mercy in response to the word of God. That's who we all were. We were all like that. We're all humbled by what Scripture says was true of us.

So the unsaved man is like a slave because he's bound to the will of something external to him. He's not free. There is no such thing as a genuinely free will because man is captive to his bondage and his love for sin that he only chooses evil continually. Can't do anything else. That's why, my friends, that Scripture so often describes salvation in terms of redemption. When Christ saved us, he paid the price to free us from that condition so that we might be free and enslaved to a different Master, our Lord himself.

Look at what Peter says in verse 18 and he's emphasizing the price that was paid for your salvation. He says in verse 18, "knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers." That's the negative side of the contrast. He says as we are talking about suffering in this life, understand that what brought you to Christ was nothing that was affiliated with this world. The most precious things of this world had no power to save and to impart to you what you really needed, and so understand that the world which afflicts you is not the world that saved you and therefore view it differently, and then think rightly about Christ.

Verse 19, it's a sharp contrast. He says you weren't redeemed with earthly things, "but," but, by contrast something different, something alien to what was just described, you were redeemed "with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ." We had a death in our family this week, a dear man who loved my mom for the past 15 years or so. I held his face in my hands just on Tuesday and he was pronounced dead an hour later, but just the perishing nature of this life. You put your hands literally on the face of someone that you've loved and you just see that it's passing away. You can't keep it. You can't bring it back and it just gives us the right perspective with which to view this world. Judgment and death and sin and, oh, it's so unappealing when you think about it rightly. To be in our position as Christians, to realize that we've been delivered from all of that and into the realm of Christ and brought into union with him, we realize we've been given a great precious gift that shapes the way we view everything else, so much so that death has no sting. And the silver and gold of this passing world doesn't last. You can't take it with you and you're probably going to lose it somewhere along the line in life anyway, right?

We were redeemed with something far greater than what this world has to offer, the precious blood of Christ. The sacrifice that redeemed us was perfect. Christ, Jesus Christ, the offering, perfect. The eternal sinless Son of God come in human flesh. It doesn't get any better than that. Perfect sacrifice. Blameless and without defect. His shed blood, the redemption price that God required in order to set us free. And why is it precious? In addition to the fact that it was the blood that coursed through our Savior's veins during his earthly life, it's also precious from the perspective of what it accomplished on our behalf. What has the blood done for you, my Christian friend? You that are so troubled by the things that are happening in this world to the point that maybe it has eclipsed in recent days your view, your remembrance, your consciousness of what Christ has done, what has the blood done for you? Well, let me just throw out theological terms. It has

justified you. The shed blood of Christ is the ground of your justification. Christ has paid the price so that God accepts you as fully righteous in his sight, having forgiven all of your sins, and has declared and accepted you on the basis of the righteousness of Christ himself. Justified, pardoned, and declared righteous. Reconciled. Formerly an enemy of God, now a child of God, in the family of God. Sanctification, set apart in position by the blood of Christ, being progressively changed also into conformity with his image. Your sins have been forgiven. One day you will be glorified in heaven with him and given all manner of perfection and somehow we are going to be given the capacity, as Jonathan Edwards spoke about, we're going to be given some kind of capacity to ever drink in and understand and appreciate the magnitude of his eternal glory in a way that far transcends anything that we know here on earth. All of that and so much more purchased for you by the precious blood of Jesus, the precious blood of Jesus that he said, "No one has taken My life away from Me. I lay it down voluntarily. I give it for your sake." He laid down his life because of his love for you.

Well, what we understand, then, is that there is a different kind of fear that arises from that. We conduct ourselves in fear because we understand we're going to stand before God in judgment, but even that great reality is swallowed up by a greater reality that Christ loved us and shed his blood for us and we fear him in a completely different transcendent way. It's the fear of profound gratitude, a fear that this amazing gift motivates me to love him and to obey him, and that is the perspective from which I live all of my life so that as you're walking through suffering, you realize, "I need to take this seriously. I'm going to stand before God. He's appointed this suffering for me and so I want to respond to it properly." But there's also this sense given to us from the Holy Spirit of how precious Christ is, how much he has done for us and what he has done for us is a measure, it is a window into how greatly he loves us. My Christian friend, it's a measure of how greatly he loves you that he did that for you. At his initiative, without anything in you prompting him to do it, just out of sheer sovereign love, out of the very nature of who he is, he says, "I love the ones that God has given to Me and I'll gladly give My life up for them that they might be with Me in heaven forever." And that kind of love just strikes your conscience, it strikes your heart with a sense of, "I love Him in response. Oh, I love Him imperfectly, I love Him in failing faltering steps, I know," but the governing principle in your heart is that you love him for who he is and what he has done.

Charles Spurgeon gives us a closing encouragement and exhortation. It's rather a lengthy quote but when you want to sound eloquent, you quote Spurgeon, right? Spurgeon said this as only he could. "The blood of Jesus, sin dies at its presence, death ceases to be death, hell itself would be dried up if that blood could operate there. The blood of Jesus, my doubts and fears flee, my troubles and disasters disappear. The blood of Jesus, shall I not go on conquering and to conquer so long as I can plead that? In heaven, this shall be the choice jewel which shall glitter upon the head of Jesus, that He gives His people victory, victory through the blood of the Lamb. And now is this blood to be had? Can it be got at? Yes. Yes, it is free, free to every soul that believes. Whoever cares to come and trust in Jesus shall find the virtue of this blood in his case this very morning. Away from your own works and doings, turn those eyes of yours to the full atonement made, to the

utmost ransom paid, and if God enables you, poor soul, to say, I take that precious blood to be my only hope, you are saved and you may sing with the rest of us."

My dear Christian friend, your life is hard and your life is brief. Fear God in light of the judgment to come, and go beyond that and give thanks to Christ. There is victory for you. Victory! Victory! Victory through the precious blood of the Lamb!

Let's pray together.

*Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come, Your will be done, as in heaven so also upon earth. Give these dear folks their daily bread and forgive them their debts, Father, as they forgive their debtors. And do not lead them into temptation but deliver them from evil and from the evil one. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and Thine alone is the glory forever and ever. Amen.*

God bless you. You're dismissed.

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