

199017 glorifyinggod leonarddewitt 1cor10v31

Well, do you folks have a good day? Elf, it's good to see you. You look tired. They're working you too hard.

I know someone who knows how to scoop up ice cream, and you'd be my guest after the service. We'll read, I'll minister, I'll minister to you. Okay.

If you have your Bibles, I'd like to have you turn to the passage that was read earlier in the service, 1st Corinthians chapter 10. And I want to draw your attention to the heart of that passage. What Paul was really focusing on, and that's found in the 31st verse.

This whole passage has to do with the liberty that we have as Christians, and how we use that liberty. God's word says, you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free. Christ is the great emancipator.

He is the great liberator. He has come to set us free from the shackles of sin, and to smash the hold that sin has on us. And when he does that, we are set free.

We are really to use that freedom in a particular way. And he says in the 31st verse, Therefore, whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. And tonight I'd like to have you consider with me glorifying God.

Peter tells us that the only reason that Christ has not come back is because the Lord is long-suffering, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come unto repentance and have everlasting life. But how long can we count on God being long-suffering? I believe that the scriptures teach that one of these days the Father will say, It's enough. It's enough.

And Christ will come. So we have our work cut out for us as the people of God. I'm concerned that we're living in a day when it seems like the church, instead of glorifying God, is more prone to embarrass him.

I just picked up a copy of a book I had seen some time ago and had not had an opportunity to get. So several days ago, I got it over here at the bookstore. And it's written by John Montgomery.

Greed, money, and power. Has the church been sold out? I'm telling you, I'm only into the second chapter, but the first chapter is enough to just make you ill. When you stop and consider what is going on in Christian circles, the kinds of carrying on that's taking place.

As I read that first chapter, I was reminded of the commandment in Exodus 20, and verse 7, where God says, You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain. The literal rendering of that commandment is, You shall not drag the name of your God through the dirt. You shall not drag the name of your God through the dirt.

Christians are people who, prior to their conversion, were in bondage to sin and Satan. In John chapter 8, verse 34, Jesus said, Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave to sin. Whoever commits sin is a slave to sin.

The first time that you decide to be unfaithful to your partner, Satan will get his hooks into you, and you're going to find it very, very difficult to break that hold. And that would be true in any number of areas. I have a dear friend of mine, he's a member of our church, and he's in prison right now.

Should be getting out this month. Then he has to go through a period of rehabilitation before he will be free to enter back into society. He was a millionaire by the time he was in his early 30s, and then a short time later, he was a pauper again.

He made it and lost it so fast, he didn't even know that he had it. And knowing him, I believe that that's probably happened several times. And just a few years ago, he established a business empire that was based in Hawaii.

And he was sort of shuttling back and forth between the big island and the mainland, and feeling a lot of pressure because of the business. Someone offered him a little bit of cocaine. Now, as Christians, we are to draw our strength from the Holy Spirit, and from the Word of God, and from fellowship with each other.

But I guess he wondered what it would be like, and he took a little bit. He never got into it really very heavy, but every so often when he needed a little perk, he'd take some. And then he encouraged his wife to try it.

Because she loved him, she consented to it. And one night, they were together in their home, decided that they'd been going through a rough time with the business. So they decided, we'll just have a little coke this evening.

She got too much, and her heart stopped. And he panicked, and he just picked her up, and slapped her, and gave her mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, just anything to get her going again. And finally, he was successful in reviving her.

And it scared him, and he decided, never again will we use this stuff. He went back to Hawaii on business, and he had just a little bit of coke left. He took it with him to sell it back to the person that had been supplying it.

He was going to notify him that he was giving it up, that he would not be buying any more. And when he went to that individual to sell it back to him, it turned out that that person was a double agent. And so my friend is in prison.

And you ought to try to appreciate the ripple effect of his incarceration. Because he's widely known in Southern California, has given his testimony many, many places. And the cause of Christ has suffered because of his foolishness.

He has really repented. And I believe that he's a changed person. He's probably deeper in the Lord than he's ever been in his life.

But it sure holds the cause of Christ up to a lot of criticism. Not only from within, but from without as well. Paul, in his letter to the Galatians, chapter 5, verse 1, says, Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.

Do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage. You and I have been liberated from the tyranny of sin. Its hold on us has been broken.

If we have accepted Christ and been filled with his spirit. So how are we to use the freedom that has been entrusted to us? Paul says that you and I are to use our freedom to consistently glorify God. To glorify God.

God's word says that we were made for God. We were made for God. He created us, and then he redeemed us.

The Bible says that he purchased us for himself. And he says, I am a jealous God, and I will not give my glory to another. I will not give my glory to another.

Paul counsels the Corinthians, and all of us who would read his letter, that in every area of our lives, we are to glorify him. We're to glorify him in our marriages, and in our families. And the scriptures, folks, are very, very clear.

If you are looking for a blueprint that you can trust for marriage, it's right here. It's right here, in God's word. If you're looking for a blueprint on how to raise your children, it's right here, in God's word.

Why is it that we are more prone to read some book that some mortal has written, than we are to read the infallible word of God? And I thank God that we're living in a day when there's an abundance of good books. But let's not neglect the books. Let's not neglect it, because that's really a book that you can trust.

It's really one that you can count on. We are to glorify God in our work. And we could just spend a lot of time just probing in these different areas.

We're to glorify God in our studies. What kind of a testimony is it, young people, if you're caught cheating? What kind of a testimony is it if you're caught sloughing off? And not giving your best? In all of our relationships, even in our recreation. In the mundane, in the routine.

In the, what we might consider the non-spiritual areas. In every area of your life and mine, Paul's admonition is, whatever you do, whatever you do, whatever you do, do it for the glory of God. I've been working with a Christian couple, because their marriage was deeply, deeply in trouble.

And we began to probe the different areas that have been a sore spot with them. And one of the things that came to light was the fact that he is embarrassed about the condition of their home. And when I began to explore that area with them, she broke into tears, and she said, I hate housework.

The interesting thing is that he, for some time, has been doing at least 50% of it. And she's waiting for him to pick up the other 50% of it. We live deliberately as people.

There's a certain deliberateness about the way we live. But that needs to be, that needs to be a part of our mindset when it comes to honoring God and to glorifying God. It's understandable when the unchurched and the unsaved dishonor God.

They don't know him. They don't know him. But when his own people sin against him and rebel against him, he is especially dishonored.

And I can, I can think of Christian people that I personally know. I don't have to go looking for horror stories. I can think of Christian people that I know that have been found out because of embezzlement, immorality, lying, dismissed because of poor attitudes on the job.

I could just keep you here all night telling you horror stories. And it grieves me. If it grieves me, if folks, it's tough enough as it is without playing into the devil's hands, without giving into his strategy.

If you and I really understood the hatred that Satan has for God, if we really understood that, we would be more careful and more cautious as to the way we conduct our lives. Because he will use any strategy he possibly can to get back at God and to embarrass God and to cause people to be disinterested in seeking after the things of God. And one of the greatest tools that Satan has used across the years is careless Christians.

We look in the book of Ezekiel, and we see that the people of God had become so corrupt and immoral that they were a reproach to him. And God disciplined them because of their immorality. In 722 BC, he allowed the Assyrians to attack and carry them off into captivity.

In 586 BC, the kingdom of Judah was invaded by Babylon, and the people were carried off into captivity. But his holy name suffered even more reproach because the surrounding nations of the, the surrounding nations said that the God of Israel and Judah must not be a very great God if he couldn't protect his own people from this kind of stuff. He disciplined them because he said that his purpose was to vindicate the holiness of his great name, which had been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst.

Then the nations will know that I am the Lord. God loves his people, but he will not tolerate their sin. And so he has, he has historically moved against the hearts and lives of his people and permitted them to go through excruciating times of judgment to turn their hearts toward him.

So that they would stop profaning his name and embarrassing him among the peoples of the

earth. How is it with you this evening as you take a look at your life? As I take a look at my life, are we living in every era of our lives to the glory of God? Is that our divine agenda? Is God pleased and honored and glorified with you and me? Does he look at us and find us faithful and obedient? I believe that the highest purpose, that the chief purpose that any one of us as Christians can have, and the Westminster's Shorter Catechism says that the chief end or the chief purpose of God, of man is to, is to know God, to love him, to enjoy him, and to glorify him. To know him, to love him, to enjoy him, and to glorify him.

That is the chief purpose of man. How do we glorify him? Let me just quickly suggest several ways. One of the first ways that we acknowledge and glorify God is when we admit our sin.

When we admit our sin. The Bible says, he that covereth his sins will not prosper. And there are times when we as God's people fail him and fail him miserably.

But instead of glibly going on our way and acting like something hasn't happened. We glorify him when we acknowledge our sin, when we confess our sin, when we repent of our sin, when we forsake it. And get back on track.

The angel said to Joseph, you are to give him the name Jesus because he will save his people from their sins. In 1st John 1.9 we read, if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us of our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. That word confess is an interesting word in the Greek.

It means to express complete agreement with. To express complete agreement with. When you and I acknowledge or when we confess our sin, we are expressing complete agreement with God about the awfulness of our sin, first of all.

And the responsibility that we accept for the same. I think of Achan who disobeyed God. And he took some of the possessions from Jericho that had been forbidden.

And he hid them in his tent. God gave them that wonderful victory at Jericho. But the instructions were do not take any of the gold or the silver or the garments or any of the any of the spoil.

Do not take it. That ought to be clear enough. But Achan saw it and he desired it and he took it.

And he hid it in his tent. The next place that they were going to go out and fight against was Ai. It was a much smaller situation.

And so they thought there's no point in sending all the troops. Let's just send three thousand. They're well able to take this small community.

But you see, God knew about the sin and the disobedience of Achan. And when they went out, the men of Ai came out with a ferocity and a fierceness and they attacked the the armies of Israel and put fear into them. They turn and they ran.

A significant number of men lost their lives, all because of the disobedience of one individual. Joshua knew that there was something wrong. And when they conducted their investigation, it came to light that Achan had sinned and disobeyed.

He had sinned against God and he had sinned against his people. And Joshua said to him, my son, I implore you, give glory to the Lord, the God of Israel, give praise to him and tell me now what you have done. Do not hide it from me.

God is glorified when we acknowledge our sin. Because when we acknowledge it, the understanding is we're prepared to forsake it, to repent of it. There's a second way that I believe we glorify God, and that is by putting our total faith and trust in him.

Putting our total faith and trust in him. One of my favorite verses is Hebrews 11, 6. It says, but without faith, it is impossible to please God. For he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them who diligently seek him.

God wants you and me to trust him. Do you? Do we? Do you have explicit confidence in God? Are you living a life of trust and dependence upon him? Romans 4, 20, it says, Abraham did not waver in unbelief, but he grew strong in faith, giving glory to God. Giving glory to God.

Do we really trust him? Do we believe that his ways are perfect? Do we believe that he's a God of his word? Do we have the utmost confidence in him? First John chapter 5, verse 10 says, the one who does not believe God has made him to be a liar. That's pretty strong. But when I, when I exhibit a lack of faith, a lack of trust, in essence, I'm saying, God, I can't trust you.

That's a serious matter. Because, because God is completely reliable, completely trustworthy. To me, one of the most exciting pictures of total trust in God is found in Daniel chapter 3, verses 17 and 18.

When Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego refused to worship Nebuchadnezzar's idol and they faced the fiery furnace and, and they responded with these words. They said to the king, Our God, whom we serve, is able to deliver us out of your hand, O king. But even if he does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.

When someone turns up the heat and you feel the flames looking at your heels, is your confidence in God shaken? Or do you stand your ground because you trust him? Job said, though he slay me, yet will I trust him. And God did deliver these men. Their faith in him was vindicated and God was glorified.

I was reading an article about a man in Florida. His name is Norval Hayes and he's a fine Christian fruit rancher living in that state. In 1977, because of severe weather conditions, the orange groves were covered with ice and it looked like he and other fruit farmers were going to lose everything they had.

But he believed that God cared about his, his fruit business. So he drove to his orchard, got out of his truck, knelt down and prayed. And he said, I just looked at the orange grove and told the devil to take his hands off those trees.

Then I asked the father in Jesus name to let his power come down and hover around my trees and, and not let them die. He says, a few weeks later, the sun began to shine, things warmed up, fruit began developing on my trees. He says, the 2,500 trees across the road owned by another grower were all dead.

But on my side, it was different. It was as if a shield had been placed on my property line that stopped the damaging frost from crossing it. He says, I didn't lose one tree.

God is glorified when we trust him. Thirdly, God is glorified by fruitfulness in our lives. In our morning studies, we took a brief look into John chapter 15 and in the eighth verse, Jesus said, this is to my father's glory that you bear much fruit showing yourselves to be my disciples.

The fruit that really glorifies God is that which is produced and seen in our lives by the ministry of the Holy spirit. We've been studying about the fruit of the spirit. That's the fruit that really glorifies God.

The love, the joy, the peace, all of that, that marvelous cluster of fruit that the Holy Spirit wants to produce in the life of every believer. Hein, the German philosopher, made this observation. He said, show me your redeemed life and I might believe in your Redeemer.

Show me your redeemed life and I might believe in your Redeemer. Is your life characterized by the fruit of the spirit? Because the fruit of the spirit is evidence of spiritual maturity. That's the norm for every believer.

To be born of the spirit, filled with the spirit, being fruitful in every area of our lives. In Matthew chapter 21 and verse 19, we have the incident of Christ and the fig tree. And we read how he was on his way to Jerusalem and, and he was hungry.

And just down the road, a piece, he saw this fig tree just gloriously decorated with beautiful leaves. But when he went, when he went to the tree to pick some of its fruit for his hunger, he discovered all there was on the tree was leaves. There was no fruit.

And the disciples heard him pronounce judgment on that tree. May you never bear fruit again. And the next day when they passed by, the disciples were stunned to see that the tree had all dried up.

But you see, it's a picture of hypocrisy. It is a picture of profession, but no possession. In Palestine, that particular fig tree, the fruit begins to form before the leaves.

So when he saw this fig tree beautifully covered with magnificent leaves, he had every right to assume and they had every right to assume that it was just loaded with fruit. But when they

looked, there was no fruit at all. That's a serious matter.

If there's anything that God hates, it is hypocrisy. And many times Christians have grown up in the church and they know the language. They know the terminology.

They even know when to say amen. But there's a terrible, terrible void when it comes to the evidence of the fruit. Does your life, does my life evidence the presence and character of Christ by our being yielded under the influence of the Holy Spirit? I'd like to know your Jesus.

Jesus said, I, if I am lifted up, I will draw all men unto me. When was the last time that someone came to you and said, you are different. I don't know what it is about you, but you are different.

And I like what I see. I really like what I see. I want those qualities in my life.

What's the answer? God is also glorified by the praise of our lips. Psalm 50 verse 23 says, who so offereth praise glorifyeth me. Who so offereth praise glorifyeth me.

The Bible says that God inhabits the praises of his people. Hebrews 13, 15 through Jesus. Therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise, the fruit of lips that confess his name.

When was the last time, men, that you thanked God for your Christian wife? When was the last time that you as parents thanked God that your kids have grown up and are serving the Lord? We hear so many horror stories about young people that are out doing their thing, but they're not all out there doing their thing. Man, there's a lot of terrific young people at this camp. And I thank God for that, for the inspiration and the vitality of their lives, for their interest in Christ.

Last night, the altar, there were many young people here, and tears were flowing. And I went to several of them afterwards, and I said, I want you to know that every time the Lord puts you in my mind, I'm going to stop and pray for you. And they hugged me, and they said, please do, and we'll pray for you.

Some of those are your kids. When was the last time you said, oh God, I just want to praise you that my son and daughter are walking with you and serving you? The Apostle John said, I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking with the Lord. When was the last time that you said, Lord, I want to thank you for my job, for the ability to provide for my family? When was the last time that you saw someone who had some kind of a physical problem or a handicap that you don't have, and you said, Lord, I just want to thank you for blessing me in the way that you have? I've made it a practice through the years that whenever I see someone who is crippled or who has some kind of a problem that I don't have, that I not only thank God for what I do have, but I ask Him to bless those individuals, whether I know them or not.

The sacrifice of praise. We glorify Him when we praise Him. Irving Feldman said, giving praise is much like giving love.

The giver is usually the most benefited. He casts bread upon the waters and often gets it back, cake. That almost went by you, didn't it? Paul Dibble says, you don't have to be afraid of praising God too much.

Unlike humans, he never gets a big head. What about that old song, count your blessings, name them one by one, and it will surprise you what the Lord has done. Across the years when I have been working with depressed people, people who are going through a time of depression, depending on the situation, but I have discovered frequently that the assignment of requiring them to take a sheet of paper and writing down the things that they should be grateful for, it has a healing effect.

And it brings them to the point where they stop feeling sorry for themselves and you can deal with the real problems that are confronting them. So many times we allow the immediate to block out years of blessing. If you hold a little tiny dime close enough to your eyes, you can actually block out the sun that gives light to an entire world.

In years past, I have suffered from ingrown toenails. Thank God I don't have many more. Took several operations and finally got it cleared up.

But I'm telling you those things, when they are carrying on, they hurt so bad that the whole body is aware of it. One time I was standing on a street corner in Edmonton, Alberta, television. I had just come to that part of the country and I was waiting for a bus and so I'm looking through an appliance store window and they've got the TV on and there's some cartoons on.

And so I'm just standing there minding my own business and some little kids came and crowded in front and one of the kids that was standing right in front picked up his foot and just came down right on my big toe that was so infected. It's the only time in my life I've ever entertained murder. In Luke chapter 17, we read about the 10 lepers that cried out to Christ for mercy.

He healed them, said, go show yourself to the priest. And we read that one turned back and he was a Samaritan and he gave glory to God. And Jesus said, weren't there 10 cleansed? Where are the nine? Where are the nine? You know, I would think, folks, when we have a sharing time in our churches or in some setting and the opportunity is given to stand up and praise the Lord, there should not be a lull.

There should not be a lull. And then the last thing that I want to share with you is we glorify God by our willingness to suffer for him. Peter was familiar with suffering.

In 1 Peter chapter 4, verses 14 to 16, he says, if you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed. If anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not feel ashamed, but in that name, let him glorify God. In that name, let him glorify God.

Your district superintendent and I, along with several others just a few years ago, made a trip to China. And while we were there, it was arranged for us to visit one of the most revered couples

in China, an elderly couple. This man and his wife are highly respected by the Christian community in that country, Wan Mingdao.

He has spent 23 years in prison because of his faith. His wife spent 18 years in prison because of her faith. We were taken to their little tiny apartment, very simply furnished.

We were able to visit with them for a period of time and ask them questions. And then his wife got up from the table and went around and she put her mouth, she put her mouth up to his ear and put her hands around her mouth and said something to him. And he listened for a moment because he's practically blind.

And we were watching as he was listening. And then all of a sudden, we just saw him sit up in his chair and he said, I will not be quiet. I'll go back to prison if necessary.

But I will not be silent about Christ. You'd think that someone who had spent 23 years in a communist prison would have had enough. But instead, he says, I will not tone it down.

I'm prepared to go back right now. But I'm not going to be quiet about Christ. We were in the home of another lady.

One room, one room was all she had. She had not left her bed for 45 years because she was crippled in her body. But I'm telling you, this dear saint spent every day in prayer for the church in China and for Christians around the world.

And when we stepped into that little tiny apartment, when we when we got out of there, every one of us said we felt like we were standing literally on holy ground. Acts chapter five, the apostles were put in prison for their witnessing. In verse 18, it says at night, the angel of the Lord let them out so that they could resume their teaching.

Later in the day, they were brought before the Sanhedrin and they were finally flogged and they were they were threatened. Do not talk any further in his name. And what was their attitude? We must obey God rather than men.

We must obey God rather than men. And in verse 41, after they were beaten and released, it says the apostles left the Sanhedrin rejoicing, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the name. God is glorified by our willingness to suffer for him.

Let's bow our heads together in prayer. It's easy for you and me to point our finger at the televangelists and say, look at the harm that they have caused. Look at the disillusionment that has resulted from that.

But, folks, I think you and I know that we can't put it all on them. Maybe we have been silent when we should have spoken. Maybe there are sins that we have committed that we have never confessed.

Maybe we haven't trusted him the way we ought to trust him. We haven't faithfully praised and

adored him the way that we should. The devil has been successful in intimidating us.

And as a result, God has not been honored the way he should. Maybe you're rebelling against something that he is revealing to you in your life. Maybe he's calling you to do something and you haven't been willing to do it.

And his name and his cause is weakened because of that. While our heads are bowed and our eyes are closed, has God spoken to you about some area of your life this evening where you have not been honoring him or you have not been glorifying him? And you'd just like to slip up a hand and say, Leonard, will you and the others pray for me? Yes. God bless you.

Yes. God bless you. Are there others as we wait for just a moment? Yes.

God bless you. Yes. God bless you.

Are there others? God is speaking to you. Yes. Yes.

God bless you. Anyone else as we wait for just a moment? Yes. God bless you.

Uh-huh. Yes. God bless you.

While we wait, will you let the Holy Spirit move on your heart? Will you obey him? Will you surrender to him? Will you yield yourself to him tonight? Will you purpose in your heart that whatever you do, you'll do it to the glory of God? Anyone else as we wait for just a moment? Pray for me. Yes. God bless you.

God bless you. Father, in Jesus' name, we just look to you right now. We pray that you will gain the victory in each of our lives.

We need to love you more. We need to praise you more. We need to serve you more fervently and more faithfully.

We need to be willing to put our lives on the line no matter what the cost. And so I just pray that there will be a new determination by everybody here tonight that from this moment on, we're going to glorify you deliberately, deliberately putting disciplines into our lives that will help us to walk uprightly and to walk humbly before our God and to give the kind of a witness that is not confusing, a witness that is clear where people can really see Jesus and the difference that he makes. I want to invite those of you who raised your hands.

Would you come and meet me right down front for prayer? Would you do that right now? I'm just going to walk right down, and I'm going to be right down here, and I'm just going to kneel with you. Would you get up and come right now? I won't be able to say any more to you because I'll be away from the microphone. So I want you to come as Tim comes to lead us in a verse or two of song.

Come quickly, will you? Number 126, softly and tenderly, Jesus is calling. Earlier on tonight,

Leonard said, confessing before the Lord, our failures, our falling short is a definite sign of a decision not to live that way any longer. I challenge you with that thought.

Come and kneel before the Lord. Let's sing together. Let's stand together as we sing and slip out from your seat and come forward as we sing together.

Softly and tenderly, Jesus. The very toughest thing you can do is to take that first step in response to the Lord. But his word promises that if you will draw near to him, he will draw near to you.

And I just see him taking many, many steps towards you as you'll step out to him. And seniors, on this seniors day, it's never too late to begin a new vision of glorifying God and sharing in testimony. Don't you be afraid to step out.

Why should we tarry when Jesus? Trying to sing the last verse and that will be it. Please respond if the Lord's dealing with you. Let's have some counselors step up right away and kneel with these folks here.

Would you come right now? As they come, maybe you'd like to come. It's not too late. Let's pray.

Our Father, how we want to bring you glory from our lives. Oh Lord, thank you for dealing with us tonight. We want to bring you honor.

Thank you for the folks who have responded. And Lord, help us all to respond in our hearts. Dismiss us now.

Watch over us, we pray. Thank you, Lord Jesus.