

INTRODUCTION

A couple days ago I decided to walk down and check the cluster mailbox in my neighborhood, and on the way, I met one of my neighbors who was coming back from checking his mail, and as we chitchatted for a few minutes on the side of the road, he mentioned how terrible it is to get old. He and his wife are a few years older than Cindy and I, being in their 80s, and I said, yes, it is terrible getting old, but you know brothers and sisters, the most important thing for those of us who are getting toward the end of life is to be prepared for what comes next, because this life is only temporary, but the next is eternal.

As we age, most of us have various ailments, don't we? Years ago, Cindy and I would travel around to speak at various independent camp meetings and to visit some of you who are on our mailing list, but we aren't able to do that anymore because Cindy has heart issues and I find it difficult to sit or stand for long periods of time. I spent a good portion of my work life in the carpet cleaning/carpet laying industry and certain parts of my body are just wore out, and several years ago Mr. Arthritis came to visit and decided to stay. Those of you in your 60s, 70s and 80s know what I'm talking about. I've tried various ways to evict Mr. Aurther, but he just refuses to leave. So now my ministry is by and large on the Internet, and I praise the Lord for the Internet because it's a great tool in these last days to get the truth out to the people, but of course the devil uses it as well, and probably more so, and just like everything else in life, it's up to us what we choose to watch or listen to, so we need to be careful and protect what we allow to enter our mind and our eyes.

When Jesus gave His disciples the great gospel commission to go into all the world and preach the gospel so He could come back to gather His people to Himself, that commission has by and large already accomplished through the Internet. Nearly the whole world has access to the truth this way, and who would have thought that this would be the case as little as 30 years ago. So, we should be ready at all times for things to wrap up very quickly.

I used to send out hundreds of CDs every month, but those numbers have dwindled significantly over the years because many people choose to listen Online at gospel-workers.com or at other ministry sites, and that's fine for those who can, but for those who don't have Internet access or perhaps like to listen as they drive, CDs still have their place and we are very happy to continue to send them out.

Anyway, as I said, the Internet is a great tool, and over the years we've had tens of thousands of people access the truth this way, and probably millions who have either listened or read or downloaded the various materials we have on our website and on our several social media platforms like YouTube, Rumble, BitChute, Spotify, and so forth, and I hope to meet some of them in heaven in the very near future, because this world is just about ripe for the harvest that's mentioned in **Revelation 14**.

And by the way, some of you have asked how we're doing with the fires going on in here Washington state, and we're doing OK. Most of the fires have been about 50 miles away from us and we've had to stay inside a lot because of the smoke, but most of that is gone now, but it comes and goes. This is the worst fire season in Washington's history and upwards of a thousand homes have been destroyed. There are whole neighborhoods where there are only cement foundations and brick chimneys left. And so, we are thankful in that respect. As many of you know Cindy and I live full-time in an RV and when it's fire season I always keep the pickup backed up to the fifth wheel so we can be ready to pull out in a matter of minutes if need be. So that's one good thing about being mobile. It's kind of like being a sojourner here in this world and not a permanent resident.

If you've been paying attention, you know that there have been more fires and floods and earthquakes and wars lately than in the recent past and these are all signs of the times. Jesus has warned us ahead of time in **Matthew 24** that these kinds of things would become more frequent as we near the end, and friends, it's time that we set our houses in order.

Anyway, I want to thank those of you who have been so faithful over the years to support this work, because without you this ministry would not have been able to reach as many countries around the world over the past 30 plus years as we have, and so again, thank you and God bless you.

FAITH AND WORKS

This morning I'd like to talk to you about a subject that is probably more misunderstood by Christians today than any other, and that is, the relation between faith and works. And I think one of the reasons for the confusion is something the apostles Paul and James both mention in their writings.

In **James chapter 2**, he indicates quite clearly that we are justified (**or made right with God**) by our works, or the things we do, and in **Romans chapter 3** Paul indicates that we

are justified by faith and not by the things we do. James says Abraham was justified by works, and Paul says he was justified by faith. So who are we supposed to believe? There are at least three possible scenarios here: #1, one of these two men are right and one is wrong; #2, they are both wrong; or #3, they are both right when understood correctly, and because these two men were both inspired by the Holy Spirit, we must believe the last option, otherwise the whole Bible is called into question. And I can assure you this morning that there's nothing wrong with God's word, and if we think there's a problem with it, or that it contradicts itself, it's not a problem with the Bible but a problem with our own thinking.

Hebrews 11:6 says, "Without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." I think one of the more important words in this verse is the word "diligently." Of course, one has to believe there is a God in heaven in the first place, because without that why would anyone seek Him? But once they do believe, then diligence in seeking Him is next on the agenda.

In other words, we are not to seek God haphazardly or carelessly or lazily, or on and off, or by spending five minutes with Him in the morning with our hand on the doorknob, but we are to seek Him earnestly, and painstakingly even, and if we do we will be rewarded with a clear understanding of the truth about the plan of salvation, which in turn will bring the reward of peace and assurance to the heart, and isn't that what everyone is really looking for in this life? Peace of mind and assurance that there is something good to look forward to after this life comes to an end.

And by the way, just believing what your pastor or Bible teacher tells you because you trust them, is not being diligent. We must know what we believe because we have searched it out for ourselves; that we have tested the promises of God and know that they're true, and the reason that's important is because we will all be judged accordingly, and what could be more important than eternal life? Jesus said, "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world and lose your own soul." These are words of wisdom. We are here temporarily during this life in order to secure the next, which is eternal, that's what it's all about, and secondly, we're here to help others discover the same for themselves.

There are many in the Christian world today, and I would say the majority from my experience, who claim that all that's necessary for salvation is to have faith in God and

that works amount to nothing. And then there are others who think they can work their way to heaven by what they do, and unfortunately both groups are missing the boat that will get them there.

James 2:14 says, “What *doth it* profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?” Or can that kind of faith save him? And the obvious answer is no! Then in **verse 26** he says, “For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also,” why? Because a thing that is dead has no life in it. Faith must be accompanied by works to make it alive. One of the early Protestant reformers said it this way, “Faith without works is a faith that does not work.”

Many, and again I would say most, Christians today believe that works of obedience to God’s commandments is not necessary to salvation, and that all we have to do is have faith to believe that Christ kept God’s commandments for us. That somehow what Jesus did is vicariously applied to us and that that’s all that’s necessary, but that’s only a half truth. It is true that the perfect life of Christ is applied to our sinful account when we accept Him as our Saviour, but there is still a growth process called sanctification that must take place afterward, and that involves loving obedience, because Jesus said, “If you love me, **(do what?)** keep My commandments.” What this implies in the Greek, and can be correctly read this way is, “if you love Me, you will keep My commandments.”

And so, the “faith only” crowd make a big deal of faith without works, going so far as to say that if we try to obey, that actually shows a lack of faith, and if we have a lack of faith in what Christ did for us, then we don’t have saving faith. But are we supposed to believe that faith does away with works under this scenario? Hardly, because notice what Paul writes in **Romans 3:31**, “Do we then make void the law through faith? **(Does faith do away with obedience to the law)** God forbid **(he says, of course not)**: yea **(rather)**, we establish the law.” What happens when something is established? It becomes permanent, right? it’s settled or fixed in its place. So here Paul is basically saying the same thing as James in **Chapter 2:22** when he spoke of Abraham and said, “Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?” So if we want a perfect faith, and that’s what it takes to get to heaven, it must be accompanied by action.

Not only is Jesus the author of our faith, as Paul says in **Hebrews 12:2**, but He is also what? the “finisher of our faith.” The authoring of my faith began when I accepted Christ into my life, but was He finished with me at that point? No! I was a baby Christian that needed to grow. The finishing of my faith is in the process as I speak, and it will continue until my

death or when human probation closes for this world and Jesus steps out of the Most Holy place in the heavenly sanctuary. Justification, or pardon, comes first and is instantaneous. The moment we accept Christ we are forgiven immediately and adopted into the family of God, and sanctification, or holy living, comes afterward, is ongoing, and is the work of a lifetime, and that finishing process involves whether or not we do what God says, plain and simple. In order to remain justified we must be sanctified all along the way, and if we blow it, **1 John 2:1** says, “My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. **(You see, it is possible not to sin, but how?)** And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” Go to Him and make it right and you can start over again.

Notice what it says in ***Signs of the Times, May 19, 1890***, “True sanctification is nothing more or less than to love God with all the heart, to walk in his commandments and ordinances blameless. Sanctification is not an emotion, but a heaven-born principle that brings all the passions and desires under the control of the Spirit of God; and this work is done through our Lord and Saviour.”

Notice also what Jesus said in **Luke 9:23**, “If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.” What did Jesus mean when He said “if any man will come after me?” He meant for us to follow His example. What did He mean when He said one must “deny himself?” He meant that we are not to do the things our fallen flesh is tempting us to do. And what does it mean to “take up **(our)** cross,” not just once, but “daily?” Again, it means we are not to satisfy our sinful flesh and to be on guard of the devil’s devices 24/7. These are things that Jesus wants us to do, and the good part is, He will give us the desire to do it, and with that desire comes power, and the foundation of it all is faith.

In **Ephesians 2:8-10** the apostle Paul says it this way, “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.” And many Christians stop right there and say, “see, our works have nothing to do with it.” But let’s read on because it tells us what the role of works is. “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”

And so, God has made us what we are, and in our union with Christ He has created us for a life of good works. So what if we say we have faith, but we don’t have good works? Then that shows we have a misunderstanding about what saving faith is, and that faith is not

made perfect. And so, was James correct? Absolutely! Was Paul correct? Absolutely! And when you put them both together you get the whole gospel, the whole truth about salvation.

In the Bible the Greek word for faith is “pistis,” and that’s the same word translated as “believe” and “trust” in most cases. Now, you might think of yourself as being weak in faith, kind of like the man who told Jesus, “Lord I believe, help thou mine unbelief.” And that’s not a bad thing. But let me ask you this, are you also weak when it comes to believing and trusting God? Most Christians would say they have strong belief and trust in God, but my faith is weak. Why do they say that? It’s because they are looking to themselves when they say it, it’s a misunderstanding of where faith comes from and how it’s strengthened.

What did we read just a moment ago in **Ephesians 2:8**? “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that (**that grace and that faith is**) not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.” Faith is a gift friends, but it’s up to us to build on it. **Romans 12:3** says “God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith,” that’s a gift, and **John 1:9** says God “lighteth (**or enlightens**) every man that cometh into the world.” And so, God doesn’t want us to trust in self, but to die to self. That’s taking up our cross daily and following in the footsteps of Jesus. We need to take God at His word, and if we do that mustard seed of faith will grow.

As you read the Bible, over and over again, it becomes clear that God’s promises are all made upon conditions. That little word “if” is a very important word. If we do His will, if we walk in the truth, if we do what He says, then we can ask and it shall be given. In **John 15:7** Jesus said, “If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.” But what if we don’t abide? Then what? The answer should be obvious, God will not bless us in disobedience. If we choose to disobey His commandments, we can cry, “Faith, faith, only faith” all we want, but the response will come back to us in just the way James tells us in **James 2:20**, “Faith without works is dead.”

A dead faith has no life in it, and if that’s the kind of faith we have, what good is it? It’s not faith at all, and we’ll learn in a few minutes what it is. In order to have the benefits of God’s grace we have to do our part. It’s just like John the Baptist said, we must faithfully work and bring forth fruits meet for repentance; it’s like **2 Corinthians 6:1** that says, we are to be “workers together with God;” and Jesus said, “By their fruits you shall know them.” And so, if nothing but faith is required of us, why did Paul tell us to “fight the good fight of faith?” Don’t these words indicate that we have something to do on our part?

In **2 Timothy 4:7, 8** the apostle Paul knew he was at the end of his life and he said, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have **(what?)** kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." Doesn't keeping the faith indicate that we can lose it if we're not careful? And if we lose faith, we will have lost the thing that takes hold of God's grace and results in life eternal.

Cindy and I were driving into town to do some shopping the other day, and out in front of a certain house we drive by all the time, there's a large sign that says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shall be saved." **Acts 16:31**. That's a true statement, and it's a beautiful truth, but is that the only thing we need to know? That's just one verse out of thousands. Is there something else we need to know in order to keep saved once we are saved? I do believe in once saved always saved as long as we keep saved, as long as we keep the faith that saved us in the first place.

I remember talking to a Baptist brother some years ago about whether or not salvation can be lost once we've been born again, and he said to me, "Once a person has been born they can't be unborn," meaning we have eternal security no matter what, and I said, "true, we can't be unborn, but we can die," and that's the way it is with salvation. It's more than being justified by faith; more than forgiveness, it's also being sanctified by faith as Paul says in **Acts 26:18**.

By the way, most people don't realize there's a big difference between eternal life and immortality. You say huh? That's right! When we accept Jesus as our Saviour we have eternal life, because He is life, and as long as we have Him we have His life, but we are still subject to death as mortal beings, both physically and spiritually. Eternal life can be lost if we lose Christ, but immortality will be permanent once we receive it, and according to **1 Corinthians 15:51-54** that doesn't happen till Jesus comes. So until then, like Paul we must continue to fight the good fight of faith and finish our course, or this race we call life here on this planet.

In **Luke 13:24** Jesus also said, "strive to enter in at the strait gate," or the narrow entrance. The strait gate is the door to heaven. In other words it's going to be a struggle to get there. How so? Because that's what Jesus said! Oh come on Pastor Jones, what does that do to our assurance in Christ? Friends, we only have assurance in Christ as long as we have Christ! If we reject Him we reject life, and we reject Him when we knowingly transgress

His law! So what do we do if that's the case? Repent! Repent as soon as the Holy Spirit convinces you of sin! That gives you the opportunity to make a new start, and be careful to make that new start, because if you don't you're in danger of the sin against the Holy Ghost, and that is unpardonable.

In order to stay on the straight and narrow way, we have to put forth some effort or we'll end up going down the broad road to destruction. It's easy to coast. As long as there is a downhill grade you don't need to put forth any effort at all. It comes naturally to our fallen flesh. And "many there be that go in there at" said Jesus. But not so with going uphill, "and few there be that find it." And not only that, but if we're going to get to our God-ordained destination we may need a front end alignment so we don't go veering off into the ditch. And that alignment comes by spending time with the alignment specialist, which, of course, is Jesus revealed in His written word.

Now let me be clear, because I don't want you to get the wrong idea. We are not going to be able to enter in at the strait gate by ourselves. Don't even entertain that thought. Why? Because in **Ephesians 6:12** Paul says, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

You see, we're not fighting with human beings, we're in a wrestling match with a foe that is much more cleaver and stronger than we are, and the only way we're going to win is to abide in Christ, because He knows how to win. He's given us an example of how to be victorious by relying upon a power outside of Himself. Remember what He said, "I can of my own self do nothing." Jesus had to live life the way we have to live it and be victorious in order to be our Saviour and example. He couldn't use His divinity to resist temptation. He was tempted (**How**)? "In all points such as we are, yet without sin." He took upon Himself our sinful fallen human nature, and by relying upon His heavenly Father He conquered "spiritual wickedness in high places" and we can do the same by relying upon Him, that's the way it works, because without Him, we can do how much? Nothing! Absolutely nothing!

So we can take courage this morning because Jesus has given us an escape route so we don't have to remain in the grip of the enemy, but we have to take that escape route of our own free will, because in the work of redemption there is no forced obedience. We are left free to choose who we're going to serve. That's what Joshua said, remember?

“Choose ye this day whom you will serve.” And with him we should say, “as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” And service requires doing something; it requires action.

When we want to be set free from sin, and we cry out for a power outside of ourselves and receive the energy of the Holy Spirit, then we will gain the victory. We take advantage of the faith we’ve been given by acting upon it; that’s how faith and works complement each other.

Very much depends upon our own choice. We are to strive as Jesus said, we need to be zealous and repent as John the Baptist said; we must cleanse our hands and purify our hearts as James said. We must seek if we would find, we must knock if the door would be opened to us. The Bible teaches that much depends upon our own course of action, and if we are eternally lost, guess what? The responsibility rests with us. Through the sacrifice of Christ provision has been made, and if we would lay hold on eternal life and finally immortality, we must accept God’s terms. We must come to Christ in faith, and we must be diligent to make our calling and election sure by doing what He says.

The forgiveness of sin is only promised to those who repent and believe, and the crown of life will be our reward if we are faithful to the end. Growing in grace means we are to improve upon the grace we’ve already been given. No effort, no growth. That’s why **James 1:27** says we are to keep ourselves unspotted from the world in order to be found blameless in the day of God.

The apostles James and Paul are not at odds with each other. Faith and works go hand in hand and work in harmony with one another in the work of overcoming. And so, faith without works is dead, which also means works without faith is dead as well, they have to go together, that’s the message of the Bible. And so, while it’s true that works will never save us, it’s also true that faith alone will never save us if it’s a dead faith. The faith we are required to have is not a do-nothing faith. **Hebrews 12:14** says, “Without holiness (**or without living a holy life**) no man shall see the Lord.”

Faith and works keeps us evenly balanced and makes us successful in the work of overcoming sin and becoming like Christ in character. Remember what Jesus said in **Matthew 7:21**? He said, “Not everyone that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter in the kingdom of heaven; but he that (**what?**) doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven.” And what is God’s will? In **Psalms 40:8** David said, “I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea thy law is within my heart.” So, the question is, is God’s law written in your heart, and if the answer is yes, then you will obey from the heart, and when it’s in the heart to obey it

can and will be done successfully, and if not it's only outward compliance, and that will never suffice.

Speaking of temporal food, **2 Thessalonians 3:10** says, "if any would not work, neither should he eat," and the same rule applies to our spiritual food; if we would have the bread of life, we need to make an effort to obtain it and assimilate it, that way we will be nourished and grow thereby.

Friends, we are living in a very important and interesting period of this earth's history, and we're going to need a stronger faith than we have ever had before, because Satan is working with all power to obtain the victory over us, because he knows that he has but a short time in which to work. In **Philippians 4:12** Paul told the church there, "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, **(but we are never to forget that)** it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of *his* good pleasure."

How does this happen? **2 Corinthians 5:17** has the answer, "if any man be in Christ, he is **(what?)** a new creature: old things are passed away; **(the chains of sinful habit have been broken)** behold, all things are become new," even the heart, and when it's in the heart to obey God, and efforts are put forth to this end, Jesus accepts this as our best effort and makes up for any deficiency with His own divine merit. But, and this is a big but, He will not accept us if we claim to have faith in Him and yet are knowingly transgressing His commandments. There's no such thing as an easy-going, crossless religion.

I already mentioned this, but it bears repeating. Jesus said, "If any man will come after Me, let him **(do what?)** deny himself, **(let him refuse to do what his sinful nature wants him to do)** and take up his cross **(die to selfish desire)**, and follow Me." That's what Jesus did. He didn't think of His own needs or wants; He didn't yield to the fallen flesh; He thought about us in our sinful condition and made a way of escape for us to be able to overcome temptation the way He did. If this isn't true, why does **1 Corinthians 10:13** say, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God *is* faithful, who will not suffer **(or permit)** you to be tempted above that ye are able **(able to resist)**; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it," or that you may be able to keep from yielding to it.

Do you have faith to believe that? The devil can only tempt, he cannot force us to sin. If we sin it's our own choice. But you say, "I can't help it, I've got this sinful nature that I inherited from Adam and Eve." Yes, and so did Jesus and everyone else born into this world. But did you not become a partaker of the divine nature when you were born again,

as it says in **2 Peter 1:4**? Because that's what gives us the choice to "escape the corruption that is in the world through lust." Once we've been born again, we have a choice, before that we don't, at least not from the heart, because it takes that new heart to resist. We can submit to the promptings of the fallen nature or the divine nature, and that choice will determine where we end up.

This relation between faith and works is a kind of oxymoron or a paradox; seemingly contradictory but rightly understood makes perfect sense. Simply put, if the heart has been renewed by the Spirit of God, the life will bear witness to the fact. We can't do anything to change our own hearts or bring ourselves into harmony with God, and we are not to trust at all to ourselves or our own good works, but still, the way we live will reveal whether the grace of God is dwelling within us or not. If we have been born again a change will be seen in our character, in our habits, and in our pursuits in life. The contrast between what we used to be like and what we are now like will be clear and decided. **Galatians 5:22, 23** says those who become new creatures in Christ Jesus will bring forth the fruits of the Spirit, "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance," which is self-control. By the faith of the Son of God we are to follow in His steps, reflect His character, and purify ourselves even as He is pure. The things we once hated we now love, and the things we once loved we now hate. Is that your experience? If not, Paul says, "examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith."

Let me read something to you from a little book titled *Steps to Christ*, and if you don't have one let me know and I'll send it to you. On **pages 59, 60** it says it better than I can. "There are two errors against which the children of God—particularly those who have just come to trust in His grace—especially need to guard. The first is that of looking to their own works, trusting to anything they can do, to bring themselves into harmony with God. He who is trying to become holy by his own works in keeping the law, is attempting an impossibility. All that man can do without Christ is polluted with selfishness and sin. It is the grace of Christ alone, through faith, that can make us holy.

"The opposite and no less dangerous error is that belief in Christ releases men from keeping the law of God; that since by faith alone we become partakers of the grace of Christ, our works have nothing to do with our redemption.

"But notice here that obedience is not a mere outward compliance, but the service of love. . . . If our hearts are renewed in the likeness of God, if the divine love is implanted in the soul, will not the law of God be carried out in the life? When the principle of love is

implanted in the heart, when man is renewed after the image of Him that created him, the new-covenant promise is fulfilled, 'I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them.' Hebrews 10:16. And if the law is written in the heart, will it not shape the life? Obedience—the service and allegiance of love—is the true sign of discipleship. Thus the Scripture says, 'This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments.' 'He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.' 1 John 5:3; 2:4. Instead of releasing man from obedience, it is faith, and faith only, that makes us partakers of the grace of Christ, which enables us to render obedience.

"We do not earn salvation by our obedience; for salvation is the free gift of God, to be received by faith. But obedience is the fruit of faith.

"That so-called faith in Christ which professes to release men from the obligation of obedience to God, is not faith, but presumption. **(Remember earlier I talked about the kind of faith that has no life in it? That's presumption, it's not faith at all.)** The Scripture says, 'Hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.... He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk even as He walked.' 1 John 2:3-6."

Friends, we need to understand that when we are justified by faith, we are declared righteous on the spot, and when we are sanctified by faith we are made righteous, a life-long process. Justification gets us started in our Christian walk with Jesus, and sanctification will finish the work of forming the kind of character Jesus can take to heaven with Him when He comes.

Then on **pages 64, 65** of this wonderful little book it says the following, and I'll close with this, "There are those who have known the pardoning love of Christ and who really desire to be children of God, yet they realize that their character is imperfect, their life faulty, and they are ready to doubt whether their hearts have been renewed by the Holy Spirit. To such I would say, Do not draw back in despair. We shall often have to bow down and weep at the feet of Jesus because of our shortcomings and mistakes, **(been there, done that)** but we are not to be discouraged. Even if we are overcome by the enemy, we are not cast off, not forsaken and rejected of God. No; Christ is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Said the beloved John, 'These things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.' 1 John 2:1. And do not forget the words of Christ, 'The Father Himself loveth you.' John 16:27. He desires to restore you to Himself, **(that word restore is very**

important) to see His own purity and holiness reflected in you. And if you will but yield yourself to Him, He that hath begun a good work in you will carry it forward to the day of Jesus Christ. Pray more fervently; believe more fully. As we come to distrust our own power, let us trust the power of our Redeemer, and we shall praise Him who is the health of our countenance.

“The closer you come to Jesus, the more faulty you will appear **(not become, but appear)** in your own eyes; for your vision will be clearer, and your imperfections will be seen in broad and distinct contrast to His perfect nature. This is evidence that Satan’s delusions have lost their power; that the vivifying influence of the Spirit of God is arousing you.

“No deep-seated love for Jesus can dwell in the heart that does not realize its own sinfulness. The soul that is transformed by the grace of Christ will admire His divine character; but if we do not see our own moral deformity, it is unmistakable evidence that we have not had a view of the beauty and excellence of Christ.

“The less we see to esteem in ourselves, the more we shall see to esteem in the infinite purity and loveliness of our Saviour. A view of our sinfulness drives us to Him who can pardon; and when the soul, realizing its helplessness, reaches out after Christ, He will reveal Himself in power. The more our sense of need drives us to Him and to the word of God, the more exalted views we shall have of His character, and the more fully we shall reflect His image.”

If that’s what you want this morning, I would ask that you bow your heads with me as we ask for power from on high.

Loving Father in heaven, we come to you in the worthy name of your Son Jesus, that name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow and every tongue confess that He is Lord. Please forgive us for the many times we have failed and help us to diligently seek your face and come to know you better and better each day, that we might die to self and take up our cross daily and follow You. Lord, take our hearts, please, for we cannot give it. It’s your property. Keep it pure, for we cannot keep it for you. Save us in spite of ourselves, our weak, unchristlike selves. Mold us, fashion us, raise us into a pure and holy atmosphere where the rich current of Your love can flow through our souls. Father, thank You for Your word, thank You for the Holy Spirit, and thank You for giving all to save us. We love You for it and we want to serve You while we are here in this world and in the world to come, Amen and amen!