

Raise Your Sights Even Higher!

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2Thessalonians 1:1-12

- 1 Paul, and Silvanus, and Timothy, unto the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:
- 2 Grace unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 3 We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth;
- 4 So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure:
- 5 *Which is* a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer:
- 6 Seeing *it is* a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you;
- 7 And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,
- 8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

- 9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;
- 10 When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.
- 11 Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of *this* calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of *his* goodness, and the work of faith with power:
- 12 That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Back on April 10th of 2011, the Lord sent us a message entitled "How to Never Fall".

If you have never heard or read that particular sermon, I would encourage you to go online to our website and listen to it or read the PDF.

There is a principle laid out in the last section of that sermon that is absolutely priceless; God will show you there literally how to never fall away from faithfully serving the Lord.

Today, I believe that God would have us raise our sights even higher. Why should we be satisfied with our not doing evil or with just being faithful to worship or even with enjoying a good life of blessing?

In **Colossians 3:1-2** we are told:

- 1 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.
- 2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

It is really easy to tell where your affections are set; it is what you spend your money on. It is what and where you spend the priorities of your time. It is where you put your talents to work.

Today's message is for every Christian. What the Lord is offering and encouraging us toward is available for every believer. However, in nearly every Church, there is only a handful; usually not more than one or two if any at all who will avail themselves of what the Lord is going to show us today.

I would like to make a suggestion. My suggestion is that before you even hear what the Lord is proposing for you today that you would decide right now to get on board. Tell the Lord and decide right now that, "Lord, I'm in! Whatever you say, whatever you want, I'm in!"

What **is** going on where Christ sits at the right hand of God? What is it the Lord wants us to

fall in love with; that He wants to become the very goals of what we live for?

It is NOT simply that we should never fall back into drugs or alcohol or greed or covetousness or some other besetting failure that takes us out of Church and back into the world.

I. God has already taught us how to never fall. Allow me to share with you this priceless principle one more time.

A. Look first at the scriptures:

1. Colossians also tells us to “put on” the new man:

Colossians 3:9-10

9 Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;

10 And have put on the new *man*, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:

2. We are taught the same in Ephesians:

Ephesians 4:21-24

21 If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus:

22 That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;

- 23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;
 24 And that ye put on the new man, which after
 God is created in righteousness and true
 holiness.

3. Again in **Romans 12:1-2**

- 1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service.
 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

4. Again in **1Corinthians 6:20** For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

5. We all know that the Lord deserves and has every right to expect of every one of us that we live our lives 100% for His glory!

6. Yet glory is much like love; it cannot be given or expressed; it does not even exist without the choice to withhold it.

B. Now, let me draw you the picture:

1. Picture a horizontal line across a blank sheet of paper. Below that line your old man which is your flesh, rules your life; you walk basically much like you did when you were lost. You party, you drink, you cheat and pretend; your

fellowship is primarily with the world; and all that goes with that.

2. Above that line your new man; your alive born-again spirit, rules your life; you come to Church, you pray, you read your Bible, you come to Bible Study, you attend Home Teams, you practice honesty and integrity, you tithe you give and you grow: I think you get the point.

3. Many Christians try to live their lives just barely above the line: they want just enough of Jesus to stay off drugs. They want just enough of Jesus to be blessed financially. They want just enough of Jesus to feel good spiritually at least at times. They live on the edge: they hover just above the line.

4. We all sin and fail God every day; sometimes in ways we consider minor and sometimes in ways we consider major.

5. God's advice is get off the line and start living at the top of the page. We call it things like "completely surrendering to the Lord", "becoming a living sacrifice", "giving God your all" or "being sold out to Jesus".

6. God calls it things like "holiness," "sanctification," being "fully persuaded."

7. Whatever you call it, when you are living down on the line, every time you sin (which also happens more often down near the line) it

takes you deep into sin and puts you under the control of your old man, the flesh: thus it becomes very easy to simply fall away.

8. When you yield yourself to the control of your flesh and you do not have those commitments to righteous activity to pull you back and to re-establish your thoughts and to pull you back into right patterns; it can take years to get back – or - you simply may not get back; you may well die down there.

9. Virtually every Christian here knows somebody who is down there right now and can't get back; some of you are living so close to the line, you may be but one failure away from being there yourself!

10. When you are living way up at the top of the page; "sold out to Jesus", you can suffer even a substantial failure; confess your sin, immediately, get right with God and still not fall under the merciless control of your flesh!

11. Those commitments and obligations and responsibilities that come with living at the top of the page become a life-line to pull you back.

Proverb 16:3 Commit thy works unto the LORD, and thy thoughts shall be established.

II. Today, God says, "Raise your sights even higher"!

A. As good as it is living at the top of the page, there is a whole other page above this one!

1. Some of you are thinking, “Preacher, I am running as fast as I can go just to stay near the top of the page... and you are asking me to move up to a whole other page?!!”

2. No, it is not me doing the asking; I am just one of the ask’ees not the ask’er!

3. **Colossians 3:1** says... *seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.*

B. There is a whole other life that is above and beyond what it takes to merely live a good life of success and blessing here in this world.

5. This other life has a greater purpose:

2Thessalonians 1:12 That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

6. This other life has a higher calling:

Philippians 3:14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. And it is not just for preachers either!

7. This other life is lived for another place:

a. **Hebrews 12:22-24**

22 But ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels,

23 To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,

24 And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than *that of* Abel.

b. **Hebrews 13:14** For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.

c. Like Abraham: **Hebrews 11:10** For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker *is* God.

8. This other life is lived for another day;

a. **2Corinthians 5:6-10**

6 Therefore *we are* always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord:

7 (For we walk by faith, not by sight:)

8 We are confident, *I say*, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

9 Wherefore we labor, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.

10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according

to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad.

b. This “judgment seat” is the famous bema; bēma

bay'-ma

From the base of [G939](#); a *step*, that is, *foot breath*; by implication a *rostrum*, that is, *tribunal*: - judgment-seat, set [foot] on, throne.

c. This is that judgment for rewards that every Christian will face that, in that day, will mean more to us than anything ever has or than anything ever will.

d. **1Corinthians 3:9-16**

9 For we are laborers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, *ye are* God's building.

10 According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.

11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;

13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

16 Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and *that* the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

In Conclusion: I expect that in the days to come, the Lord will have much more to say about living our lives for this new day that is to come.

I could never begin to describe to you the importance or the value of living our lives sold out and committed to being ready for that coming great day.

We do however have some life experience that may help us see the urgency and the value of living such a life.

If life expectancy is now somewhere in the 70's, how many of you are well in to the last half?

Remember when you were in high school? Remember the things that were soooo important to you then?

How you looked? How you dressed? How you wore your hair? Which sneakers you wore?

Oh, and that letter jacket. Oh, and that class ring that you just had to have even though mom and dad perhaps couldn't really afford it?

You know; the one that you either lost or sold for scrap gold or don't even remember what happened to it.

We older ones all laugh at how meaningless all the stuff we used to worry about really was.

Today young people are hopeless to the point of taking their own lives over things that in a few years will be meaningless to them all because the Devil has them duped and deceived.

Well, guess what most the stuff you are stressed out about and misplacing your priorities over is going to mean one second after Jesus comes again or one second after he takes you home.

We really need to re-evaluate what we are living for!

**Gold, silver and precious stones;
or wood, hay and stubble.**

We are talking about things that last and things that don't.

Money? More than what it takes to be blessed in order to be a blessing is just stubble.

Job; career, vocation? When they are anything more than tools to be used for Jesus' glory it is just more wood for the fire.

Souls won to Jesus? These are precious stones that last for eternity! You know what you could be doing toward reaching souls if only you would.

Building your Church? Your Church is the only institution in existence whose entire purpose is to exalt and bring glory to Jesus; teaching, training, winning souls and reproducing the same in others until Jesus comes again. Solid gold!