

From My Bible

Sermon Notes
& Outlines

These Things

by
Terry D. Sellars
Pastor
Faith Baptist Church
Ludowici, Georgia

Introduction

These messages are compiled from study notes and outlines of my own and many others. I hope they are a help to you.

I'm sure that all of us have at times "borrowed" or "used" a sermon we heard or read somewhere along the way. A thought, a word, or an idea jumped out to us from another preacher and we took that thing and ran with it. You have probably used an outline from a preacher brother but ended up preaching something that was uniquely different. Same idea, it just came out differently when you preached. Using your own thoughts, experiences, and illustrations.....the message became your own.

I heard an old-time preacher once say, "*Any message worth preaching ought to be worth preaching again!*" Well, I have certainly preached some sermons again and again. I have borrowed from others to preach theirs again too. Please use these messages as the Lord leads and preach His Word over and over again!

I make no claim of complete originality for this material. Also, please remember that these messages are not expected to substitute for your own personal study of the Word of God! The thoughts and ideas are given as a catalyst to help begin your ideas on a given passage of Scripture or trigger a seed thought to get you going. It is my prayer that the "stuff" contained here will further kindle the fire of God's message that is already in your heart. Your own thinking, praying, and studying will be necessary to guide you into the delivery of His Word to your own people.

May these sermons become *messages* from the Lord that He uses in your own life as He has used them in mine.

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
One Thing	5
Two Immutable Things	8
Three Inevitable Things	10
Four Things You Need To Know.....	14
Five Last Things.....	20
Six Things In Overcoming Family Curses.....	22
Seven Things Incorruptible	27
These Things	30
Things To Be Thankful For.....	35
Great Things The Lord Hath Done	38
These Necessary Things.....	40
Things You Can't Afford To Miss.....	46
Can Any Good Thing Come From There?.....	48
The Thing Is Gone From Me	53
Under Things.....	57
Broken Things	59
Things Eternal	64
Important Things You Can Lose.....	65

One Thing

Introduction: In a world filled with a multi-tasking mindset, it seems interesting that the Bible calls attention to “*one thing*.” Doing many things, wearing many hats, or thinking many things...all point to the notion that we have difficulty trying to focus on “*one thing*.”

How many have heard their pastor say, “...and *one more thing*” only to hear another thirty minutes of rambling losing his focus and the attention of his audience.

ONE THING DEFICIENT (Lacking)

Mark 10:21 Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, **One thing thou lackest:** go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.

ONE THING DEFINITE (Certain)

John 9:25 He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: **one thing I know,** that, whereas I was blind, now I see.

ONE THING DELIBERATE (Needful)

Luke 10:42 But **one thing is needful:** and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

Luke 10:42 - that good part. Today, we can only sit at Jesus' feet and hear His word by reading and meditating on the Scriptures. Important as our daily responsibilities may

be to meet our material needs, we should somehow make time for this “good part.” The Lord assures us that if this is our desire, He will provide the time, as He did with Mary.

ONE THING DOMINANT

Philippians 3:13 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but *this* **one thing I do**, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,

Phil 3:13 - one thing I do. “This one thing I do” is only one word in the Greek, succinctly expressing single-minded concentration and determination.

ONE THING DETERMINED (Remembered)

2 Peter 3:8 But, beloved, **be not ignorant of this one thing**, that one day *is* with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

2 Pet 3:8 - thousand years. This verse has been widely misinterpreted as supporting the day/age theory of creation in Genesis 1. In conText, however, it has nothing to do with creation week, but rather with the last-days conflict between evolutionary uniformitarianism and Biblical-creationist catastrophism (2 Peter 3:3-6). In effect, Peter is not saying that one day means a thousand years but rather that “one day is with the Lord like a thousand years.” That is, God's judgment on a wicked world will do as much geological work in one day as could be accomplished by uniform natural processes in a thousand years. It is even intriguing (though probably meaningless) to note that two billion years (which is about the current geological estimate for the time required to deposit the earth's

sedimentary rocks, would correspond roughly to six thousand years of Biblical history (during which the earth's sediments have actually been laid down, most of them at the time of the Flood) if those years each represented three hundred sixty-five thousand years (at one thousand years per day).

ONE THING DESIRED

Psalms 27:4 One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in his temple.

ONE THING DISCOVERED

Joshua 23:14 And, behold, this day I *am* going the way of all the earth: and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that **not one thing hath failed** of all the good things which the LORD your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, *and* not one thing hath failed thereof.

Two Immutable Things

Text: Hebrews 6:18

Introduction: Hebrews 6:18 *“That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:”*

In Hebrews 6:18, what are the two immutable things in which it is impossible for God to lie? God’s impossibility of lying is the basis upon which two immutable things rest which secure our hope – Heb. 6:18-20.

Immutable: *“fixed, unalterable, unchangeable” (absolute, not able to be forfeited, unassailable, incontrovertible, indisputable, undeniable).*

These two immutable things form a sure foundation for the Christian’s hope. The context here is one of encouragement to mature & remain faithful. Abraham relied on two immutable things to help him patiently endure – 6:15. Those same two unchangeable things support our hope, which anchors our soul.

What Are These Two Immutable Things?

1. **God’s Promise** Heb. 6:13-15; Gen. 22:17-18

Abraham’s hope was secured by God’s promise – Rom. 4:17-21.

Through faith in Christ, Christians are heirs of the promise – Rom. 4:13-16; Gal. 3:16, 18, 22, 29.

Just as Abraham patiently endured because he knew that God keeps His promises ...He does not lie), so we too can trust Him!

2. God's Pledge Heb. 6:16-17

God swore by Himself that He would keep His promise – Heb. 6:13; Gen. 22:16.

Why an oath? (What is it?) Men swear oaths by some authority greater than themselves – Heb. 6:16.

An oath confirms (validates, ratifies, carries authority) a covenant – Heb. 6:16; Gal. 3:15, 17.

This confirmation meant that the covenant would be carried out and would not be changed.

By an oath, one established his *credibility* and *willingness to be punished* if he does not keep his word – Example - Gen. 14:21-23.

In this way, an oath ended any dispute – Heb. 6:16. God confirmed His promise with an oath – Heb. 6:17. God wanted to give overwhelming proof to the heirs of the promise that He would keep His word. Since there is no greater authority to call upon to confirm the covenant, He swore by Himself! – Heb. 6:13

Heb. 6:18 – By God's promise and His oath we have strong encouragement to remain faithful!

Three Inevitable Things

Text - James 4:13-17

Introduction: Sooner or later, we must face the fact that every “*thing*” in life is not going to be good for us. People are looking to other things for fulfillment and hope. Some have turned to living in an escapist world where all they do is run from those things that are real. Life is not lived in a world of myths, legends, sitcoms, and movies that seem to resolve problems in a two-hour stretch. Run and hide if you will but some things are just inevitable.

According to James there are three inevitable things we need to accept as reality:

I. Material Gain Cannot Bring Fulfillment

James 4:13 *Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain:*

(a). A Foolish Presumption.

James 4:13 ... To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and CONTINUE THERE A YEAR,

Isa 56:12 *Come ye, say they, I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink; and to morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant.*

Luke 12:19-20 *And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou HAST MUCH GOODS laid up for MANY YEARS; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: .”*

(b). A Finalized Prosperity

James 4:13 “...and *GET GAIN:*” *James 5:1-9* “Go To Now, ye rich men...”

Isa 56:11 “Yea, they are greedy dogs which can never have enough.....”

Acts 8:20 *But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.*

I Tim 6:10 “*The LOVE OF MONEY Is The Root of ALL EVIL..*”

II. The Morrow Cannot Be Forecast

James 4:14 *Whereas YE KNOW NOT WHAT SHALL BE ON THE MORROW. For WHAT IS YOUR LIFE? It is even a VAPOUR, that APPEARETH for a little time, and then VANISHETH AWAY.*

(a). Remember

James 4:14 *Whereas ye know not what shall be on the MORROW.*

Prov. 27:1 *Boast not THYSELF OF TO MORROW; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.*

(b). Recognize

James 4:14 *For what is your life? It is EVEN A VAPOUR, that APPEARETH for a LITTLE TIME, and then VANISHETH AWAY.*

Life Is Always Fleeting, Uncertain, with Trials and Afflictions.

Ps. 102:11 *My days are like a shadow that declineth; and I am withered like grass.*

Job 8:9 *(For we are but of yesterday, and know nothing, because our days upon earth are a shadow:)*

1 Chron. 29:15 *For we are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers: our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding.*

III. The Master Cannot Be Forgotten

James 4:15-17 *For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that. But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil. Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.*

(a). The Shelter For Our Life. (Knowing God's will)

James 4:15-17 *For that ye ought to say = {instead of saying the above}, If the LORD WILL, we shall live, and do this, or that.*

1 Cor. 4:19 *“But I will come to you shortly, if the LORD WILL, and IWILL.....*

Eph. 5:17 *Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.*

(b). The Solution For Our Life. (Doing God's will)

James 4:17. *ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil. Therefore to him that KNOWETH TO DO GOOD, and DOETH IT NOT, TO HIM..SIN*

Luke 12:47 *And that servant, which knew HIS LORD'S WILL, and prepared not himself, neither did according to HIS WILL, shall be beaten with many stripes.*

John 13:17 *If ye KNOW these THINGS, happy are ye if YE DO them.*

John 15:22 *If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin.*

James reminds us of three inevitable things:

I. Material Gain Cannot Bring Fulfillment

II. The Morrow Cannot Be Forecast

III. The Master Cannot Be Forgotten

Conclusion: Sooner or later in life all these catch up to us if we face things honestly. Only the Lord Himself can help us deal with the real things that come our way.

Four Things You Need To Know

Introduction: I remember the first time I ever went to visit a federal prison. A dear friend of mine asked if I had ever been behind bars before, to which I responded, “No.” He then attempted to tell me of all the things I needed to know about the dangerous things inmates might do to me. I was terrified for the entire visit. I really did not need to know *everything* that might possibly happen but a *few* things could have helped.

Well, I cannot tell you everything today about the Lord or about life, but I can tell you four things you really need to know.

1. The Awesome Nature of God

Take a look at nature and enjoy all the beauty that is around you. It is an awesome God who created the universe, the world and everything in it.

Genesis 1:1 - *In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.*

Psalm 19:1 - *The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.*

Psalm 139:14 - *I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.*

God’s creation is awesome. It is God the Son that not only worked to create, but He holds everything together!

Colossians 1:17 - *And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.*

God is Awesome Because He Is Omnipresent.

Psalm 139:7-10 - *Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? [8] If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. [9] If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; [10] Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.*

God is Awesome Because He Is Omniscient.

Psalm 139:1-6 - *O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. [2] Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. [3] Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. [4] For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether. [5] Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. [6] Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it.*

God is Awesome Because He Is Omnipotent.

Romans 11:33-36 - *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! [34] For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? [35] Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? [36] For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.*

2. The Annoying Nature of Sin

What is sin? Sin is anything that displeases God. You don't have to be a murderer or a bank robber in order to be a sinner.

Romans 3:10 - *As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:*

Romans 3:23 - *For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;*

Romans 6:23 - *For the wages of sin is death...*

Ezekiel 18:4 - *Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die.*

Isaiah 64:6 - *But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.*

Sin is annoying because it separates us from God.

Sin is annoying because it can keep us out of Heaven.

Before you die you need to recognize that you are a sinner and that you don't deserve to go to Heaven.

3. The Accessible Nature of Forgiveness

God loves you. God realized that we would need help, if we were ever going to get to Heaven.

Someone had to pay for our sins. But for someone to take our place and die for us, the person had to be sinless.

So God sent His sinless Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to pay for our sins. Out of His love God sent Jesus to die for you.

Romans 5:6-8 - *For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. [7] For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. [8] But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*

My friend Jesus died for you! Forgiveness is accessible and available.

All you have to do is to turn from trying to earn your way to Heaven and put your full faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior.

John 3:16 - *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

Romans 5:1 - *Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:*

Romans 6:23 - *For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Will you receive Jesus as your Savior and trust Him for forgiveness and eternal life?

4. The Amazing Nature of Grace

In a moment we will play a hymn. The first verse goes:

*Amazing grace! How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found;
Was blind, but now I see.*

When you trust Jesus as your Savior you become a recipient of God's grace, or unmerited favor. He gives you what you don't deserve.

Among other things,

Grace Defeats The Past

All your sins are forgiven. God does not hold them against you!

Psalm 103:12 - *As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.*

Grace Deals With The Present

God gives you favor so that you can live the Christian Life differently from how you lived in the past.

2 Corinthians 5:17 - *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*

Grace Delights In The Future

If you place your faith in Jesus Christ, by His grace you will be with Him in Heaven. That will be a delightful thing!

1 John 3:2 - *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*

There are four things you need to know before you leave this world:

- 1. The Awesome Nature of God**
- 2. The Annoying Nature of Sin**
- 3. The Accessible Nature of Forgiveness**
- 4. The Amazing Nature of Grace**

Conclusion: It is a serious thing to face eternity! There are a lot of things this world throws at us that it insists we know to handle both life and death. But these four things are we really NEED to know before we face eternity. Make sure you know them...personally!

Five Last Things

Text - Revelation 22:17-21

Introduction: In the last five verses of the Bible are five last things, things that God has left for us.

I. The Last Invitation:

Verse 17 - *“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”*

(1) The Call of The Spirit And Bride: *“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say. Come.”*

(2) The Condition Of The Seekers: *“And let him that is athirst come.”* The soul that is parched with sin, seeking the water of life, can come to Him and drink.

(3) The Certainty Of The Salvation: *“And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”* No one has been left out, for all can come and all can be saved.

II. The Last Warning:

Verses 18-19 - *“For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.”*

Here is one of the most solemn warnings that we find in the Bible. It is like a flaming sword to guard the cannon of the Scriptures.

III. The Last Promise:

Verse 20 - *“He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen.”*

The **great** promise our Lord left with us is that He is coming back and we believe it to be quickly.”

This is a **sure** promise, for He said, “*Surely,*” and it is a personal promise for He said, “*I come.*”

IV. The Last Prayer:

Verse 20 - *“Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”*

The last prayer of the Bible has been the prayer of many saints down through the ages. When the trials come and the burdens have been heavy for the child of God, they have prayed, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”

V. The Last Benediction:

Verse 21 - *“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.”*

Conclusion: Nothing could be more desired by us than the grace of Christ to be with us in this world, to prepare us for the glory of Christ in the other world.

Six Things In Overcoming Family Curses

Text: Proverbs 20:7; Exodus 34: 6-7

Introduction: Have you ever been to a doctor for the first time and had him ask about your family history. They always want to know if there have been any problems of sickness or disease in your family? The same is true for insurance companies. They always seem to ask, “*Is there any, Diabetes, cancer, heart disease, hypertension, suicide, depression etc in your family!*”

Doctors and researchers seem to believe that families have generational sickness problems; they really don’t know, but there seems to be some hereditary factors that connect families down the generations.

Today I want to talk with you about what is termed as a “*family curse*” or “*generational curse*” and how to break it.

Have you ever wondered why some families tend to have recurring patterns within them such as divorce, numerous failures, financial ruin, untimely deaths, unexplained health problems, fear, and many other repeated misfortunes. Are such things inherited **genetically**?

I have heard it said that alcoholism, an addiction to tobacco, and criminal behavior are a genetic predisposition, but is this true? Not necessarily. Genetics has clearly explained why we look like our parents, but can genetics completely explain why certain catastrophes can be traced through family lines? Is it possible that there are more things at work than just the arranging of chromosomes?

Could the mistakes of our parents, grandparents and even great grandparents become issues for us to deal with in our lifetimes? Are we linked to our family line spiritually?"

Well, let's take a look at what the Bible has to say and see if we can find some answers in order to help explain these difficult questions. This topic indirectly questions our "individual responsibility" for sin, and God's "grace" and "forgiveness," and I don't want someone coming away from church this morning saying that their preacher doesn't believe in God's grace, so please pay close attention. I will very briefly address the issue of how God's "grace" and our "individual responsibility" relate to this topic. Let us look at Exodus 34:6-7.

Exodus 34:6-7 *And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.*

We see that it is possible to suffer because of a sin or sins that our parents or forefathers committed, but is that suffering punishment *from God*? Are we being punished for our parent's sins? The answer is "no!"

We are not being punished for our parent's sin! God didn't say in Exodus 34:7 that he visits the "punishment" of the fathers upon the children; he said, "visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children . . ." He visits the "sin" upon the children and grandchildren. This means that the

children and grandchildren will repeat many of the same sins.

One reasonable definition of a *generational sin* or *curse* is that it is “*the natural consequence of ingrained behavioral patterns that are passed down from one generation to the next.*” *Generational sin* can be viewed as learned behavioral patterns, and this includes “*spiritual*” behavioral patterns.

Let’s look at **Proverbs 20:7** *The just man walketh in his integrity: his children are blessed after him.*

The “*just man*” of Proverbs 20:7 is a man who is in right standing with God and others.

“*Walketh in his integrity*” means there is a completeness about his life. In each area of life he is striving to be what he ought to be; he has no major areas of inconsistency.

“*Children*” refers to *children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren*, and so on. “*His children are blessed after him.*” Something this man does begins a lineage of blessing for his children.

Note the following key thoughts:

I. God is aware of your ancestry and your lineage.

II. We may have either a lineage of blessings or curses.

III. We are passing something on today to the next generation.

IV. Generational sins or curses can be broken when someone has the wisdom to see them, and the courage and dedication to break them.

You are not “stuck.”

- 1. Recognize it.—ADMIT IT**
- 2. Repent of any sin.—APOLOGIZE**
- 3. Make the drastic changes needed.—ACCOMPLISH**
- 4. Commit to live Biblically.—ASSIGNMENT**
- 5. Ignore your own feelings.—ATTENTION**
- 6. Do what the Bible says.—ABIDE BY**

Conclusion: What is it that is coming down to you today, and what is it that you are passing down to others?

Additional Notes: The Kennedy Curse

Does this really mean that his “sin” would inevitably be “punished” down the generations? I am not suggesting this, nor do I personally believe life is that simple. The world is full of extremely nasty pieces of work who live long and destructive lives and die self-satisfied in their beds, while many good, decent people encounter terrible experiences which neither they nor their ancestors have merited. Moreover, not all tragedies form part of a repeating ancestral pattern. This short list does not include issues such as divorce, adultery, alcoholism, and other family pastimes which are sufficiently common not to merit the term “tragedy” except, perhaps, to the individual participants.

- Joseph P. Kennedy Jr, Joe's eldest son., the great hope of his father for the American Presidency, is killed in a plane crash in 1944, aged twenty-nine.
- Kathleen Kennedy, Joe's second daughter, dies in a plane crash in 1948, aged twenty-eight.

- John F. Kennedy, 35th President of the US, is assassinated in Dallas in November 1963, aged forty-six.
- John F. Kennedy's son, Patrick Bouvier Kennedy, born prematurely to the President and his wife in 1963, dies three months before his father's assassination.
- Robert F. (Bobby) Kennedy, Joe's third son, is assassinated in June 1968, aged forty-two.
- Edward M. (Ted) Kennedy, Joe's youngest son, drives a car off a bridge on Chappaquiddick Island in July 1969, after a party. His aide, Mary Jo Kopechne, is found dead in the submerged car. His political career has not survived the speculation surrounding the incident.
- Bobby Kennedy's son Joseph is involved in 1973 in a car accident which leaves a female passenger paralysed for life.
- Ted Kennedy's son, Edward Jr., has his right leg amputated in 1973 because of cancer.
- Bobby Kennedy's son David dies in 1984 of a drug overdose.
- Ted Kennedy's son Patrick is treated for cocaine addiction in 1986.
- Ted Kennedy's nephew, William Kennedy Smith, is acquitted of rape in 1991.
- Bobby Kennedy's son Michael is killed in a skiing accident in December 1997, aged thirty-nine.
- John F. Kennedy's only surviving son, JFK Jr., dies in a plane crash in July 1999 (exactly thirty years after Chappaquiddick), aged thirty-eight.

Even given the fact that there are a great many Kennedys and that therefore, statistically, their chances for a list of tragedies such as this are greater, the males in this family do seem to have suffered more than their share of catastrophes and early deaths. Could all these people have been afflicted, with the inherently destructive or arrogant attitudes which are part of their psychological inheritance? We should understand why cocaine addiction or alcoholism might afflict a member of this family. Taken individually, each tragedy is explicable in its own, very human terms. Taken together, they present a rather more disturbing picture.

Seven Things Incorruptible

Text: 1 Peter 1:13-25

Introduction: We know that as Christians we have no condemnation (Romans 8:1). However, we also have an heritage of things that have no corruption. Corruption is a loss of soundness due to contamination or some destructive influence. Corruption slowly infiltrates the whole and weakens the integrity and purity of the thing.

We inhabit a corrupt world in corrupt bodies. That which is incorruptible cannot be corrupted. Incorruptible things will continue in their full purity when all the corruptible things no longer exist. Paul tells us to look, not at the things which are temporal (that pass away with time), but at the things which are eternal (2 Corinthians 4:18). Our salvation and eternity, our hope in heaven, are all built on those things which are incorruptible. Please consider these incorruptible things.

I. The Incorruptible God (Rom. 1:23)

A. Unlike the Corruptible Creatures (Rom. 1:20-25)

II. The Incorruptible Blood (1 Peter 1:18-19)

A. Incorruptible Because it is the HIS Blood (Acts 20:28)

B. Qualified to be the Blood of Redemption (Heb. 9:11-14)

III. The Incorruptible Word (1 Peter 1:23-25)

A. The Seed is the Word of God (Luke 8:11)

B. The Word is the Source of the New Birth (Jam 1:18, 21)

IV. The Incorruptible Spirit (1 Peter 3:3-4)

1 Peter 3:3-4 *Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.*

“But let it be the hidden man of the heart”—The idea of the *“hidden man of the heart”* is that *“personality of the Christian woman is made beautiful by the ministry of the Holy Spirit in glorifying the Lord Jesus and manifesting Him in and through her life”* [Wuest]. Internal grace gives beauty and adornment to the soul, such is the person that has a new heart and has the will to that which is spiritually good.

“...in that which is not corruptible”—“Corruptible” or “Imperishable” (*aphthartos*) that which is not subject to corruption. As outward adornments are subject to corruption they are of no value in the winning of lost souls. The new man, the hidden man of the heart, is not subject to corruption and will not perish, because there is no corruption in it.

The real adorning that is acceptable and pleasing to God is that of the inner man which is not corruptible. A meek and quiet spirit is a spirit that is governed by the grace of God and is opposed to self-promotion or self-interest. This is the type of adornment that is lasting and is a faithful witness to the lost. It comes from the activity and operation of God’s Spirit (Romans 8:16; 1 Cor. 2:12; Ecclesiastes 12:7)

V. An Incorruptible Body

A. Replaces our Present Corruptible Body (Phil. 3:20-21; 1 Corinthians 15:49-50)

B. Given When Christ Returns For Us (1 Cor. 15:51-55)

VI. An Incorruptible Inheritance

A. Reserved in Heaven For Us (1 Peter 1:3-5)

B. Protected From the Corruption of Earth (Matt. 6:19-21)

VII. An Incorruptible Crown

A. For Those Who Master Temperance (1 Cor. 9:24-25)

B. Deserving of Every Effort We Give (1 Cor. 9:26-27)

Conclusion: Is your life built on the corruptible things of this world or on the eternal, incorruptible things of God? A salvation built on man's good works will fail because these good works are corruptible. A salvation built on the incorruptible blood and the incorruptible word will last for eternity.

Even Christians need to make sure that their lives are built on incorruptible things. Are you laying up an incorruptible inheritance or are you too interested in the things of this world? Are you striving for the incorruptible crown? There is no better time to start than today.

These Things

Text: 2 Peter 1:8-15

(Draw attention to the repeated phrase “*these things*.”)

Introduction: Who would like to be known as a disappointment or failure in the Christian life? That’s a pretty stupid question isn’t it? After all, who wants to fail? The truth is, every one of us wants to be a successful Christian and we really want to bring glory and honor to God.

I want to be the best that I can be for the glory of God. That is probably what you want too. Thankfully, Peter gives us *these things* that lead to godly living.

2 Peter 1:8 *For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

2 Peter 1:9 *But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.*

2 Peter 1:10 *Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:*

2 Peter 1:12 *Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth.*

2 Peter 1:15 *Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance.*

I. The Consequences of These Things - v. 8-11

- *these things*, whatever they are, will produce in your life.

A. v. 8 These Things Ensure Fruitfulness

If “*these things*” are found in your life, then you will never be barren, but you will always be a fruitful branch for God’s glory. This implies that you will be a witness and a soul winner for Jesus. Whatever “*these things*” are, they must be pretty great because they promise us that we will always bear fruit. This, after all, is the goal of our Heavenly Father – John 15:1-2. It is also proof of our faith in Him – Luke 6:43-44.

(Ill. “*These things*” will prevent the Christian from being shelved by the Lord, but will keep us productive and fruitful, 1 Cor. 9:27)

(Ill. Whatever “*these things*” are, they must really be some big things! If they can do this, then I really want to know what they are.)

B. v. 9a These Things Ensure Spiritual Discernment

Many people have absolutely no spiritual discernment. They are blind and easily lead astray, Eph. 4:14. But, when “*these things*” are active in our lives, we will be able to see the tricks, traps and temptations of the Devil. We will be able to see the needs of others and not be blinded by our own selfish interests. We won’t ever be blind and in spiritual darkness ever again. I don’t know about you, but whatever “*these things*” are, I want to know about them!

C. v. 9b These Things Ensure Assurance Of Salvation

Who among us hasn't doubted his/her salvation? We have all doubted from time to time! Many people are so overcome with their doubts that are of no use to the Lord. Evidently, they lack "*these things*." Because, "*these things*" promise us that we can have assurance of salvation. They promise us that we can get to the place where we never doubt again! I tell you, "*these things*" must really be something! Whatever "*these things*" are, then I want to know them. I want to be secure in the knowledge that I am saved.

D. v. 10 These Things Ensure That Never Falling Again

This verse says plainly that "*these things*", if practiced in our lives, will ever keep us from falling. How many have fallen as a Christian? Every single one of us has fallen from time to time. But, "*these things*" promise us a fall free life. If I can get my hands on "*these things*" then I want them really bad because I never want to fall again. Whatever "*these things*" are, they are worth going after if they will do all this.

If "*these things*" can guarantee:

- 1. That I Will Always Be Fruitful.**
- 2. That I Will Always Have Spiritual Discernment.**
- 3. That I Will Never Doubt My Salvation.**
- 4. That I Will Never Fall As A Christian.**

Then I want to know what "*these things*" are. They must really be something! Are "*these things*" reserved for the "*super saints*" like Paul and Peter? Well, let's see what they are by looking at the steps below:.

II. The Collection of These Things - v. 5-7

Well, here are “*these things*.”

A. v. 5 Virtue – (“Moral uprightness”; “Holiness”) This word literally means “*excellent living*.”

Moral purity refers to every aspect of our lives. Physical, mental, spiritual purity must be maintained if we expect His blessings on our lives – 1 Pet. 1:16

B. v. 5 Knowledge – (Literally “*an understanding of the truth and how to live it out*.”) This word is telling us that we can have all those things we discovered by having a sound knowledge of the doctrines of Christianity and by applying them to our lives and living them out.

C. v. 6 Temperance – This word means “*self-control*.” It implies that I do not do as I please, I control myself and do as the Lord pleases! (Ill. Paul – 1 Cor. 9:27) (Ill. This is one of the fruit of the Spirit Gal. 5:23.)

D. v. 6 Patience – (Endurance) The patient person is the one not turned from his devotion to God even by the greatest of trials.

E. v. 6 Godliness – This word literally means, “*Walking in view of His greatness*.” It has reference to the person who has every action and attitude yielded to the fear of the Lord. This person spends his life in a state of “*God-like-ness*.” He spends his days serving God and serving men.

F. v. 7 Brotherly Kindness – (*Philadelphia* – Literally, just plain old brotherly love.) If Christians would practice the second Great Commandment, Matt. 22:39, then they would

experience those four great blessings that we all want so badly.

G. v. 7 Charity – (Love!) He is referring to that self-sacrificing, never-ending, all-encompassing love that Jesus exhibited when He came to the earth to die for sin. It is that very same love that God desires to see lived out in our lives today. – 1 Cor. 13:1-3.

Are you disappointed with “*these things*”? Don’t be, these are great things that they cannot be produced in the life of an unbeliever! The lost person just cannot fake “*these things*!” So, if they are present in your life then rejoice!

H. v. 5 Notice the word “*Add.*” This little word means “*to supply generously.*” It does not teach here that we are to first get faith perfect that then add virtue, then add knowledge, etc. What it means is, that “*these things*” are to be practiced as a whole and every one of them is to be active all the time.

Conclusion: Now, we know what “*these things*” are and what they can do for us. The final question is this, “Are ALL of them present in your life tonight?” If you found yourself lacking then the place to be is right here at this altar. As for me:

1. To always be fruitful.
2. To always have spiritual discernment.
3. To never doubt my salvation.
4. To never fall as a Christian.

Therefore, I am going to seek the Lord for all of “*these things*.” How about you?

Things To Be Thankful For

Text: 2 Corinthians 9:15

Introduction: The most unthankful crowd I know is God's people. I wish it was not so but I have been around far too many Christians that are simply unthankful. If only they would take a look at what they can be thankful for.

I. We Need To Be Thankful For His Forgiveness

Acts 13:38-39 - *“Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins. And by him all that believe are justified from all things from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.”*

Psalms 103:3 *“Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases;”*

1 John 1:9 *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”*

II. We Need To Be Thankful For Our Friends

Proverbs 6:3 - *“Do this now, my son, and deliver thyself, when thou are come into the hand of thy friends; go humble thyself, and make sure thy friend.”*

Proverbs 18:24 *“A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.”*

III. We Need To Be Thankful For Our Finances

Malachi 3:10 *“Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.”*

Luke 6:38 *“Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.”*

Matthew 6:33 *“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”*

IV. We Need To Be Thankful For Our Food

I Timothy 4:3 - *“Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.”*

1 Timothy 6:8 *“And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.”*

V. We Need To Be Thankful For Our Future

John 14:1-3 - *“Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.”*

Hebrews 11:16 *“But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.”*

Conclusion: Take a look in the Book and see the things we can be thankful for.....A dear family (*The Andrew Stringer Family*) in our church often sings this song:

*When I look around and see
The good things he does for me
I know I'm unworthy of them all
But his blessings he freely gives
I owe my life to him
I've got so much to thank him for.*

Chorus:

*And I've got so much to thank him for
o much to praise him for
Well you see he has been so good to me
And when I think of what he's done
And where he brought me from
I've got so much to thank him for*

*And sometimes while on this way
I kneel and I stop and say
Lord thank you for all you've done for me
And one day I'll reach heavens shore
Oh please let me kneel once more
I've got so much to thank you for*

Great Things The Lord Hath Done

Text: Psalm 126:3

Introduction: If we were to begin to count the things that the Lord has done for us, we would still be listing them on our dying day or at the rapture of the Church. There is not enough pencil, ink or paper on which to calculate these blessings but I wish just to name a few. These things for which we should render thanksgiving to Him every day.

I. He Has Sought Us

Luke 19:10

Romans 3:11 *“There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.”*

A. God Sought Us Because Of Grace. 2 Cor. 8:9, Deut. 32:9-10.

B. God Sought Us By His Spirit. John 6:44.

C. God Sought Us For A Purpose. Acts 1:8.

II. He Has Bought Us

I Cor. 6:20

1 Peter 1:18-19 *“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:”*

III. He Has Brought Us

Deut. 5:15

Deuteronomy 5:15 *“And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy God*

brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm:..”

God doesn't save us and then forget us, He is always mindful of us and watchful over us and we should always remember this.

IV. He Has Taught Us

I Thess. 4:9

1 Thessalonians 4:9 *“But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another.”*

Titus 2:11-13 *“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;”*

Colossians 2:7 *“Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.”*

A. Through His Spirit

B. Through His Word

C. Through his chosen teachers - John 14:26, 2 Tim. 3:16-17, and Eph. 4:11

Conclusion: The Lord Sought Us, Bought Us, Brought Us, and Taught Us...Hallelujah!

These Necessary Things

Text: Acts 15:28

Introduction: In Acts 15 it was settled once and for all by Christ's disciples in council: *salvation is by grace alone, thru faith alone, in Christ alone...plus nothing, minus nothing...*and good works have no part in our receiving of salvation. According to vs. 11, there is only one plan of salvation for Jews and Gentiles/good people and bad people. The Bible says we have a universal problem...sin. It says nothing about the quality/quantity of that sin. "There is no difference!"

This council settled this for the Jewish believers that day. They understood the true basis of salvation and not to add anything from their old traditions. Then the council decided, as a follow up, to send a letter to the believers in the Gentile areas, to clear up this matter...and to give them certain standards which should FOLLOW salvation as a natural result. In other words, the council put forth a *Doctrinal* Statement in v. 11, but then a *Practical* Statement which begins in our text in v. 28 and following. They first deal with how we are SAVED, then they deal with how we should LIVE as a result.

So, the Jerusalem Council wrote the believers this letter, encouraging practical obedience in 4 areas:

- 1. Avoid idolatry**
- 2. Abstain from immorality**
- 3. Abstain from eating blood**
- 4. Abstain from eating animals that had been strangled.**

The last two don't have much direct application to us today...these were cultural things which applied to 1st Century believers in the Jewish culture.

Ex.—eating meat offered to idols is not an issue today, but would have been very offensive to the Jews...so, “don't be a stumbling block in any outward way, whether it be wrong and you know it, such as is with fornication, or even if you know it's no sin...*perception is reality* to your Jewish brethren, so don't offend.”

So, the disciples are trying not to put the Gentiles under Old Testament Law, but at the same time they were asking them to be sensitive not to offend their Jewish brethren's sensibilities. “*Don't just please God, but also remember that men are watching!*”

Necessary Things

1. It Is Necessary To Uphold A Moral Responsibility To Ourselves.

The moral standard was very low in that day. Most of the believers were saved out of pagan worship, and much sexual deviance. Priestesses were nothing but prostitutes, orgies were commonplace...even in worship! “If it feels good do it”, “satisfy yourself.”

Now the Jerusalem Council says to these new believers, abstain from fornication, live a clean, pure, moral life that's brand new to you.

We live in a day, once again, of very loose morals, and all of us, inc. our new converts, have to be totally re-taught because we've been brainwashed by the world that

anything goes and it's no big deal...it's commonly accepted today that you'll take a test drive before you buy!

One article stated that hotel managers are saying the number of unmarried couples checking in together has skyrocketed and is off the charts. Even if the manager doesn't approve of it, they can't turn down the business because it's such a large part of their business. Years ago that was considered a shame, and though it's always happened at some level, they at least had the decency to lie about it and check in as Mr. and Mrs. Smith. But now they don't even try to cover it up...it's commonly accepted! Now that's the culture in which we live today!

But God says **2 Corinthians 6:17** *“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.”*

Those new believers could have continued on in their sexual practices and still fit in in their world, but they needed to know that was displeasing to God, and they needed to maintain a different moral mandate.

Believers have a new moral responsibility as the temple of God, to guard our bodies, our tongues, our eyes, our ears, our thoughts!

2. It Is Necessary To Uphold An Ethical Responsibility To Others.

This is the key lesson of this passage. Believers should be willing to give up some of their rights for the sake of not offending others.

Jewish legalists here gave up their insistence on the Gentile believers having to be circumcised, and the Gentiles gave up some of their dietary habits for the purpose of not offending their Jewish brethren. It was a good compromise. Some things we should never compromise, like doctrine. But these were all believers, and yet from different backgrounds and cultures, and they needed to find some common ground of fellowship.

Our salvation is about a new relationship we form with God, but it affects every other relationship we have.

We have an ethical *duty* to others, and “*Others*” includes:

The Saints—other believers in the body of Christ. Jesus is the Head, but we all make up the rest of the body with different function. Many this morning or right now function as legs and arms and hands, eyes and ears, and some in the nursery right now as laps! This speaks of our interdependence...our “connectedness.” In other words...we need each other. When one member hurts, we all hurt, when one rejoices, we all do!

Ill.—just smash your thumb with a hammer...first you’ll scream [but what do vocal cords have to do with your thumb?], then you’ll dance around, then you’ll suck on it! We’re connected...no man is an island...we affect each other and we have a moral responsibility to each other!

The State—Christians should be model citizens. God tells us to submit to the powers that be for the Lord’s sake. When they asked Jesus if believers should pay, He said yes, render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and unto God the things that are God’s...a brilliant answer which left

God on His heavenly throne and Caesar on his earthly throne. We have a responsibility to God and also to others!

The Society—the lost are watching, not for us to fit in, but for us to stand out. Everyone is looking for something different, and they need to find it in us.

Ill.-- Several years ago a preacher moved to Houston, Texas. Some weeks after he arrived, he rode the bus from his home to the downtown area. When he sat down, he discovered that the driver had accidentally given him a quarter too much change. As he considered what to do, he thought to himself, "*You'd better give the quarter back. It would be wrong to keep it.*"

Then he thought, "*Oh, forget it, it's only a quarter. Who would worry about this little of an amount? Anyway, the bus company already gets too much fare; they will never miss it. Accept it as a gift from God and keep quiet.*" When his stop came, he paused momentarily at the door, then he handed the quarter to the driver and said, "*Here, you gave me too much change.*" The driver, with a smile, replied, "*Aren't you the new preacher in town?*"

I have been thinking lately about going to worship somewhere. I just wanted to see what you would do if I gave you too much change." When the pastor stepped off the bus, he literally grabbed the nearest light pole, and held on, and said, "*Oh, God, I almost sold your Son for a quarter.*"

Our lives are the only Bible some people will ever read.

3. It Is Necessary To Uphold A Spiritual Responsibility To The Lord.

When you know you're saved, when you know how much you were saved from, when you know how much you're saved TO...you don't mind giving up some things for the sake of Christ. When you remember what Jesus gave up, it makes it easier! He did it for love, and when we truly love someone we'll make changes for them too!

What a opportunity and blessing it is to give up some habits, to forgive some hurts, to get over some hang-ups, to make some wardrobe changes, to develop a new vocabulary, to find some new friends, to throw out some old CD's, to stop going to those places...and what a privilege it is to replace the old ways with some new, godly ways, all for the sake of Christ.

II Cor. 5:17 - "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

An artist was painting a picture of Jesus and had spent much time on it, making sure every hair, every line was just right. Someone watching was impressed and said, you must really love Him to spend that much time painting Him. Yes, I do love Him...but fact is, I know in my heart that if I loved Him more, I would paint Him better.

Fact is, we all paint Him every day...may the Lord help us to paint Him better!

Things You Can't Afford To Miss

TEXT: John 20:24

Introduction: There are a many things we miss out on in this life, for one reason or another; but there are some things in the future that God has for them that love him and you don't want to miss out on them.

I. You Can't Afford To Miss The Service - Matthew 18:20

A lot of church members seemingly are content to be absent when the church services are going on; but for me, I want to be there. I don't want to miss the service. If two or three get together in the Lord's name, He is going to be in the midst to bless. I don't want to miss the blessing.

II. You Can't Afford To Miss The Shout - I Thess. 4:16-17

“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”

III. You Can't Afford To Miss The Supper – Rev.19:9

When that great supper is spread in the sky, I want to be there. It will be great when the saints of all ages sit down together. - Matthew 8:11

IV. You Can't Afford To Miss The Saddle – Rev. 19:16

Christ came the first time to be smitten of men, to suffer and die. The next time He comes to this earth, He will come as “*King of Kings and Lords of lords.*”

V. You Can't Afford To Miss The Summit – Rev. 20:1-3

The Bible assures the child of God that we, who are faithful in our service for Him, will rule and reign with Him. I don't want to miss that.

VI. You Can't Afford To Miss The Singing – Rev. 21:2

After the seven years of tribulation, thousand years reign, John saw a new heaven and a new earth, Then he saw the holy city coming down from God out of heaven. There is an everlasting joy in that city. The inhabitants of this place are singing a new song. The singing will be of Him, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. I don't want to miss the singing.

Conclusion: Things I can't afford to miss. There is only one way we can be assured of being there when these events take place and that is through the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus paid the price for every sinner at Calvary.

Can Any Good Thing Come From There?

Text: John 1:43-50

Introduction: Among the first things we want to know about people is where they come from. When we want to know about a person, we look at his relatives, his background, and his environment. History and cultural traditions are full of illustrations of prominent people from modest beginnings.

Think of someone like D. L. Moody who was an orphan that grew up with none of life's luxuries. No one thought that his life would amount to anything special but he shook two continents for God in the 1800s. The great missionary David Livingstone was born near Glasgow, Scotland to a very poor family. He was forced to work in the local cotton mill at ten years old to help his family.

One of the greatest preachers and hymn writers in Christian history was John Newton, the writer of *Amazing Grace*. His mother died when he was seven, and his father raised him on board the ships he sailed. At twelve, he was on his own. As an adult, he was captain of a slave ship. One could look at Newton's early life and wonder how such a one could ever do anything for God.

Our text tells of the call of the disciple Nathanael. When Philip told him of Christ, he replied, "*Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?*" What a question!

The small town I have ministered in for nearly thirty years is looked at just this way. Can any good thing come out of Ludowici, Georgia? Speed trap, riffraff, rednecks, white trash, "*load of whiskey*", so many critical things have been said. We kind of take them all in stride but we do know the

concept that seemed to have filled Nathanael's mind. The past history of our town does not lend itself to the idea of greatness coming from here.

We will use this text to look at the attitudes and prejudices of many people and the grace of God that overcomes them.

I. An Announcement (verse 45)

Notice in verse 45 that Philip found Nathanael. Philip was the "*finding*" disciple. Many times when Philip is mentioned in Scripture, it shows him winning souls and witnessing for the Lord. He had met Christ and now wanted to share his experience with Nathanael.

"*We have found him,*" Philip told him. Many young men of Philip's time were searching for "*him,*" that is, the Messiah. Israel was under the dominion of the Roman empire and many looked for the one who would lead their beloved nation to freedom and independence.

- (1) A Find "*found Nathanael*" and "*found him*" (Christ)
- (2) A Fulfillment "*of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write*"

II. An Attitude (verse 46)

Here is a great illustration of a pessimist. Nathanael's reply is so much like our own many times. We think less of people because of external difficulties. Nazareth was not a desirable place. It was not known for great minds or great abilities. Most scholars believe that Nathanael was voicing an honest concern as well as possibly casting an aspersion on the city of Nazareth.

There were no major scriptures identifying Nazareth as a city of prophecy concerning the Messiah. It would seem that Nathanael was very knowledgeable about spiritual matters. Philip came to him with the announcement, "*we have found him...*" These men had probably spent much time and discussion about who He would be and where He would come from.

The political situation was bleak. Many Jews flourished financially under the dominion of Rome. But those Jews who considered Israel God's chosen nation were not satisfied. The spiritual Jewish believers also yearned for the appearance of the Messiah. These were the two categories of people looking for the Messiah, *political* and *religious*. Which category the disciples belonged to is unknown. It could have been both.

- (1) Doubting the Place "*Nazareth*"
- (2) Doubting the Possibility "*can any good thing...*"

III. An Assessment (verse 47)

In verse 47, Jesus addresses both the political and religious aspects of His coming. As Nathanael approaches Christ, Jesus calls out to him. He says, "*Behold, an Israelite indeed.*" This was a great compliment to Nathanael. The term "*Israelite*" was held in high esteem by the Jews, and usually reserved for the political elite. Jesus was acknowledging Nathanael's patriotism. He perceived that Nathanael had godly motives concerning his nation.

Secondly, Jesus said, "*...in whom is no guile.*" Guile is deception, subtlety, or hypocrisy. Nathanael was a straightforward, honest man. These were great compliments coming from the Son of God to a man of flesh and

inconsistencies just like you and me. But with all his attributes, Nathanael had yet to receive Christ. Rest assured that Christ knows us just as fully as he knew Nathanael. What would his assessment be of us?

- (1) Jesus Probed his Political Beliefs
- (2) Jesus Prodded his Religious Beliefs

IV. An Attribute(verse 48)

An attribute of divine origin. Nathanael had no idea who he was speaking to. He asks how does Jesus know him? Jesus responds with words that Nathanael can hardly understand. Not only did Jesus know about his conversation with Philip, but he also had a personal note for him. "*When thou wast under the fig tree*" has been a phrase that has caused scholars to guess and wonder for generations about the meaning. The fig tree typifies both Israel and the fruitful life. Some have concluded that there could be symbolic meaning here.

"*Under the fig tree*" in ancient Jewish times was a place of reflection, study, and meditation. Micah 4:4 says "*But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree.*" Perhaps Christ is pointing here to a time of Nathanael's meditation on the questions of life or the things of God. Christ was now answering those silent questions hidden deep in Nathanael's heart.

- (1) His Omniscience
- (2) His Omnipresence
- (3) His Omnipotence

V. An Admission (verse 49)

To Nathanael's credit, it didn't take very long for him to realize who Christ was. His exclamation is brief, but telling. He calls him "*rabbi*," meaning "*great teacher*." He then confesses Christ as his personal redeemer and his national redeemer. He is both the "*Son of God*" and "*King of Israel*."

- (1) A Religious Title "*rabbi*"
- (2) A Spiritual Title "*Son of God*"
- (3) A National Title "*King of Israel*"

VI. An Addition (verse 50)

Jesus was pleased that Nathanael had believed so easily. He promised something in addition, "*greater things*." Jesus always responds positively to faith. There are great discoveries of God's greatness and power for those who exercise faith. Nathanael did not realize the journey that he was starting. He would see Jesus preach great messages, heal the sick, and raise the dead. Nathanael's confession of faith allowed him to be a part of it.

- (1) Christ Responds to Simple Faith
- (2) Christ Reveals Greater Things

Conclusion: Truthfully speaking, good things can come from unusual places. Nathanael had his doubts. At first, he wondered if anything good could come from such a place. After meeting Christ, he probably wondered how a great and mighty God could use him in His service. Surely we should never doubt what God can do for and to even the least of us.

The Thing Is Gone From Me

Text: Daniel 2:5

Introduction: The young preacher was shocked to hear the well-known evangelist utter the words, *"I have spent some of the happiest moments of my life in the arms of another man's wife. Yes, I have spent some of the happiest moments of my life in the arms of another man's wife."* Then, following a pause, the evangelist added, *"That woman was my mother."*

"I've got to use that!" the young pastor thought to himself. A few weeks later, as he was speaking to a civic group, the phrase leapt into his mind and he exclaimed, *"I have spent some of the happiest days of my life in the arms of another man's wife."* Then, after another long pause, the young man muttered meekly, *"But for the life of me I can't remember who she was."*

In our text, Nebuchadnezzar has forgotten his dream. Fortunately, I forget almost all of my dreams, so they don't worry me too much. However, there are other things that I forget that I should be remembering. Do you have trouble remembering some things?

People tend to be forgetful of what they need to remember, and they tend to be mindful of what they want to remember. Our memory starts doing tricks on us as we get older. We remember the details of something that happened at a birthday party forty years ago, but we can't remember whether or not we paid the house payment last month.

What People Forget

I was relieved to find out that I'm not the only one who forgets things. Everyone does at one time or another, according to Karen Bolla, a Johns Hopkins researcher. These are the things people most often forget:

1. names	83%
2. where something is	60%
3. telephone numbers	57%
4. words.	53%
5. what was said	49%
6. faces	42%

And if you can't remember whether you've just done something, you join 38 % of the population. The average adult attention span is 6 minutes. Commercials break about every 6 minutes!

Let's think on some things we tend to forget.

I. People Fail To Remember Their Promises

Genesis 40:14 *“But think on me when it shall be well with thee, and shew kindness, I pray thee, unto me, and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house:”*

Genesis 40:23 *“Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgot him.”*

- A. Their promises to God
- B. Their promises to heir Church
- C. Their promises to their family

II. People Fail To Remember God's Promises

Psalm 119:11 *“Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.”*

- A. The promise of His pardon
- B. The promise of His presence
- C. The promise of His power
- D. The promise of His protection

III. People Fail To Remember The Purging of Sins

2 Peter 1:9 *“But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.”*

- A. The shame - Heb. 12:2
- B. The shed blood
- C. The smitten body

When we have the Lord's Supper we do so for the specific purpose of remembering these things and showing forth the Lord's death until He comes.

It was Christmas Eve 1875 and Ira Sankey, D. L. Moody's song leader, was traveling on a Delaware River steamboat when he was recognized by some of the passengers. His picture had been in the newspaper because he was the song leader for the famous evangelist D. L. Moody. They asked him to sing one of his own hymns, but Sankey demurred, saying that he preferred to sing William B. Bradbury's hymn, “Savior Like a Shepherd Lead Us.”

As he sang, one of the stanzas began, *“We are Thine; do Thou befriend us. Be the Guardian of our way.”* When he

finished, a man stepped from the shadows and asked, “*Did you ever serve in the Union Army?*” “*Yes,*” Mr. Sankey answered, “*in the spring of 1860.*” Can you remember if you were doing picket duty on a bright, moonlit night in 1862?” “*Yes,*” Mr. Sankey answered, very much surprised.

“So did I, but I was serving in the Confederate army. When I saw you standing at your post, I thought to myself, ‘That fellow will never get away alive.’ I raised my musket and took aim. I was standing in the shadow, completely concealed, while the full light of the moon was falling upon you. At that instant, just as a moment ago, you raised your eyes to heaven and began to sing... ‘Let him sing his song to the end,’ I said to myself, ‘I can shoot him afterwards.’ He’s my victim at all events, and my bullet cannot miss him.’ But the song you sang then was the song you sang just now. I heard the words perfectly: ‘We are Thine; do Thou befriend us. Be the Guardian of our way.’ Those words stirred up many memories. I began to think of my childhood and my God-fearing mother. She had many times sung that song to me. When you had finished your song, it was impossible for me to take aim again. I thought, ‘The Lord who is able to save that man from certain death must surely be great and mighty.’ And my arm of its own accord dropped limp at my side.” Our Daily Bread, Dec. 1996

There are serious moments of reflection, when the heart is especially awake to spiritual influence, and when the soul sees God in an extraordinary, supernatural manner. Does this last? Sometimes. But too often the clouds roll again over the horizon, and “*the thing is gone from me.*”

Under Things

Introduction: Over the years many have said that I seem to somehow work certain words into my messages. Words like “*heifer*” or “*ain’t*” or “*underwear*.” I don’t know how it first began, probably out of nervous energy or talking to fast. However, having said that, “*under-wear*” brings to my demented mind the thought of “*under-things*” which put me to looking up Bible verses on “**UNDER**” things! Here are some things I found:

1. Understand

Gen 11:7 *“Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech.”*

Gen 11:7: Go to. A council in heaven (perhaps mocking Nimrod’s councils--**Psalm 2:1-4**) decrees the confusion of tongues. This act is clearly supernatural, involving the divine creative power which Satan could neither duplicate nor reverse. (**11:7**) “*confound their language*”. In some inexplicable manner, God altered the brain/nerve/speech appari of the Babylonian rebels to give each family unit (possibly the seventy families of Genesis 10) its own distinctive vocabulary/phonology complex. With all this, however, they all remained truly human, unchanged in basic thought processes or moral character. Further, their distinctive languages were still sufficiently alike that they could, with time and much effort, learn to speak each other’s languages. For some time, however, they could no longer communicate between families and, therefore, they could no longer cooperate. They were thus forced to obey God’s earlier command to scatter abroad and to fill the earth with different nations and governmental units. (*Defender’s Study Bible-Henry Morris*)

Micah 4:12 *“But they know not the thoughts of the LORD, neither understand they his counsel: for he shall gather them as the sheaves into the floor.”*

Mat 13:13 “Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.”

2 Pet 2:12 “But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption;”

2. Underneath

Deut. 33:27 “The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them.”

3. Undergird

Acts 27:17 “Which when they had taken up, they used helps, undergirding the ship; and, fearing lest they should fall into the quicksands, struck sail, and so were driven.”

4. Undertake

Isa 38:14 “Like a crane or a swallow, so did I chatter: I did mourn as a dove: mine eyes fail with looking upward: O LORD, I am oppressed; undertake for me.”

Broken Things

Text: Jeremiah 18:4

Introduction: By and large, when something is broken, it is of no use unless it can be repaired. Perhaps you know what it is like to have a broken arm or leg. When a person is financially drained so that he has absolutely nothing, he is said to be “*broke*.” When a person's romantic hopes are destroyed, he is heart-BROKEN. When a person is broken, he is almost useless, unless he gets repaired.

The first time the word “*broken*” is found in the Bible is in the description given of God's judgment upon the world in Noah's days:

Genesis 7:11 *“In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened.”*

When things are broken in your life, you are in a mess:

Proverbs 25:28 *“He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls.”*

Proverbs 15:13 *“A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance: but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken.”*

Proverbs 25:19 *“Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint.”*

God Is Able To Mend:

- Broken Hearts
- Broken Homes
- Broken Hopes
- Broken Health
- Broken Happiness

I'm glad that our Lord involves Himself in healing broken things!

Psalm 147:3 *“He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.”*

When a person is at rock bottom, he is *broken*. Under God's discipline, David said:

Psalm 38:8 *“I am feeble and sore broken: I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart.”*

Now we come to one of the paradoxes of the life. The word “*broken*” is almost always negative. However, the word, “*break*,” can be positive. For example, when a person gets an advantage in life, it is called “his big *break*.”

To be “*broken*” in heart, health, or hope, could be your big break. For instance, God gives you His attention when your spirit is broken, more so than when your spirit is proud:

Psalm 51:17 *“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.”*

Let look at a few examples from the word of God of those who were broken, yet became greatly blessed and used of God.

I. Joseph Was Broken

Acts 7:9 *And the patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt: but God was with him,*

- A. Joseph was Envied
- B. Joseph was Expelled
- C. Joseph was Exalted
- D. Joseph was Exonerated

II. Moses Was Broken

Exodus 2:13-14 *“And when he went out the second day, behold, two men of the Hebrews strove together: and he said to him that did the wrong, Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow? 14 And he said, Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? intendest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian? And Moses feared, and said, Surely this thing is known. 15 Now when Pharaoh heard this thing, he sought to slay Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh, and dwelt in the land of Midian: and he sat down by a well.”*

- A. His Motive was Pure
- B. His Mission was Providential
- C. His Meekness was Preeminent

Moses wasn't a glory-seeker yet his ministry was pushed away, his mansion and money parted from him, his Master was patient with him, his mending was perfect.

It took 40 years but God prepared him to be used like no one in the history of mankind

III. Paul Was Broken

2 Corinthians 12:7-10 *“And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. 8 For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. 9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.”*

- A. This was a Matter of Pain (physical-*“in the flesh”*)
- B. This was a Matter of Prayer (*“thrice”*)
- C. This was a Matter of Permanence (He never did get rid of the problem.)

IV. Our Savior Was Broken

Although not a **BONE** of our Lord was broken, when the Lord was crucified and bore our sins in His body, the Bible describes His body as being broken:

1 Corinthians 11:24 *“And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.”*

Isaiah 53:5 *“But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.”*

- A. His Blood Promised A Redemption
- B. His Burial Promised A Removal
- C. His Body Promised A Resurrection

Our Lord was broken, but through His brokenness, salvation was made available. The greatest men were broken but God used them. Are you broken? It may be that God is going to use you. God uses broken things!

Jeremiah 18:4 *“And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it.”*

It is on crushed grain that man is fed; it is by bruised plants that he is restored to health. It was by broken pitchers that Gideon triumphed; it was from a wasted barrel and empty cruse that the prophet was sustained; it was on boards and broken pieces of the ship that Paul and his companions were saved. It was amid the fragments of broken humanity that the promise of the higher life was given; though not a bone of Him was broken, yet it is by the broken life of Christ that His people shall live eternally; When the true story of all things shall be known, then will it appear how precious in God's sight, how powerful in His hands, were many broken things. Broken earthly hopes will be found to have been necessary to the bringing in of the better hope which endures forever. Broken bodily constitutions will be found to have been needful in some cases to the attainment of that land where the body shall be weary and sore no more; broken earthly fortunes, to the winning of the wealth beyond the reach of rust and moth and thief; broken earthly honour, to the being crowned with the diadem which fadeth not away. Yes! even for what we have to accomplish here, it often needs that we should be broken up into personal helplessness ere we can accomplish anything; that the excellency of the power may be not of man but of God. It is along a channel marred, and, as we should say, of no worth, that the precious ointment flows. Therefore, when any of God's people are broken and marred, let them bethink themselves of this shattered box, and how from it there flowed forth that ointment which anointed Jesus for His burial, and how it gave materials for that story which every gospel should tell.

-P. B. Power.

Things Eternal

Text: 2 Cor. 4:18

Introduction: *"While we look not at the things which are seen , but at the things which are not seen : for the things which are seen are temporal ; but the things which are not seen are eternal. "*

I. These Things Eternal

- A. They are not seen
- B. They have no end

II. The Way In Which Christians Perceive These Things

- A. With a firm belief in their real existence
- B. With a high estimation of them
- C. With personal interest
- D. With an exhibition of their practical influence

III. The Effect These Things Should Produce On Us

- A. They should turn our minds from things that are seen
- B. They should reconcile us to the afflictions of life
- C. They should fix our souls on great things before us

Important Things You Can Lose

Introduction: We have all lost something at one time or another in our lives. One thing is certain, *you cannot lose your salvation* once you are truly born of God. But you can lose some things:

I. You Can Lose Your First Love (Rev. 2:4). You can be in a state of decline when it comes to your love for the Lord. We would be wise not to let that happen. "*First love*" is a glowing, radiant love. The Ephesian Church had decreased in its fervency. This brought discouragement and defeat.

II. You Can Lose Your Rewards (1 Cor. 3:15). All believers will be rewarded for service rendered with the right motives. You can lose your reward in the sense that you may not gain what you could have if you had given your service with pure motives. We should all desire a "*full reward*" (2 John 8).

III. You Can Lose Your Power (Judges 16:20). Though you cannot lose your salvation, you can lose your power with God. God will not fill an unclean vessel filled with the wrong things. Samson woke up one morning and found that the power of God had left him. Nothing is worth losing the power of God over.

IV. You Can Lose Your Position (I Sam. 13:14). God told Saul, "*But now thy kingdom shall not continue.*" It is God who raises up and who can bring down. Humility and dependence on God are two essential ingredients when serving in positions of responsibility.

V. You Can Lose Your Influence (Gen. 19:14). Lot had so hung around the evil people of Sodom, that his own sons-in-law would pay no attention to him when he warned them to leave Sodom.

VI. You Can Lose Your Soul (Mark 8:36). The Lord Jesus said, "*What is a man profited if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?*" When the final opportunity to be saved comes, and you refuse Jesus Christ, then you lose your soul. To be lost forever means you will burn in Hell forever!

Some choose possessions and pleasures over Jesus. If you don't have Christ you have nothing, but if you have Him, you have everything.