

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Taught by Bruce Bickel

Session: May 25, 2012

Father, we're once again reminded of the fact that your grace is so amazing, and we are in such need of your grace, not only for our salvation but for our preservation. Remind us, Lord, that we're not only saved by grace, but we're also maintained and preserved by grace. Forgive us when we think that we can maintain ourselves. Father, we just pray that you would descend upon us now through your Holy Spirit, that you'd be our teacher, and honestly, Father, you know how absolutely tired I am today and how unprepared I am, and I just trust, Lord, that your Holy Spirit would do a work that would be far beyond anything that we could conceive of ourselves, least of all because of my own efforts this morning. Father, your grace is amazing. We just trust it now for Jesus' sake. Amen.

Last week, a couple of you had a question about a statement I made. I'm learning, with you guys, and it's a good thing to learn, as a teacher, is to make sure that you understand what I'm not saying. That's as equally as important as it for you to understand what I am saying. I made a statement—I've made it several times—that you do the best you can and you trust Christ with the rest. Here's what I'm not saying. I'm not saying it means you can work anything and earn your salvation by doing your best. I'm not saying that. I'm saying that you and I have a responsibility to do the best we can while we're trusting Christ, realizing that our very best efforts are going to be as filthy rags, so even if I could do something perfectly, it would be far inferior to meeting the standards of God's righteousness.

So I'm not suggesting at all that when I say do the best you can, that that's a works-oriented mentality. I'm saying that you and I, through God's grace, which is amazing, do the best we can trusting Christ. We never do it perfectly. That's why we need to trust Christ with the rest. I'm not suggesting anything that would be of the nature that says that you could earn your salvation or you earn anything. There's no merit in whatever we do. Do you understand that? We don't achieve any merit by anything that we do. Your very best efforts, whatever they are, are going to be as filthy rags. So get over the idea that says you think you can work for something. You can't. What we're doing, we're expressing our gratitude for God's grace and God's mercy and God's forgiveness by doing our very best, while we're trusting Christ, you see. But even our very, very best is not going to be good enough. So that's why we have to trust Christ with the rest.

I'm going to have to do that today. My plane got in at 1:00 last night. My car was fine, but it took about another 40 minutes for the van to come and pick me up, so by the time I got home, you know, I just went to the bathroom and got back up. So I'm going to do the best I can, trusting Christ today, and I'm going to trust him with the rest.

Let's open your bibles to Matthew 5:4, looking at the Beatitudes, Jesus' introduction into the character and the witness of the citizens of the kingdom of God. We've seen that this was his first staff meeting. He introduces, not a strategic plan, but he introduces a plan of changing the condition of their nature and their hearts, and says, "This is how you enter into the kingdom, this is how you live a kingdom life, and these are the characteristics of a kingdom citizen. The first one being blessed are those who are poor in spirit." We recognize our spiritual bankruptcy, our inability to achieve God, appease him or to please him in any way. We just recognize that we're spiritual paupers. We're spiritual beggars. We are really empty. It's when you come to the point of being empty, that's when you begin to realize that Christ can fill you. Until a person really understands what it means to be poor in spirit, they always begin to think that they can make a difference.

One of the great things in my life that it took me many years to realize was this—that I can't make a difference. I can't make a difference. I just came back, yesterday, and the day before, from the LSU

Graduate School of Executive Management where I was teaching leadership and teamwork and ethics. One of the young ladies of the class, afterwards, she said, “What’s one of the things you’ve learned in your leadership life?” I thought for a minute, and I said, “The biggest thing I have learned is this—that I can’t change anybody.” The sooner you realize you can’t change anybody, the more effective you can be. You can create an environment where they can be influenced in their behavior, but you can’t change that person. Leadership is not changing somebody; it’s influencing the behavior of people.

As we come into this passage today, we look at blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. We dealt with this last week. This particular Beatitude is really an anomaly to the world because their logic is this—the world’s logic is we’ve got to be happy, we’ve got to be cheerful, we’ve got to be trivial, we’ve got to be upbeat. They read this and say, “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted? How can a person who is mourning be blessed?” That’s illogical. It doesn’t make sense that somebody who’s mourning in the eyes of the world, somebody’s who’s mourning can really be a blessed person. And if they’re blessed, why in the world would they want to be mourning?

Don: Let me add insult to injury. For us men, I mean, men aren’t supposed to cry. Right?

Go ahead.

Don: That blessed are those who mourn, my goodness, we’re not...yeah, I mean, that’s all that I can say. That’s not only an anomaly or an anathema to the world, but to men, even in [UNCLEAR] of church.

That’s correct. We have this macho mentality that says, “Weakness is really when somebody is mourning or somebody is crying,” it’s a sign of weakness. One of my great Puritan friends said, “Tears are a rainbow of the soul.” It’s really when you’re crying, you’re expressing the soul’s heart desire.

As we come to this particular Beatitude, blessed are those who mourn, the world’s going to have a problem with this. It is only the person who understands, who’s been affected by the grace of God, who understands their absolute emptiness...it’s only that person who understands their spiritual poverty, which is why blessed are the poor in spirit precedes those who mourn...you see, it’s until that person understands what it means to be empty, what it means to be a spiritual pauper, what it means to have no spiritual resources that do anything to please God...until that person is really bathed in the grace of God, they’ll never understand what it means to be blessed when you mourn.

These Beatitudes come in pairs of two. The first one and the second one really fit together. As we look at this one, we want to see, today, that the type of mourning that Jesus is talking about is really spiritual mourning. It’s a mourning where it’s just not bereavement or grief or loss of life or pain or agony. It’s really the understanding of mourning over my spiritual condition. I’m empty. I realize I’m a spiritual beggar. I have no spiritual resources, and the reason I have that is because I recognize the heinousness of my sin before a holy God. I realize that my whole life from its first breath was an act of cosmic treason against the holiness of God. When you understand that, is when you begin to realize that you can be blessed because you are comforted.

The type of mourning that we see here is, that Jesus is talking about is spiritual mourning. It’s the mourning that is blessed as the result of a realization of God’s holiness and an awareness of God’s goodness, that issues in a sense of depravity of our nature. You see, when you really mourn, you recognize that total depravity of your nature.

When we talk about total depravity as one of the doctrines of grace, we’re not talking that you’re as bad as you can be, or you’re as depraved as you can be, because you can always become more depraved.

What we're talking about is every aspect or every sense of your being has been affected by sin. That's what we mean. Your total being, your total senses, have all been corrupted. When you recognize that you're poor in spirit, that's when you begin to realize the emptiness that you have and you need a Savior.

You see, that's why we start with, in the presentation of the Gospel, you don't start with God loves you and has wonderful plan for your life. You don't start with that. You start with this—God's holy. You start with the holiness of God. Because until somebody realizes that their life is an offense to the holiness of God, they're never going to mourn. They're never going to mourn. They're never going to be heartbroken because of the heinousness of their cosmic treason before the holiness of God.

In the Gospel presentation, we start with the holiness of God, then we talk about the sinfulness of man. You see, that's exactly the outline of the Beatitudes. The holiness of God is covered in blessed are the poor in spirit, because you recognize your emptiness before the holiness, before the goodness, before the righteousness of God. That's what helps you recognize you're spiritually bankrupt.

So we start in the Gospel presentation with the holiness of God. Then we go to the sinfulness of man. Then we go to the person and the work of Christ, and then we go to repentance and faith. You see, the Gospel presentation in its purest form really follows the outline of the Beatitudes. "Blessed are the poor in spirit," you see the holiness of God. "Blessed are those who mourn," you begin to see our own depravity, and we see that what caused us to mourn is the realization of my life is a sinful life, it is an offense to God in all of his goodness and his holiness. As we have that sense of the depravity of our nature, and the enormous guilt of our conduct, and this mourning for which Christ promises divine comfort, if sorrowing over our sin in a very godly nature.

As we saw last week from the example of Isaiah, this mourning that we have because of our sin doesn't necessarily stop with ourselves. There can be such what we saw in Isaiah is a nationalistic mourning. He said, "I'm a man of unclean lips and I live in a country of unclean lips." So we, as believers, really mourn over the condition of our country and the condition of other people as we see that around the world. So this mourning doesn't stop just with us. When you begin to realize the magnificence of the holiness of God and see the offense that we are, you begin to look around the world and see the world really is a total offense God, isn't it. We mourn over the condition of our world. That's what prompts us to action is because we want to deal with the sinfulness of this world.

The mourning that Jesus is talking about here is strictly relegated to that which is spiritual, not that which is personal bereavement, sorrow or grief.

As we talk about, "they shall be comforted," what do we mean by that? By these words, "blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted," Christ is talking primarily about the removal of the guilt of our sinfulness, about the burdens of our conscience. In other words, you have a clear conscience because of the recognition of being comforted as a result of our recognition of our sin.

This is accomplished by the spirit's application of the Gospel of God's grace to the heart of the believer. That's why you have to understand "blessed are the poor in spirit" comes before "blessed are those who mourn." When you put those two things together, you begin to realize you have a need for a Savior.

***Don:** I was going to ask something along those lines. I believe, probably, that the mourning is not just a one-time thing before you're saved, but it's continual...*

Absolutely.

Don: ...and yet, we also have passages about joy, too. Jesus said, “I come so that your joy may be complete.” I’m just wondering how do you put those together?

I think we do that...we understand the power of the redemptive work of the blood of Christ at the cross. It comes back to the power of the blood. Remember, without the shedding of blood there’s no remission of sin. So really what we understand...the comfort comes for us when we recognize the sinless perfection and perfect obedience of Christ. There’s our Gospel presentation—the holiness of God, the sinfulness of man.

Now we come to the comfort is this. Is there one who met the holy standards of God? Yes, there is. Is there one who paid the right justice of God? Yes, there is. That’s when we begin to discover the comfort when we realize that the blood of Christ has been applied to us personally because of God’s grace when he helped us recognize by changing our nature, changing our heart of stone and giving us a heart of flesh, we began to realize all of a sudden now there is a means by which I can become acceptable and be called acceptable in the Beloved. It’s because of the blood of Christ.

So I think we really see the power of the blood of Christ in this, and that’s what gives us our comfort because we know that we have been redeemed because of the blood of the Lamb. The whole emphasis as you follow the Gospel is, the holiness of God, the sinfulness of man, and then the person and the work of Christ. That helps us under justification. Justification is God declaring us as righteous. We get credit for someone else’s sinless perfection and perfect obedience. We are justified by faith alone, not by works, not by doing the best you can and trusting Christ with the rest. That’s not what we’re talking about. We’re talking about God in his grace, God in his grace, which is so amazing, says, “I’m going to give you credit for that which you can never accomplish yourself, and that is the sinless perfection which I demand, and the perfect obedience, which demand. You’re going to get credit for the One who did that through the blood of the Savior.”

That’s what is the genesis or the foundation of our comfort is the realization that we are wrapped in the robes of righteousness, we’ve been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, and as a result of that, our conscience, which was seared because of sin, now can be cleared because of the forgiveness and grace of God. There’s just wonderful comfort here.

The world’s not going to understand anything I just said. They’re not going to understand that at all. They’re going to say, “How can you be in that condition, and you need to be positive mental attitude and let’s work on your self-esteem.” Well in my judgment, brothers, you’ve heard me say, I think self-esteem is the disease, not the cure. We don’t need to think more about ourselves; we need to think more about Christ. That’s what Jesus is teaching in these Beatitudes.

The divine comfort is the peace, which God says, the Scripture says, “that passes all understanding,” filling the heart of the one who is now assured that he is accepted in the Beloved.

Audience Member: *Can you explain the difference or the relationship between mourning and grief? Do you use them interchangeably? I’m not sure...*

The quickest way I would say it is grief would be a human description of a pain that we would have at the human level—loss of a loved one, breaking of a leg, it might be the loss of a job—something that would be circumstantial, situational. That is what causes grief. The mourning we’re talking about is the realization that my life is an offense to God because of my sin, and as a result I mourn over that and I ask God to forgive me, and the comfort comes when we realize all the promises of Scripture and the work of the Holy Spirit applying God’s grace to us at that moment to realize that yes, my life has been an offense, but I’m acceptable in the Beloved. One deals with circumstances, the other deals with the

condition of the nature of your heart and your conscience. That would be mourning. He's talking about the spiritual mourning, not the circumstantial, situational mourning.

Ted: I'm wondering if mourning actually increases as you grow in the faith and grief decreases.

That's a good...

Ted: It's just a thought, I mean, because as you grow in the faith, you become more aware of your attitudes and the emotion or burden of it decreases because of the assurance of Christ.

Well I think that's a good point. Certainly the more mature we become in Christ, the more we're going to mourn, because you realize all the things that I used to think were good, are now no longer good.

Ted: Or don't think are many consequences, there are less consequences.

That's right. Exactly.

Ted: It's no big problem.

Both of you are right. Don is suggesting that mourning is not a one-time event. It's something that is continual. Just like poor in spirit is not one-time event. It's constantly recognizing I have no spiritual resources at all. The more you become mature in Christ, the more you realize the lack of spiritual resources you have. That's why you have to do the best you can trusting Christ in your weakness and trusting him for the rest, because he alone can make up the difference.

I do believe, I agree with you, Ted, I think that mourning does increase. Now I don't know about grief decreasing because I think that would be a personal thing. Somebody might really go through a tremendous personal loss, and I really couldn't say that your grief should decrease because you mature in Christ. I don't know. I can't say that. But I do believe the other side of the coin is absolutely correct. The more we understand God's grace and mercy, the more we're going to understand what it means to mourn over our sin, because you begin to realize, I mean, guys, you've just got to realize, you know, God demands perfection, and that's not me. That's not you. We're never going to be that. Is there one who achieved that, that I can trust? That's where justification by faith comes in. You get credit for somebody else's righteousness. It's what we would call an alien righteousness. You get credit for what Christ accomplished. That's the grace of God. That's why it's so amazing, and you get credit for that.

Now God looks at you totally different. He now sees you wrapped in the robes of righteousness. You're wrapped in the robes of righteousness. He now sees you differently than you see yourself. You know what the real battleground for us as men is, in my judgment? It's who do you believe. Do you believe what the world says about you? That you're enough is never enough. You need more of this. You need more of that. You've got to go get more of this. You've got to do this. You've got to acquire that. You've got to have this position. You've got to have these possessions. You see, the world's always you're enough is never enough.

What Jesus is saying is this, "When you mourn over your sin, my enough is enough because you're going to be comforted in realizing what I've accomplished for you that you couldn't do for yourself." That's when you know yes, we are sinful, and yes, we mourn, but yet, we're comforted because we understand the implications of the cross. You see, that's why the church has one single message week after week after week. It's Christ and him crucified. It's the cross of Christ. That's the message. Every message we ever preach has got to have some reference to Christ and him crucified, because that's the whole issue of our comfort. It's realizing this is what God says about me.

I think I did a study several years ago. I think there were 41 or 42 things that God says about the believer. A couple of them are—you're accepted in the Beloved. What more do you want? I mean, you could stop right there. Well I want a better job. I need more money. I need a better car. You're accepted in the Beloved. I mean, dwell on that a little bit. Think about that. We're referred to...the other thing is the Bride of Christ. Do you realize that we're Christ's bride? Do you realize that, individually, when Christ was on the cross, you were on his mind? When he was on the cross you, individually, by name, were on mind. That means this—that you, individually, guys, each one of you, is a love gift of the Father to the Son. You're a love gift. "My Son, I give you this person." That's why John 10 says, "I lose none of those you gave me." Do you realize you were given to Christ as a love gift? You're accepted in the Beloved. That's where we derive our comfort. It's not in the system of the world. It's why Paul's statement in Romans 12 is so significant for us as men, "Do not be conformed to the system of this world, but be transformed by your good works." No! {LAUGHTER} "Be transformed by the renewing of your mind." By the renewing of your mind. In other words, who do you believe, guys? Who do you believe?

You're going to go through situations today that somebody's going to say that your enough is not enough, and you're going to have to fight through that and say, "Yes, that is true. My enough is never enough. But Lord Jesus, I know because of grace, your enough is always enough, and I'm going to fight through the tendency that I have the world is trying to mold me into its mentality. I'm going to fight through that through your grace and I'm going to do the best I can, which is going to be imperfect, and I'm going to trust you with the rest, because you are enough." That's what we're talking about in the comfort that we get in the life of Christ.

We've talked about the Holy Spirit. Here's where the Holy Spirit is the Comforter. That's one of his names. He is the Comforter. He comes along side and comforts us. We've said over the years that mission of the Holy Spirit is essentially this—to convict us of our sin. It's the work of the Holy Spirit. That's why you can't convert anybody. People always ask me, "How many people have you lead to Christ?" My answer is "None that I know of," because I can't convert anybody. All I can do is proclaim the Gospel and allow the grace of God to redeem that person if that's what he's chosen to do. I can't do that. I can't change anybody's heart. I can't change their nature. I can't take credit for somebody who's come to saving faith. Now I have to admit that I've been the OB/GYN who's presided at their new birth, but I'm not the cause of it. I didn't change them.

Coop: Even if you ask that question, doesn't that go down the path of pridefulness both for the sender and the responder? How much have you done, instead of how much have you observed Christ do?

Yeah, that's a good point. You see, we'd like to take credit. Why is that in evangelism campaigns since the 1850's we've separated trust in Christ as your Savior and making him Lord? We've done that, haven't we? We've separated Lordship and salvation. We've basically said, "Oh, she accepted Christ when she went forward. She hasn't made him Lord of her life yet. That's why you don't see any fruit of repentance." All that is, is easy believism. It helps the evangelist; they get more hands raised. But it's cheap evangelism.

You see, when the heart is changed there is conduct. You'll know them by their fruit. Now the fruit may not be ripe right away, but there's going to be some evidence. That's why in Puritan evangelism back in the 1500's and 1600's, whenever they would go preach the Gospel, they would start with the holiness of God, the sinfulness of man, the person and work of Christ and repentance and faith. Somebody would say, "Did you have a revival?" and they'd say, "Well we'll come back in five years and tell you. We don't know yet because we haven't see fruits of repentance. There's going to be evidence of that," and their evidence was this—increased righteousness in the community. Is there increased righteousness?

You may not see that after the preaching is over. It may take some time for the grace of God to settle in and change the nature of people's hearts and begin to change the way they think and therefore the way they act. Then they would say in addition to increased righteousness, there's going to be decrease of sinfulness, decrease in crime. Is there a decrease? You may not see that right after the evangelistic campaign.

The third thing was this. Is there increased church membership? Are there more people going to church now? If those three things were met, they would say, "Yes, there's possibly a revival." You see, revival in their mind was a sovereign visitation of God in all of his power and glory. Sovereign visitation, not something that they could achieve, not something they could make happen. It's something you couldn't schedule.

***Audience Member:** I'm thinking about this, the thing about calling something a revival before it even happens and creating an event. I've always thought the same thing, I mean, you can't call it a revival until revival has occurred. But I think if you create a name for something and you're inviting people to come and you said, "This is an invitation to repentance," a lot of people wouldn't come.*

No. Isn't evangelism, modern evangelism, marketing? Isn't that pretty much it? It's really marketing, isn't it? That's why I did my dissertation on the Puritan view of the pulpit and the Puritan Gospel versus modern what I would call neo-Finneyism. Do you realize that at the Billy Graham Center in Wheaton, Illinois, at the Billy Graham Evangelistic Center, there's a plaque on the wall from Charles Finney that says this, "Revival is an act of man"? Revival is an act of man. You do these seven things, you've got a revival. It's right there on the wall.

***Ted:** That's to help you provide Jesus.*

Whatever it is, it's basically saying, and that's where we develop our trend now in modern evangelism is pretty much marketing. It's because we actually think that we can change the nature of a person. We actually think that. How prideful that is. We ought to mourn over that, brothers. We ought to mourn over the fact that you think that I can change a person, that I can lead them to Christ. My goodness, I had enough difficult time getting there myself, let alone trying to lead somebody else to Christ. We can share the Gospel because what is the role of the Holy Spirit? To convict of sin, to convince of sin, to convert from sin, and then to comfort from sin. That's what we see in this mourning. That's all the process of seeing the two blended together—blessed are the poor in spirit and blessed are those who mourn.

We begin to see that mourning is this realization of my sinfulness and my offense to God, and I realize that he has done for me what I could not do for myself, and that is to provide a means for me to have entrance into the kingdom of God through the blood of the Savior, the work of Christ at the cross, for which I, by faith, get credit for his sinless perfection and perfect obedience.

I still find it interesting the number of times that I'm in churches and I say, "Do you have to be perfect to get to heaven?" and the answer is, "No. It's no." Absolutely you have to be perfect. Are you perfect? You need a Savior. You see, that essentially the Gospel. But how much in America today we think that we really are pretty good people. You see, we need to mourn over that mentality. That's what we saw in Isaiah. But the other side of the coin is, guys, don't stay there. You've got to move to the other side of the coin that says you're forgiven, you're forgiven.

Let me take you to an example I gave you a couple of weeks ago that is just so powerful. Go to 2 Samuel 12. David, in Israel, is known for several things. David is known as their greatest warrior. He's known as their greatest statesman. He's known as their greatest musician. He's known as their greatest leader, their greatest king. But he's also known as Israel's greatest repentant. We see that in David's life.

That's why God says he's a man after my own heart. Was it because he was perfect? No. It's because he mourned over his sin and he responded. Read Psalm 51. Read Psalm 51, you'll see David's response to being made aware by Nathan that he was sinful, and you'll see mourning in its purest form. But you'll also see the comfort that's given because of the gracious forgiveness and goodness of God.

When you look at 2 Samuel 12, beginning at verse 1, Nathan comes to David and he describes for him a situation using an example of a situation in life, and then David's response down around verse 12. David says, "You ought to deal with that man severely." Nathan says, "You're the man. You're the man." Notice David's response, "I have sinned against the Lord. I've sinned against God." Notice what Nathan said right away, "You're forgiven." You see that? That's mourning. That's the comfort that we get. It's instantaneous when you and I repent of our sin because of the accomplishments of Christ, you're forgiven. That's where we get the comfort. That's where your conscience is cleared. It doesn't give you the right to do it again, but how quickly that happens. Nathan said, "David, you're the man." David said, "I have sinned." Nathan said, "You're forgiven." Look how quick that is. Guys, that's mercy. That's grace. That's goodness. That's the comfort that you and I get when we mourn over our sin. So don't get stuck in your sinfulness. Never take it lightly.

The thing that I'm always asking, "Lord, keep my sin ever before me, because I want to give it to you, because I know this—my comfort's going to become, not in the realization that I'm sinful, but in the realization that you took it away. You died for it." That's what we need to be saying.

***Don:** You were talking a little while ago about not only mourning for our individual sins, but [UNCLEAR] the world. I think, for example, [UNCLEAR] people in foreign countries, for example, who don't have an access to the Gospel or those who don't know Christ, honestly, can't manufacture this [UNCLEAR], it has to come from [UNCLEAR]... I don't know what I'm saying, I guess, but how would we have a healthy kind of mourning for those who don't know Christ, whether it's family members or those around the world? I don't know...I don't mourn as I should [UNCLEAR].*

That's a good question, Don. I'm not sure I've got a good answer. But I think we can mourn over the condition of some of those countries where people are being abused, they're being sold into slavery, relegated to poverty. I mean, there are situations of the governments of those countries that are causing abuse to those people. I think we can mourn over that. We may not know them personally. We may not know them individually. But we know the condition that is set up in some of these countries. We can mourn over that.

But I would say, first of all guys, let's just start with America. Let's just start here. Let's start in Allegheny County. Let's start in Pittsburgh. Let's start mourning over that, and then let the Holy Spirit say, "If I want you to go out into Samaria and to other parts of the world, I'll take you out there, in your mourning." I think we just need to start right in our own backyard. We can start right here in our own city, and just mourn over that, and say, "Lord, do something. May the preachers in the pulpits preach the Gospel of Christ with all clarity and power." You see, that's really what's going on. We need to pray for those in the pulpit, because the only thing that's going to change our environment is going to be the brokenheartedness of people being exposed to the Gospel of grace. We can mourn just over our own backyard. Let's start there and trust the Holy Spirit, Don, just to take us outward, if that's what he wants us to do. And he will do that.

Now there are other ways in which we derive comfort. Certainly it is by the Comforter who comes along and gives us the comfort of the ministry of the Holy Spirit, who convicts, convinces, converts, and now he comforts us in the realization that because of the blood of the Lamb, we've been redeemed, we've been forgiven, God's goodness is showered upon us, and we're blessed and we're comfortable in that.

Another way in which we derive comfort is by the fellowship and encouraging words of brothers—just each other. Don't ever forget that, that one of the ways in which God gives us comfort in our mourning is by the man, the brother who's sitting right beside you—to your right or to your left or to the front or back of you. Just in the fellowship that we have. That's why it's so important, guys, that we are here every Friday, because I know...when I went to sleep for a half hour last night, I woke up and said, "You know, I'm going to be comforted by the fact that I'm going to be with those men," because you are ministering to me profusely by just being here, and there's great comfort I'm going to derive. So realize it's going to be the work of the Holy Spirit. It's going to be the work of the brothers, the body of Christ, brothers and sisters in the body of Christ, by design. That's what the one another commands do. Encourage one another. Build one another up.

And then lastly, its Scripture promises. Guys, keep your nose in the Book. Let the Scripture, let the Holy Spirit...remember his job description. It's not to cause enthusiasm. That may happen. That might be a consequence. But that's not his role. His role is to guide us into all truth. Guide us into all truth. Where are you going to find that?

Let me just show you one quick verse as we wrap this up. And why it's so important, brothers, that you and I be studying the Scripture, to derive the comfort that the Holy Spirit will give us through the written Word and the sufficiency of Christ and sufficiency of Scripture. Look at Revelation 11-13, "¹¹Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. ¹²His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. ¹³He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God."

Now brothers, when you are studying the Scripture, you are developing a relationship with the Living Lord Jesus Christ. That's why we study the Scripture. That's why we preach so often here in this fellowship time together the sufficiency of Scripture, because it's basically saying, when you're talking about the sufficiency of Scripture, you're talking about the sufficiency of the sinless perfection and perfect obedience of Christ. Those two things are synonyms. You cannot have one without the other.

Notice, when you're going in to study the Scripture, don't go in and look for answers. Go in and look for a person. Look for a person. It's the Risen Savior, who in his graciousness, has redeemed us from the pit of hell, and in his goodness, covered us with his blood, and we're now wrapped in the robes of righteousness. Brothers, take great promise in the comfort you're going to derive by reading the Scripture. In do that, you're being introduced and developing a deeper personal relationship with the Lord Jesus. The sufficiency of Scripture and the sufficiency of Christ are synonyms, because Jesus, the name by which he is called, is the Word. Derive great comfort from studying the Scripture. May God be pleased to do that. Let's pray.

Sig: *When do you leave for Turkey?*

Oh, that's right. I will not be here next week. I leave for Turkey next Friday. As you know, I'm going to go with Ravi Zaccharias and be teaching at his International Conference on Christian Apologetics. I'll be there in Turkey. It's going to be a quick trip. I leave on Friday, get there Saturday, teach on Sunday and Monday, fly back on Tuesday. So I won't know if I'm coming or going. I'll be teaching on Sunday and Monday. One will be how do you maintain excellence as a believer in a changing environment. His ministry is going through a lot of internal organizational administrative changes, and he's worried that his international staff, 35 students from about 12 different countries, don't know how to manage change. Well you don't manage change; all you can do is manage yourself. So I'm basically going to teach them the Beatitudes of how do you manage yourself in a changing environment because you can't manage change. You just manage yourself. The second thing is the 58 one another commands. Respectful

relationships. He's asked me to teach on the 58 one another commands about how they, these international students from 12 different countries, can develop respectful relationships based upon the one another commands. So that's what I'll be teaching on Sunday and Monday, the 3rd and 4th of June, so I will certainly appreciate your prayers. Thanks.

Sig: *Could we ask Bishop Rogers to send you off in prayer?*

Sure. John, would you do that? Just stay where you are. Thanks, Bishop

Bishop Rogers: *The Lord be with you.*

Audience Members: *And also with you.*

Bishop Rogers: *Lord, you have called apart your servant in your divine providence, to bring him to speak to these young people. We trust you that you will pour out your spirit upon him and through him, through the Word. So we send him out in confidence in you, confidence that you have a work for him to do. We pray for his safety, coming and going, and we look forward to hearing the great accomplishments which you will bring about when he comes back and gives us a report. We say these things in Jesus' name. Amen!*

Thank you, brothers.