



How Then Shall We Live? "Enjoying a Fabulous Relationship with God"

Pastor Rick Shelton
Sunday, March 15, 2009

This is the last message in the series "How Then Shall We Live?" The complete series is available in the Resource Center.

- Do you know God wants you to live a fabulous life? We come to God looking for answers, and purpose, because we feel something is not right, or something is missing.
- Pastor Rick shared last week about the girl from Sweden, who stated her life wasn't too bad, and questioned what would this 'faith' do for her. Pastor told her that no matter how much fame, money, etc., she would accomplish, she would always feel like something was missing. She admitted she felt that way. We all do! We feel empty, looking for purpose, afraid, disappointed, until we accept Christ.
- The essence of coming to Christ is to come to the end of ourselves, and turn the reins of our life over to Him.
- Why is it months, and even years after a person gives their life to Christ, going to church and reading the Bible, etc., there is no total life transformation? Christianity is not about adding another element of God to our life, but to admit to ourselves that life can only be fulfilling, with peace and enjoyment as God becomes our life!
- God has created us to be a whole being, to love, play, work, fellowship, but the 'center' of our life must change Christ becomes center!
- Are what you believe and experience the same?
- We come to Christ to sell out to Him, not making demands, requirements, or negotiate with Him.
- The longer we live differently with what we say we believe and what we walk out in our life (our experiences), and the longer we walk with that chasm, the more destructive it will become to our soul. We will develop more doubts, even doubting our salvation, and that there is a God.
- Why is there a disconnect between what we believe and what we experience? Because we never really get it! **GOD IS EVERYTHING WE NEED! ALL WE NEED IS HIM!** All the stuff we pray for, and think we need, or all the stuff we are told we will get if we follow Him, or even the time we spend asking God for it, what we **REALLY 'need' is HIM, His PRESENCE!**
- **Philippians 2:12 (Amplified)** Paul said, Therefore, my dear ones, as you have always obeyed [my suggestions], so now, not only [with the enthusiasm you would show] in my presence but much more because I am absent, work out (cultivate, carry out to the goal, and fully complete) your own salvation with reverence and awe and trembling (self-distrust, with serious caution, tenderness of conscience, watchfulness against temptation, timidly shrinking from whatever might offend God and discredit the name of Christ).
- What is the goal of our salvation? We can get careless before God, but need to walk out our life with reverence.
- Atheists believe there is no God. We say we love God, so we're not atheist, but we live an atheistic lifestyle, living like God is not personally involved in our life. (I'll take care of my finances, marriage, business, problems, etc., my way! I'll worry about my things.)
- **Philippians 2:12 (Amplified)** live "with serious caution, tenderness of conscience, watchfulness against temptation"
- Some teach "don't do this" and "don't do that"; that's legalistic. Then we discovered 'grace', and we cast off all restraint, saying we are free. We are free from rules from pastor, church teachings, etc., but we are not free from our conscience and the law written in our hearts.
- The only way we can live a life displeasing to God once we accept Jesus into our hearts is to live contrary to what He tells us in His word, and violate our own conscience. We sear our conscience and it will become calloused and hard,

when we live violating what is inside, doing what is wrong over and over. We may feel something is missing, but not living with guilt, so we tell ourselves God approves of us because we don't feel guilty anymore.

- Again, **Philippians 12:2 (Amplified)** watchfulness against temptation, timidly shrinking from whatever might offend God and discredit the name of Christ).
- **Philippians 12:3 (Amplified)** [Not in your own strength] for it is God Who is all the while effectually at work in you [energizing and creating in you the power and desire], both to will and to work for His good pleasure and satisfaction and delight.
- "Not in your own strength!" We say we can't do it, and we're right, we can't. It is God working in us!
- The key: There is a life pleasing with God and we cooperate with Him, but it's not in our own strength; He gives us the power and desire. If you struggle because you want to read Bible more, etc., but don't have desire, He can give you the desire.
- **Philippians 3:7 (Amplified)** "But whatever former things I had that might have been gains to me, I have come to consider as [one combined] loss for Christ's sake." Paul is saying everything he thought he had of some merit to make himself right with God, he counts it all lost for Christ sake.
- **Philippians 3:8 (Amplified)** Yes, furthermore, I count everything as loss compared to the possession of the priceless privilege (the overwhelming preciousness, the surpassing worth, and supreme advantage) of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord and of progressively becoming more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him [of perceiving and recognizing and understanding Him more fully and clearly]. For His sake I have lost everything and consider it all to be mere rubbish (refuse, dregs), in order that I may win (gain) Christ (the Anointed One),
- Give everything to God, surrender all, because on your own you will fail every time.
- Pastor decided as a young man to pray an hour every day. He prayed everything he needed to pray, ask, worshiped, repented, then he checked his watch; 5 minutes had past! How could he do this? It took a while. He began to understand his goal wasn't perfection, but his goal was a fabulous relationship with God.
- Even Paul said he wanted to "progressively becoming more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him [of perceiving and recognizing and understanding Him more fully and clearly]."
- It's not about the activity (reading the Bible, etc.), or the mechanics of a prayer, etc., it's about the relationship with God, the creator of our soul, who loves us. It's all about the relationship!
- If we can get this, it will revolutionize us! We approach the Bible or prayer, because we want to KNOW the Lord.
- **Philippians 3:9 (Amplified)** And that I may [actually] be found and known as in Him, not having any [self-achieved] righteousness that can be called my own,
- You will always feel you never measure up if you are trying to please God. Throw that aside, and come to God because it's about Him, knowing Him passionately!
- Why? It solves the problem of legalistic religion because when you come to God solely to know him, realizing that everything that you need is in Him. First, He's your Father! Remember Jesus taught us to pray, "Our Father which art in Heaven." The Lord will treat you as a good Father would treat His child. The Best Daddy you can have!!!
- Pastor said his dad would whip him when he did something wrong, but he never doubted for one moment his dad loved him (just like God chastises us, because He wants us to be better). It's not our performance that causes His love to be given or taken away; it is not our ability to achieve or make ourselves good that causes His favor to come to us or from us. We have favor on our good days, and we have got it on our bad days.
- **Philippians 3:11-13 (Amplified)** "That if possible I may attain to the [spiritual and moral] resurrection [that lifts me] out from among the dead [even while in the body]." (That I might be more pleasing to God.)
- **Philippians 3:12 (Amplified)** "Not that I have now attained [this ideal], or have already been made perfect, but I press on to lay hold of (grasp) and make my own, that for which Christ Jesus (the Messiah) has laid hold of me and made me His own." (After all these years of Paul following the Lord, he says he still hasn't arrived, not there yet, but he's pressing on.)
- It's a beautiful journey with God, where you need nothing but Him, everything you need will come from Him!