

## 2 TIMOTHY 4:6-8

### HOW CAN I COPE WITH MY OWN MORTALITY?

“I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.”<sup>1</sup>

**H**e was already an old man when I met him. He had driven an ammunition truck across Europe, having seen constant combat from the invasion of Normandy until at long last the war had ended. During the period of our acquaintance, his attention was almost exclusively focused on a fraternal order to which he belonged, though he proclaimed faith in the Son of God. His wife, on one memorable occasion, challenged him, “Why are you not getting ready for meeting God? If you were planning a holiday, you would make preparations. If you were going to Montreal, you would pack a suitcase and make certain you had accommodations waiting your arrival. If you were going to New York you would have your passport in order and make certain your tickets were in hand. You say you are going to heaven, but I never see you getting ready. I never see you pray; I never see you read the Bible. Why do I never see you preparing for what is a certainty?”

His wife was blunt, but her question was legitimate. If an individual says he is going to heaven, wouldn't you expect that that person would give evidence that he was anticipating the journey? If he has no interest in his destination, surely there is a problem. After all, each of us is moving inexorably toward a meeting with the True and Living God. Either we are meeting Him in repentance now, or we shall meet Him in terror after this life.

You have heard me say, “The statistics on death are amazing—one out of one dies!” Death is inevitable, should Christ tarry. It is what follows death that should give us pause. Solomon cautioned that “the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it” [ECCLESIASTES 12:7]. Though the Apostle's words are specifically directed to those who know God, in the broadest sense they hold true for all mankind. “We must all appear before the Judgement Seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil” [2 CORINTHIANS 5:10]. Only redeemed saints will appear before the Judgement Seat of Christ, but those who are unsaved must stand before the Great White Throne where they will receive eternal sentence. We each will give an accounting to God for the decision we made concerning His Son and for the manner in which we have lived.

One of the primary tasks assigned to any preacher of the Word is preparing people to die. Without apology, this is the purpose of the message for this day. I propose to equip you to victoriously enter a safe harbour at the conclusion of this present life. To accomplish this goal, I invite you to join me in exploring Paul's testimony to a younger pastor.

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from **The Holy Bible: English Standard Version**. Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers, 2001. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

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**WHAT IS INEVITABLE** — “I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come.” At the time he wrote these words, the Apostle was incarcerated in the Tullianum, or lower chamber, of the Mamertine Prison situated on the northeast side of the Capitoline Hill in Rome. He was condemned to die because of his faith in the Living Saviour. Few people know when they are scheduled to die, but all people know they must die. The only exception to this dark knowledge is the fact that some will be transformed at the return of the Master. Before we invest time thinking of the dark inevitability of death for the most, turn your mind to the Blessed Hope, the return of our Saviour.

John encourages believers to live in anticipation of the return of the Master when he writes, “Now, little children, abide in him, so that when he appears we may have confidence and not shrink from him in shame at his coming. If you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him.

“See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure” [1 JOHN 2:28-3:3].

Focusing on the return of the Master—Living in the light of His return—has a purifying effect in the life of the believer. In the Word of God, we are taught that we are to live in anticipation of His return, at which time we will be transformed—literally, *metamorphosed*. “Our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

“Therefore, my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved” [PHILIPPIANS 3:20-4:1].

The child of God lives with the expectation that the Master is coming again to receive His people to Himself. At His return, those who have believed in Him, though they may have suffered death, will be raised from the tomb and changed into His likeness. We who are alive will then be changed so that together with our beloved dead we shall be gathered to the Saviour.

Scripture teaches us to live in hope. “We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. Therefore encourage one another with these words” [1 THESSALONIANS 4:13-18].

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The knowledge of His return is meant to encourage the people of God, and it is anticipated that God's beloved people will encourage one another by referring to these truths. I should expect that we would want to focus on His return frequently, and the more so as time moves toward that promised return. This is clearly taught in the Letter to Hebrew Christians. "Let us be concerned about one another in order to promote love and good works, not staying away from our meetings, as some habitually do, but encouraging each other, and all the more as you see the day drawing near" [HEBREWS 10:24, 25 HCSB].<sup>i</sup>

Let me pause to remind you that we Christians are looking for the Son and not for signs. Those individuals who spend all their time looking for signs will always be disappointed. However, it is impossible not to note the conditions outlined by the Master preceding His return. "There will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth distress of nations in perplexity because of the roaring of the sea and the waves, people fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world. For the powers of the heavens will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near" [LUKE 21:25-28]. Our present situation appears to presage those dark days that must come.

Things look dark on the horizon of history. It is possible that within our lifetime we will witness the last remaining superpower replaced by a red dragon. This could occur momentarily because of the greed of the people of that great nation which has sold their future for immediate gratification. Also, God has indeed made Israel a cup of trembling [see ZECARIAH 12:2, KJV],<sup>ii</sup> and increasingly it seems that all nations of the world are arrayed against that valiant little nation. The nations have forgotten the divine warning that was given as a promise to Israel, "Truly, one who touches you touches the apple of my eye" [ZECARIAH 2:8, NRSV].<sup>iii</sup> Increasingly, decent people who strive to be righteous are persecuted on account of their righteousness and compelled to adopt the attitudes of this dying world. Entertainment has become almost utterly degraded to the point that it is not possible to be amused without sacrificing godliness. In light of all these events, we must live in the light of His coming to receive His own. I do not say that these signs are evidence of the proximity of His return, but they surely alert us to the need to be watchful.

Remember the warning of the Master, "Of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is. It is like a man going to a far country, who left his house and gave authority to his servants, and to each his work, and commanded the doorkeeper to watch. Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming—in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning—lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping. And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch!" [MARK 13:32-37, NKJV].<sup>iv</sup>

What must be kept in mind is that we see a promise which can be fulfilled momentarily. However, death hovers near for each of us until the Master returns and gathers us to Himself. We know, "It is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgement." We also know that "Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for Him" [HEBREWS 9:27, 28].

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Nevertheless, until He returns we are responsible to continue to live righteous, holy lives. And during this period as we await His return, we know that we are mortal, facing death. As was true for the Psalmist we find that often we who believe cry out to the Master,

“You have made us like sheep for slaughter,”

and

“For Your sake we are killed all the day long;  
we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.”

[PSALM 44:11, 22]

When the Old Testament saints spoke of going “the way of all the earth” [e.g. 1 KINGS 2:2], they spoke a truth the dogs us to this day. As I have taught so often, and as seems ignored by most of mankind, “Sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned” [ROMANS 5:12]. Every cemetery testifies to the sinful nature of mankind, for were there no sin there would be no death.

As one who studied the chemistry of life and who has peered into the molecular structure of the cell, I testify that the body is “fearfully and wonderfully made” [see PSALM 139:14]. We have fail-safe systems and back-up mechanisms designed into our bodies. Within our bodies are repair mechanisms at the molecular level. Realistically, there is no reason for the body to age and wear out. However, it is evident that the body does wear out and death does reign over mankind. This wearing away of the fabric of life can be nothing other than the testimony that “the wages of sin is death” [ROMANS 6:23].

We do not read very far in the Book until we come to the fifth chapter of Genesis—one of the dark chapters of the Word. That dark chapter opens with these words: “This is the book of the genealogy of Adam. In the day that God created man, He made him in the likeness of God. He created them male and female, and blessed them and called them Mankind in the day they were created. And Adam lived one hundred and thirty years, and begot a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth. After he begot Seth, the days of Adam were eight hundred years; and he had sons and daughters. So all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years; *and he died*” [GENESIS 5:1-5].

The lineage continues, listing Seth, Enosh, Kenan, Mahalalel, Jared, Enoch, Methuselah and Lamech. What is dark about the account is that with the singular exception of Enoch the life of each individual concludes with the grim reminder of human frailty when the divine author states, “and he died.” Live we ever so long, yet our days end in death. This is not theory; this is reality. I know that people grow tired of hearing the preacher warn that death is coming, but the weariness of the people is inconsequential in the face of the last enemy [1 CORINTHIANS 15:26]; and the preacher is charged with speaking the truth in love, warning of what is certain.

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**WHAT IS IMPORTANT** — “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.” Death awaits each one. What is important is not that we will die, but what we do while we live. We have a very short period in which to prepare for the inevitable. We are taught in the Word that “night is coming, when no one can work” [JOHN 9:4b]. Whether we live many years, or whether we die in what we call the prime of our lives, what is vital is that we prepare for the inevitable. Since death is certain, it is critical that we prepare for that inevitability.

I am compelled by the Word to confront what has become a plague among the professed people of God in this day. We no longer live as though we were preparing for eternity; Christians have become indistinguishable from the world. We are so focused on gathering what we imagine we need and what we want in this present age that we neglect preparing for eternity. It is the role of a priest of God to teach the people of God the difference between the holy and the common, and how to distinguish between the unclean and the clean [see EZEKIEL 44:23].

As I prepared the message this week, I read a religious news article that caused me to pause. The article asked, “Do we view sin as God views sin?”<sup>2</sup> It was a sobering article, to say the least. As I pondered the question, and refreshed my memory of the verses Mrs. Gliebe cited, I read again the dark words of Ezekiel’s prophecy. Listen to the Word of God.

“Then [God] called out in my hearing with a loud voice, saying, ‘Let those who have charge over the city draw near, each with a deadly weapon in his hand.’ And suddenly six men came from the direction of the upper gate, which faces north, each with his battle-ax in his hand. One man among them was clothed with linen and had a writer’s inkhorn at his side. They went in and stood beside the bronze altar.

“Now the glory of the God of Israel had gone up from the cherub, where it had been, to the threshold of the temple. And He called to the man clothed with linen, who had the writer’s inkhorn at his side; and the LORD said to him, ‘Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, **and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and cry over all the abominations that are done within it.**’

“To the others He said in my hearing, ‘Go after him through the city and kill; do not let your eye spare, nor have any pity. Utterly slay old and young men, maidens and little children and women; but do not come near anyone on whom is the mark; and begin at My sanctuary.’ So they began with the elders who were before the temple. Then He said to them, ‘Defile the temple, and fill the courts with the slain. Go out!’ And they went out and killed in the city.

“So it was, that while they were killing them, I was left alone; and I fell on my face and cried out, and said, ‘Ah, Lord GOD! Will You destroy all the remnant of Israel in pouring out Your fury on Jerusalem?’

“Then He said to me, ‘The iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah is exceedingly great, and the land is full of bloodshed, and the city full of perversity; for they say, ‘The LORD has forsaken the land, and the LORD does not see!’ And as for Me also, My eye will neither spare, nor will I have pity, but I will recompense their deeds on their own head.’

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<sup>2</sup> Kate Gliebe, “Do we view sin as God views sin?”, Baptist Press, <http://www.bpnews.net/BPFirstPerson.asp?ID=33341>, accessed 14 July, 2010

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“Just then, the man clothed with linen, who had the inkhorn at his side, reported back and said, ‘I have done as You commanded me’” [EZEKIEL 9:1-11 NKJV].

What I want you to ponder is this question: If God should mark those who “sigh and groan over the abominations that are committed” in our own nation, would I receive a mark? If God should mark those who “sigh and groan over the abominations that are committed” in our own province or even in our own community, would I receive a mark? I fear that we are so consumed with our own lives—with our comfort and with our own interests—that we are incapable of sighing and groaning over the abominations that mark our land.

Too many of our leaders are prepared to sell their vote for a bribe; they seem intent only on enriching themselves at the expense of integrity. Our judges seem incapable of thinking or acting righteously; they seize power and coerce the righteous of the land to conform to their view of how we should live. We entertain ourselves by watching the most intimate acts while our language grows increasingly crude; even the educated people of our nation seem incapable of speaking without resorting to crude language. We tremble in terror that we might offend violent men who rejoice at the slaughter of thousands by their terrorist brothers, even as we ridicule the holy tenets of the True and Living God. We grin in the face of Holy God and desecrate every sacred belief, all in the name of humour. We normalise perversion and compel all to accept such degradation as reasonable. We who name the Name of Christ the Lord grow strangely silent and our presence is increasingly irrelevant as we permit ourselves to be marginalised.

These things are happening now! Do we grieve? Do we sigh and groan? Do we refuse to accede to the urging of the multitude to accept evil as good? Do we silently acquiesce when we are told we must not say that these things are wrong and wicked? The pulpit should not be a place to promote or facilitate lurching toward error. The people of God should not accept silently the progress of evil. If we do not hold the preachers accountable, if we do not pray earnestly for mercy for our nation, if we do not grieve over evil, asking the Father to hold back judgement, if we do not warn the people of the consequences of sin, if we do not insist that those who share this Faith must act honourably—then we are guilty before the Lord.

“I have fought the good fight,” said the Apostle. “I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.” I cannot say when your race will be ended, but I do know that it shall be ended. I do know that you are now engaged in combat. Ours is not combat that calls us to take up arms against other mortals; neither is it combat that calls us to the polls. We are engaged in spiritual combat that demands that we live holy lives, that we prayerfully seek the face of the Living God, that we declare the truth of God and that we hold one another accountable for doing these things.

I know you are weary, but the war is not finished. I know you long for peace, but “no one can be discharged during the battle” [ECCLESIASTES 8:8, NET].<sup>v</sup> I have frequently pondered the weariness expressed by the prophets of God. Jeremiah complained to God; he questioned why the wicked prosper and why the treacherous thrive. He wondered why God permitted evil to continue unchecked, even as it cost the nation terribly. He noted the mourning of the land because of unrestrained evil. He marvelled at the audacity of the wicked and wondered at God’s silence toward the cries of the righteous [see JEREMIAH 12:1-4]. Listen to God’s answer.

“If you have raced with men on foot, and they have wearied you,  
how will you compete with horses?  
And if in a safe land you are so trusting,  
what will you do in the thicket of the Jordan?”

[JEREMIAH 12:5]

“Jeremiah, you’ve been running a footrace, you’ve been competing with mere men; shortly you will race horses! What are you going to do when you compete with horses? If you are so trusting in a land that is safe, what will happen when you are forced into the thickets of the Jordan?” Dear people, we have no reason to be weary as we have not even begun to compete. We have not yet agonised over sin, pleading with God to show mercy to His people and warning the lost to repent of their wickedness.

Listen to me! When did you last spend the evening praying and mourning over sin? When did you last spend the night crying out to God for mercy for a lost child, for a lost parent, for a lost friend? When did you last find yourself weeping as you asked God to give our leaders—national, provincial and community—wisdom, asking that He would make them good so that we would have peace? When did you last speak with your neighbours about the life that is found only in the Son of God? When did you last refuse to go along with the crowd though your refusal jeopardised your personal comfort? I fear there are few within the Christian community who can say with the Apostle that they have fought the good fight or kept the faith.

Yet, we who are believers in the Risen Son of God know that we shall give an account to Him who saved us. We read the words of Scripture and act as though they did not apply to us: “We must all appear before the Judgement Seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil” [2 CORINTHIANS 5:10]. Each Christian will give an account of what he or she has done with the Faith entrusted to him or her.

May I remind you of a truth that you know very well? The Judgement Seat of Christ will be *A PLACE OF REVELATION*. Before the Judgement Seat on which the Master shall be seated, “each one’s work will become manifest” as “it will be revealed by fire” [1 CORINTHIANS 3:13]. When we appear before that Judgement Seat, the Lord “will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and [He] will disclose the purposes of the heart” [1 CORINTHIANS 4:5].

The Judgement Seat of Christ will be *A PLACE OF RECKONING*. I read a most sobering statement which Paul included in his letter to Roman saints. “Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God; for it is written,

‘As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me,  
and every tongue shall confess to God.’

“So then each of us will give an account of himself to God” [ROMANS 14:10-12].

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The Judgement Seat of Christ will be *A PLACE OF RECOGNITION*. Again, focus on the words Paul wrote to the Church of God in Corinth. “According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw—each one’s work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If anyone’s work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire” [1 CORINTHIANS 3:10-15].

What I would have you see is that before the Judgement Seat of Christ the distinction is not between saved and lost; rather, the distinction is between those who have built well and those who have built poorly! There shall be fire, but this will be a fire of testing, not of purifying. Let me say very clearly to each Christian who listens at this time: you are either building to the glory of God, or you are destroying. There is no neutrality. You are either engaged in the war, or you have surrendered to the enemy and dishonoured your Sovereign.

I warn that many who claim to be soldiers of the cross are doing their utmost to destroy the work of God. Many who claim to be building to the glory of God are building only for their own glory. Many who claim to be enlisted in His great cause have deceived themselves. The evidence is seen in the fruit that is being produced. I caution you that a crowd does not mean that a church is pleasing God, any more than everyone speaking well of you means that you have acted with integrity and courage.

**WHAT IS INCENTIVE** — “Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.” The struggle is long, lasting throughout the days of your life from the time you received the life of Christ the Lord until He is pleased to remove you from the fray. Without a doubt the battle makes you weary. The clash of arms, enduring hardship and the unrelenting struggle against wickedness take a toll.

Paul acknowledges this profound truth as he encourages Timothy at the start of his second letter to the young theologian. “You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him” [2 TIMOTHY 2:1-4].

This plea follows an earlier appeal in which the Apostle pointedly urged the young preacher, “Do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which He gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began” [2 TIMOTHY 1:8, 9].



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With the Apostle each Christian can say, “If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied” [1 CORINTHIANS 15:19]. However, there remains another chapter that is yet to be written. As I stated in a previous message, that chapter which shall shortly be written is summed up in that one marvellous word, “Henceforth.”

**Henceforth**—there is another chapter yet to be added, one which is eternal.

**Henceforth**—there awaits a victorious entrance for each one who stays the course.

**Henceforth**—there awaits the commendation of the Master. We who believe anticipate His welcome as He says, “Well done, good and faithful servant.”

**Henceforth**—we shall be gathered with all the redeemed of the ages to dwell forever in the presence of the Lord.

**Henceforth**—we shall see those who have gone before.

**Henceforth**—the battle will be finished.

**Henceforth**—the struggle will cease.

**Henceforth**—rest awaits those who have faithfully served.

**Henceforth**—I wish I were able to tell all that is waiting for the people of God.

On one occasion Lynda and I witnessed one of the most moving performances I can recall in a church. Representing the Shepherd’s Home in Union Grove, Wisconsin—a place of refuge for the mentally challenged—before the congregation where we then served, was a group of men and women horribly injured in their minds. These young men and women—most would die before they could be called elderly—received loving care and attention from gracious Christians who believe that we are responsible to serve the least with the compassion of Christ.

The home was seeking ongoing support for their ministry by permitting these young people to tell what it meant to be at the home. Some recited Scriptures they had memorised. And though it was painful for others, they beamed with pride as they spoke of God and of His love. They told how they were cared for and of the kindness of the staff. Most importantly, many spoke of their love for the Saviour and how he had saved them.

One young man in particular moved the entire congregation to tears. He wanted to sing. It was difficult to believe that he could do so because he struggled even to speak. The group’s sponsor sat at the piano and played an introduction slowly; then, the young man began to sing. He was obviously straining to remember the words, but he managed to sing them all.

Oft times the day seems long, our trials hard to bear,  
We’re tempted to complain, to murmur and despair;  
But Christ will soon appear to catch His Bride away,  
All tears forever over in God's eternal day.

It will be worth it all when we see Jesus,  
Life’s trials will seem so small when we see Christ,  
One glimpse of His dear face all sorrow will erase  
So bravely run the race ‘til we see Christ.

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The congregation strained forward, collectively willing the young man to sing the next word. When at last he completed the song, there was not a dry eye in the congregation. Witnessing his loving rendition of that great old Gospel hymn, I could not doubt that I had witnessed one of the greatest sermons I had ever seen. His struggles, and they were great, were nothing like mine. His trials, and they seemed almost insurmountable, were fitting him for a crown of righteousness. Yet, his face shone as he sang the song; he sang with obvious love for the Saviour and he radiated joy at the prospect of which he sang. Can we do less?

Dear people, you who have believed in Christ the Lord, keep your eye on the goal; press on toward the goal of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus [see **PHILIPPIANS 3:14**]. Determine to serve the Master with radical abandon. Regardless of the number of years allotted, you must serve Him now, while it is day. Keep on serving, knowing that He will reward you when at last He appears.

As I have spoken, there are some who have listened who have never been born from above. Perhaps you are a church member, but you are unsaved. Perhaps you were baptised, and you have even filled some capacity within your church. Your great need is to be born from above and into the Family of God. That is not something that you can do, but it is something which you can ensure takes place.

Christ Jesus the Lord died because of your sin, and He was raised from the dead so that you might have a right standing with the Father. Therefore, the Word of God invites you now, If you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” believing in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be delivered from condemnation and from death. With the heart one believes, resulting in a right standing with God the Father, and with the mouth one confesses resulting in deliverance. When the Apostle wrote those words, he concluded by quoting the Prophet, “Everyone who calls on the Name of the Lord shall be saved” [see **ROMANS 10:9, 10, 13**].

I invite you to believe and to receive the life that is offered in Christ the Lord. I encourage each Christian to keep on serving, knowing that when the Master shortly appears you shall be rewarded. Amen.

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<sup>i</sup> HCSB refers to **The Holy Bible: Holman Christian Standard Version** (Holman Bible Publishers, Nashville, TN 2003)

<sup>ii</sup> KJV refers to **The Holy Bible: King James Version**

<sup>iii</sup> NRSV refers to **The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version** (Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, TN 1989)

<sup>iv</sup> NKJV refers to **The New King James Version** (Thomas Nelson, Inc., Nashville, TN 1982)

<sup>v</sup> NET refers to **The NET Bible First Edition** (Biblical Studies Press, 2006)