

July 18th, Becoming Who We Will Be
Part 2 in the series ‘The End is Near’

What were some things from last Sunday’s message that resonated with you?

Was there anything you wrestled with?

In last Sunday’s message Jim mentioned that “The number of apocalyptic dramas produced doubled between the years 2000 to 2010, and double again between 2010 and 2020.” What do you make of that?

READ 1 John 3:2-3

“Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.”

Read this quote from C.S. Lewis (Mere Christianity)

“Hope is one of the theological virtues. This means that a continual looking forward to the eternal world is not (as some modern people think) a form of escapism or wishful thinking, but one of the things a Christian is meant to do. It does not mean that we are to leave the present world as it is. If you read history you will find that the Christians who did most for the present world were just those who thought most of the next. The Apostles themselves, who set on foot the conversion of the Roman Empire, the great men who built up the Middle Ages, the English Evangelicals who abolished the Slave Trade, all left their mark on Earth, precisely because their minds were occupied with Heaven. It is since Christians have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become so ineffective in this.”

What do you make of the argument that looking forward to Jesus’ return can have the effect of making someone “so heavenly minded that they’re of no earthly good.” ?

What do you think happens to a Christian’s perspective on this world when they look continually to Jesus’ return and the eternal world?

Read 1 Timothy 4:6-10 (NIV)

If you point these things out to the brothers and sisters, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, nourished on the truths of the faith and of the good teaching that you have followed. 7 Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives’ tales; rather, train yourself to be godly. 8 For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come. 9 This is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance. 10 That is why we labor and strive, because we have put our hope in the living God, who is the Savior of all people, and especially of those who believe.

Why do Paul and as we read earlier, John, emphasize ‘hoping in God’, both in terms of purifying as well as laboring and striving?

What does Paul mean when he says “For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come”? Why would it matter for the life to come?

Read The Parable of the Bags of Gold, Matthew 25:14–30 (NIV)

14 “Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his wealth to them. **15** To one he gave five bags of gold, to another two bags, and to another one bag, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. **16** The man who had received five bags of gold went at once and put his money to work and gained five bags more. **17** So also, the one with two bags of gold gained two more. **18** But the man who had received one bag went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money.

19 “After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. **20** The man who had received five bags of gold brought the other five. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with five bags of gold. See, I have gained five more.’

21 “His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’

22 “The man with two bags of gold also came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with two bags of gold; see, I have gained two more.’

23 “His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’

24 “Then the man who had received one bag of gold came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. **25** So I was afraid and went out and hid your gold in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.’

26 “His master replied, ‘You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? **27** Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest.’

28 ““So take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has ten bags. **29** For whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. **30** And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

What do the talents or bags of gold represent?

A: Talents, abilities, ministries, businesses, they are all very temporary. Soon, none of them will exist. This is about something eternal - eternal treasure. The bags of gold represent something of the very nature of God that he has entrusted to each one of us.

What does the servant burying his bag of gold and neglecting it represent?

How is God preparing us for the life to come?

What does it look like to embrace the preparation?