

Change

I want to take a look at the tenth verse of the first chapter of Ephesians, but I want to go two places first. Turn over to Genesis the first chapter, the 31st verse. *And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day. Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.* That's the end of the sixth day. Now on the seventh day, God didn't create. Is that okay? I'm retranslating just a tad because most of the church world would answer the question "What did God do on the seventh day?" by saying that He rested. What He rested from was creating. He didn't do nothing; He wasn't on vacation; He wasn't tired. He was fulfilling the purpose on the seventh day for which He had worked the first six days by creating, so in the third verse it begins to tell what God did on the 7th day. *And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it.* This is really a good message. I'm not saying what I'm preaching is a good message but what it says here is a good message. We'll weigh the rest on the balance. In the sixth day, God created and on the seventh day, He didn't create, but what He did do was blessed and sanctified. What do you think He blessed and sanctified? What He created.

The second picture I want to look at before we go to Ephesians is the pool in Jerusalem called Bethesda. Jesus walked into the pool one day or I guess the landscape around the pool, and it says that there were five porches there. There were a lot of people that lay scattered around because on occasion an angel came to trouble the water, and the first one into the water got healed. We don't have any accounting of that other than the statement that's there. We don't know how many people were there; we don't know at what interval the angel showed up, but there was a man who had been afflicted for 38 years. We don't know that he had been on the deck of the pool for 38 years, but he had been afflicted for 38 years. When Jesus asked him a question, he said, "Well, my problem is that I don't have anyone to put me in the water. Someone always beats me there, and I can't lie on the edge of the pool the whole time just so I can roll over because it's too long between intervals of the angel's coming. I just can't figure out how I'm going to get this done." So Jesus healed him. He walked up to a man who was waiting to be healed and he healed him. The man got up, picked up his bed, and left. My thinking goes beyond just the framing of the words that tell the story (Sometimes that's okay; sometimes that's not so good.), but I'm thinking that Jesus walked into the pool area pretty much unnoticed because this was only his second miracle. He hadn't become notable yet. Had it been two years later when he walked in, they all would have noticed him. So he walked in pretty well unnoticed, but after the man who had been infirm for 38 years was healed, I doubt Jesus walked out unnoticed. I think he walked out with many pleas for healing. If Bartimaeus was outside of the city because he was blind and somehow realized that Jesus was passing by and began to cry out, "*Thou son of David, Thou son of David, have mercy upon me,*" I think there was probably more than one acclaim for the mercy of God toward Jesus at that pool. My point isn't to say

that he only went in and healed one person, so how could God be a God of love and only do that; that's the way it happened. My purpose is just to say that when it became known that this had happened, and they asked him, "Who did this?" he said, "I don't know." When it became known that it was Jesus, scripture tells that the officials of the religious order of that day sought to kill Jesus because he had healed on the Sabbath. He healed him on the seventh day. It's clear even back in Genesis that God designated the seventh day for blessing and sanctification. It was probably one of the first times that there was a clear testimony in Israel since the law was given of God's purpose for the Sabbath. They were trying to observe it by not doing anything because they thought that God didn't do anything on the seventh day. The natural man only relates to what he knows. He knows work, so he could know "not work." That makes sense to him because he knows work: six days you work, and on the seventh day you don't work; that makes sense. However, if you said to the natural man, "Six days you work, and then on the seventh day you bless and sanctify," he would say, "I'm not good at that. I can 'not work,' but I'm not good at blessing and sanctifying." So they cleaved to the concept of not working, and they took it down to the minutiae. They got down to the small and intangible details of applying this idea of "don't work." They became experts.

Another picture of this "not work" thing as it applied to Jesus with the Pharisees was that he was journeying, walking past a field of wheat, and his disciples (I guess it was snack time; I don't know.) reached out and they grabbed some kernels of wheat. They unhusked them, blew off the chaff, and had a little snack. This was seen, and the Pharisees didn't really correct the disciples because they weren't after the disciples; they were after Jesus. They said to him, "Why do your disciples work on the Sabbath?" Jesus referred to Genesis where we just read (I'm going to again rephrase.) and he said, "Let me ask you a question. Was the Sabbath created for man or was the man created for the Sabbath?" The Sabbath was created for man. What that means is that the Sabbath isn't designed to govern and the Sabbath isn't the lord of man. Man is the lord of the Sabbath. We need to get a clue about the purposing of God for the seventh day. What He wanted to do was to bring Adam as a created being into the seventh day in order to bless him and sanctify him so that he could join God in a greater purpose than just existing as a living soul. That's all that the sixth day accomplished. It set up an environment for man to exist going forward until he finally destroyed himself. It says that if the days aren't shortened all flesh would perish. Man has within him by creation a nature that will destroy himself and everything else that's alive. We are now six thousand years of Biblical history into this process. The ecosystem that God set up before He placed man in the garden was designed to sustain man as a living soul. God created the world; He separated the light and the darkness, the water above and the water below; He placed vegetation and animals there. It was all designed for one reason: so that He then could put man there and man could have continuance in a temporal existence. The first man Adam God created had to be supported by other things – the ecosystem, so He put vegetables there; He put meat there. He designed a

system to support itself, and He placed within man the capacity to procreate, which simply means that when a man and a woman come together they can make of themselves, in joining, the same life that they have in them. So the math of nature is one plus one equals three. That's the math of nature. The math of science is one plus one equals two, but the math of nature is one plus one equals three. The math of Spirit isn't that. The math of Spirit isn't one plus one equals three, and the math of Spirit isn't one plus one equals two. The math of Spirit is one plus one equals one, and that one is the life of the first one expressed through the second one. So when you look at the Song of Songs and you see the love affair between Solomon and the Shulamite, in the eighth chapter you don't see the Shulamite pushing a stroller with a baby in it. You don't see three because the union between Solomon and the Shulamite didn't produce a third. What it did was produce the life of Solomon in the Shulamite so that she was expressing the wisdom of God bringing her into or becoming what He is. The chorus, the virgins, said, "We have a sister. What are we going to do because she's not mature enough to be wed, but she is being asked for, she's being sought?" The Shulamite had the wisdom of Solomon for that situation. She didn't say, "Divide it in half," but it was nonetheless wisdom. She said, "We are going to build a wall around her. We are going to protect her; we're going to provision her until she is mature enough that she can go forward." This is the Shulamite, now having had her garden tended and coming to life, expressing the wisdom of Solomon. It wasn't ever designed for them to come to union to produce a third. Their union was designed to reposition and repurpose her by the life of Solomon being lived as her life now but still a Shulamite. That looks like the doctrine in the New Testament that says, *If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation.*

Here comes the conflict. Jesus said that the children of this natural world or this generation are wiser in their relationship with this world than the children of light are with the kingdom of God. He said, *The children of this generation are wiser in their generation than the children of light.* What that means is that the children of this world have made better use and interface with the principles and the government of this world to accomplish things pertaining to this world (nothing eternal, just natural) and that the children of nature have encountered the natural world to greater benefit in the natural than the children of light have encountered the kingdom of God for the benefit of what the kingdom of God is purposed for. You see the church and they are just fractured, splintered, segmented, competitive, and comparative. Paul said, "You compare yourself to one another. That's not a good idea." The church doesn't embrace diversity; they persecute diversity. They look for homogeneity; they look for sameness; they want to dumb-down the effect of the Spirit of God in each member to look like what the Spirit of God is in me. So "if you want to have fellowship with me, here's my doctrine; and if you don't see it that way, just move along or I'll move along – whatever." God is seeking to do differently than that. Jesus, speaking to the Pharisees and answering their question concerning him healing on the Sabbath at the Pool of Bethesda said this – it's a pretty definitive point in scripture; it's the 17th verse of the 5th chapter of the book of

John – he said, *The father worketh hitherto, and I work.* I guess he understood that God didn't take a vacation on the seventh day. If you ask Jesus what did God do on the seventh day, he doesn't say, "Rest." He says, "He's working harder now than He has ever worked before, and He is seeking to draw a people into that work because it's a great work and it's a great purpose." What He wants to do is bless and sanctify His creation.

We know the seventh day (we are not going to go through all the verses because I think everybody gets it) is Christ. The rest of God is Christ. Where else does God bless and sanctify? In Christ. *If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation.* He gets out of the sixth day and gets into the seventh day in Christ. Dan and John talked earlier about 2 men. There are only 2 men: there is Adam and there is Christ. Adam is of the earth, earthly; he's of this generation, and he's pretty savvy concerning this natural world. He's done some pretty amazing things. You know this room looks a lot better than a cave, but one of the things that governs this generation or let's say the kingdom of this world and Adam is that they were made "subject to." Romans 8, God made man "subject to." One of the effects of that being "subject to" is that man, in spite of himself and because of himself, cannot change his nature, and that nature will "out." You can change its appearance, so there is a common phrase, "Oh, you dress up good!" You can change its appearance; you can even re-designate *My Fair Lady* Eliza Doolittle. You can even get it to talk differently, walk differently, but Micah the 7th chapters says, *The best of them is a brier.* There's no difference between the good of Adam and the evil of Adam. That is a tough adjustment to make. It's really a tough adjustment to make, but if we are a new creation, we're going to have to have new definitions.

Jesus walked up to Jairus' house, and they said, "What are you going to do?" He said, "Well, she's sleeping; I'm going to go wake her up." They mocked him by laughing and said, "No, she is dead." Jesus said, "All of you unbelievers, out. You have got to go. She's not dead; she is sleeping." He said the same thing in approaching Lazarus' tomb. They said, "Lord, if you had been here, he wouldn't have had to die because we know you heal." He said, "He's not dead." They answered, "He stinks." So Jesus said, "Okay, have it your way. He's dead. You want me to just talk your language; you won't come talk mine. You won't see from the platform that I'm standing on. You want to look at the heavens as being up when I already told Nicodemus that the Son of Man is in heaven and he was standing right here on the earth."

Today is the day. The prophecy earlier today said, "Embrace your hunger. Cultivate your thirst." Don't try to solve it. *They that hunger and thirst for righteousness will be filled.* We're looking to get filled instead of looking for righteousness. What are we thinking? Having new definitions does not mean that now we just have a new dictionary, and we say, "Oh, yeah, that's right. We can't say 'dead' anymore; now we have to say 'sleep.'" Changing the words isn't the point. Changing the frame of

reference so that the words reflect the truth makes a lot of sense. If we don't begin to relate to our day and our environment on the basis of principles that are not natural, where is the evidence that it is of us living as that new creation which we are? How do we get there? We have to go the way he went, and that's called "growth." We are not growing up into the new creation that we become in the seventh day. *If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature*, but he has to grow up to the full expression of that creature. That's where the solution to Jesus's statement that *the children of this generation are wiser in their generation than the children of light* comes in. We need to get wise concerning the kingdom of God. We need to begin to live our life by the expression of a different government.

There are clues. Here is one of the big differences and discrepancies. Because there's still a lot about me that is first nature, I somehow still buy-in pretty quickly to the position that if I understand something that, in itself, makes a difference. It does not. It's an indication that a difference can come. *In him was life, and that life was the light*. We want to take the light as life, and the light is not the life. The light is the manifestation of the life. So we get the illumination but it's a statement of what is possible. Adam can't change; God won't change. The answer is the seventh day because Christ does change – by growth. If we have a 7-month-old child here and the child is walking around and one day he takes his hand off of the coffee table, takes three steps and falls on the floor, we get excited. This is great! Look at that! However, if he is still doing that at 17 years old, we take him to the Mayo Clinic. We have to grow up in this new creation. There's a sense to which righteousness is typified by the Israelites following the cloud. Follow the cloud. It is important to follow the cloud because following the cloud is righteousness. Just because I followed it yesterday doesn't mean that I can stand where I am if the cloud moves and stay righteous. Righteousness is progressive; righteousness is cumulative. *Day unto day uttereth speech*.

I'm pretty confident that it was true for everybody, at least the guys in here. Sometime toward the end of August, the dreaded day came. It wasn't that it was the end of vacation and you had to go to school. I really didn't mind going to school – too much. What I hated was going shopping for clothes for school, but come January – sometimes even in December – my mother would take a look at my ankles which were visible by then and say that we had to go shopping again. Where was the internet when I needed it? Come on Amazon! You didn't see ankles the 3rd of September or the 4th of September or the 5th of September. If we persist in well-doing, following the cloud, the evidence of that right relatedness will accumulate and be noticeable. Jesus said it this way, "Seek with the greatest priority of anything else in your life the kingdom of God." When you see that cloud, stay righteous with it. Seek first the kingdom of God and righteousness with the King of that kingdom. Everything else stems from that. Nothing else of any benefit comes without that. Seek first righteousness with the King. The scepter, the authority of the kingdom of God is righteousness. Do we know what

righteousness releases as a torrent in our lives? The 21st verse of the fifth chapter of Romans says, *Grace R-E-I-G-N-S through righteousness*. Grace reigns through righteousness. It flourishes; it dominates; it repurposes through righteousness. We are saved by grace. Grace is one of the fundamental principles of the kingdom of God. It is part of the solution of us becoming as wise in the kingdom of Light as the children of this natural world have been in their generation. Jesus said, *Hitherto the Father works, and I work*.

In the 17th chapter of the gospel of John, the 19th verse, concerning the seventh day that he was living as and in, Jesus said, *I sanctify myself for their sakes*. This is a huge pivot point in our growing up. I have to be honest; my encounter with the things of God has been significantly flavored by me being saved. It isn't just from some hell fire and damnation although at one point it might have been that. The outer court, first feast evangelist said, "Do you know where you're going to be if you die tonight?" scaring people into grace. Crazy, really. However, something is beginning to happen in us as we follow the Lord. We are beginning to find something that is just coming out of us by the change that is taking place in us. It is that I can't afford to please myself because if I please myself I can't be part of anyone else getting sanctified. *I sanctify myself for their sakes*. There comes a point of diminishing return if my encounter with salvation is just so I get saved because there is an inherent selfishness in that motivation that is contrary to love that seeks not its own. The influence of the Spirit of God in my heart has to begin to reset and repurposed the disposition of my affection so that it isn't just for me. Boy is this a big day.

Let's go to Ephesians. I'm just going to touch and go there. Just because we are reading Paul, we ought to set a little bit of context. I can identify with your search – where do you start with Paul – Ephesians 1:1. He doesn't write the first verse except to write the second verse which is the platform for the third verse. In the 9th verse, it says, *Having made known unto us the mystery of his will*, (Wow, there is something behind the obvious here.) *according to his good pleasure which he has purposed in himself*. There's a scripture that says, "What is it that what is made would ask the Maker what doest thou?" We asked those questions too much. *That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Christ*. We read in Genesis 2:1 that *The heavens and the earth were finished, and all the hosts of them*. All that was finished was creation. What's on the earth? The epic high point of the earth's creation is man. What about the heavens, what's in the heavens? Angels. So we come out of that verse, and in Ephesians we find out that the purpose of God, the mystery of His will, is that He intended to gather all that He created in heaven and in earth into the seventh day, in Christ, so that it can be blessed and sanctified, repurposed – instead of just being created to exist without being able to change – to enter out of the limitations of the natural order which can't change into the kingdom of God where change is the norm. It is by the

principles and the government by which that kingdom operates that the change takes place.

The natural order says it can't change. We have six thousand years of history, and there is scant reference even in the scriptural sense to anyone escaping this life without going feet first. There are two; then if you see the two, there is maybe a third or a fourth. Most, including Paul, exited this life through death. He said, "I finished," and if anyone knew what the race was he knew. He said, "I finished," having said prior to that "I haven't yet apprehended what I have been apprehended of," but then he came down the road a little further and said, "Now, I finished." He even crowned it (pun intended) with life. It's in the book, so we can take that as some comfortability that it's true; the print is dry. God doesn't anticipate that all are going to exit this natural frame through death. It's purposed that the prophecy be fulfilled, *Death, where is thy sting? Grave, where is thy victory?* Death is designed to be swallowed up during the natural lifetime of some and then certified with a glorified body, as it pleases Him. In other words, what fulfills His purpose from the beginning, that's what pleases Him. God designated His creation to be divined, not destroyed. That takes a lot of sweat out of my life.

Let's turn to Hebrews. The author of Hebrews is bringing a confrontation between the old and the new. It's a comparison by contrast, but he also did this for the purpose of showing the transition from the not-so-good to the better. He was not just defining the difference but showing the path to get out of what can't change into what does change and to experience the change. It's right here in this book. He starts out by saying that God has spoken to us in the past prophetically. There are a couple things about the prophetic word. First of all, it is black and white; there is no gray in the prophetic word. It is ordained; there is a lot of judgment, and most of it is corrective. Prophetic is corrective. There is another aspect to the prophetic word, and that is that it foretells. It is not speaking about now; it is speaking about then, about the future. God spoke to Israel through the prophets of a time that was coming. What was coming in that time wasn't defined by time. It had always been, just not seen. The mystery of His will was set in place before He created, but it is now being made known to all men for the obedience of faith. Is it for the obedience of doing it? No, for the obedience of not doing it! Faith. Most men still relate to the kingdom of God based on the natural principle of doing it. You can't do the kingdom of God. You can't do becoming. Faith is obedience. The new definition in the kingdom of God of obedience is trust. It has nothing to do with doing because it is all designed not to do but to become. Change.

We turn the page and we are not speaking prophetically now. He said that we speak now, the word now is come by Son, not by prophet, by Son. What He says to the Son is not what He says to anyone else, and no one else but the Son can understand it. In the 5th verse of the second chapter, He said that in this natural creation angels are higher than men, but the word of God didn't come to angels; it came to man. Do you know

why? Because if God just gave His word to angels and redeemed angels, man would say, “Wow, they had an advantage I didn't have,” and he would be right. However, if He redeems a man, what angel has an excuse? If you redeem the lowest, you prove the capacity to redeem it all! This same principle is what operates in the gifts of the Spirit. The evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is not the gifts of the Spirit; it's an understanding of the Spirit of the word. The manifestation of the Spirit is typically in most cases, not all cases, but it is the gift of tongues. The reason for it is the same reason that God has set His word to be sent to the lowest parts of the earth, which is man, to prove His capacity to redeem it all. James said that the tongue is a little member but the most unruly member so that there is a testimony in our experience if we have spoken in tongues that the most unruly member of our body, when we through an act of our will engage faith, can manifest Spirit. Wow, is that good! He reached down to the lowest part of me, not just of the earth, and He showed the redemptive capacity of His Spirit in my body. Then, through Paul, He said, “Now bring the rest of your body through an act of your will and a step of faith.” *As you have learned Christ!* Whatever your first lesson was, walk that way. The fifth verse, *For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection...* We need a drum roll or something right here. *He has not put in subjection to angels the world to come.* What is the implication? In fact what is the flat-out statement in that? He has subjected the power of the world to come to you and me. That is what it's saying. *What is man ... that thou visiteth him* and destined him for glory? This is very real; this isn't a game.

Before we go forward, I want to revisit a word that is in the first chapter of Ephesians and the 10th verse where it says, *For in the dispensation of the fulness of times.* There are Bible scholars who have unfortunately taken that word and segmented history into dispensations and said that God was this then and then He was that, and this was all that they had available to them and this is all that they had available to them. Yeah, not so much. The word “dispensation” is the same word that feeds into the word “stewardship.” It is talking about distribution. Let's look at it this way. In time God distributed His purpose and it is progressively unveiled; it was very obscure. Only those who move by faith as Enoch did caught the whiff of it. He moved by the Spirit and pleased God. At that point the Lamb of God hadn't even been defined as a four-legged wooly beast yet. That didn't happen until under Moses. Then there are hundreds of years of history where the Lamb of God was a four-legged wooly beast before John the Baptist took the next level of layering off of that and said, “It's not a lamb; it's a man and that man is moving as a lamb.”

In the 18th verse of the 30th chapter of Isaiah, it says, *Therefore will the Lord wait, that he might be gracious to us, and therefore will the Lord be exalted, that he might be merciful unto us.* I am glad He's waiting to be gracious. If He had to do something without waiting, we would all be destroyed, so I'm glad He's waiting. But it says that if He's going to be merciful to us, He's going to have to be exalted. How do you exalt

God? I know we sing a song *I exalt Thee; I exalt Thee, Oh, Lord*. He's high above all heavens; His word upholds the existence of all things, and we are going to exalt Him. How do we exalt God? How can I lift up that which is far above all heavens and clothed in an eternal majesty? Increase the distance between me and God, not by lifting Him but by subjecting myself. I exalt Him by humbling myself. What does He give to the humble? Grace. Now, we're ticking; now, we're moving in kingdom. We exalt Him by humbling ourselves! We can't lift Him higher; we have no leverage; we have no power. The song is okay if we understand what the terminology is saying, if we understand how it functions. It says that we exalt Him, but it doesn't say how because the book's instruction is designed to frustrate the energy of man. So Jesus said, "When you are frustrated, when you're tired, when your burden is too great for you, come here and I'll teach you how to do this. For I am meek and lowly." That is pretty good. If you are meek and lowly, you know that you can't do it. Now that you know that you can't do it, how do you do it? The next words to come out of his mouth were "Take on you the yoke that I have on me." He didn't say, "Be yoked to me." He said, "Get yoked like I am yoked." How did he offer himself to God? Through the Spirit.

This brings us to the next portion of Hebrews. With my left hand over Genesis and my right hand over Revelation 22, there are some great themes between these two covers. They are prevailing themes; they are salted throughout every chapter of this book. One of the greatest of those themes, not the greatest but one of the greatest of those themes, is offering. The first story in Genesis that doesn't include Adam and Eve is two boys bringing an offering. Right out of the gate, offering. Up until Moses brought the law to show man how he was doing it wrong by the instincts of his Adamic nature, there was no priest. Every man acted as his own priest. It didn't mean he was good at it. Acting isn't reality. God designated a whole chapter of Deuteronomy to say, "When you come into the land, I will place my name in a place and that's where you are going to bring your offering, not everywhere you just want to like you are doing now. There will be a place where I put my name; that is where you will bring your offering." Then He designated priests to offer it. So there is a second great theme in scriptures that joins itself to offering. It is not introduced first; it comes after that, some 1500 years after that, and that is priest.

I think it really is a pattern; it isn't just a coincidence that the offering was introduced before the priest. I have made an offering, and what I offered was very similar to what the rabbis and the Levites offered under the law. I offered a substitutionary sacrifice. Jesus died so that my sins could be expunged, not just forgiven, removed. The one that I offered as an offering was also the priest that offered it for me, which brought those two great themes into one. The offering and the priest were no longer separated. Then Paul says, "What I want you to do from now on is I want you to present yourself daily to God as an offering." That's first. We have been delivered from Adam to begin to grow up as Christ, and that is a son. Was he a son in the manger? He was already a

son. He wasn't grown up as a son, but if he continued to grow, he wouldn't grow up as a servant, he grew up as a son. A son serves, though lord of all, servant. Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Don't be surprised, but if you don't get born again, you can't see or enter into the kingdom of God. You can't be subject to the laws of another kingdom unless you have another life." Adam proved, and it has been spoken of several times already in this conference, that he would not and could not keep one law, and he didn't even have to break a habit to obey. The commandment was, "The tree you haven't eaten of yet, don't." He didn't say, "You know that tree you like the best, don't eat of it anymore." Adam didn't have to break a habit to obey; he just had to "not do," and he had no shot at keeping that commandment. It wasn't in him.

But what if God, when He is angry and in control, wants to show His power by great long-suffering toward the vessels of wrath fit for destruction? When was the last time you were in control and upset? What happened the last time when you were not only in control and upset but you wanted to show the fact that you were angry? James said, "If the spirit is still in the body, the body has life, and the life that that body is going to express is consistent with the nature that is in that body." Don't expect a dog to meow, and don't wait for your cat to bark. A leopard can't change its spots. It can die and quit barking; however, if you put life back in it, if the spirit enters back into it and raises it up, it's going to bark because it expresses the nature that's in it. This new life, if we present it to God on a consistent basis by subjecting ourselves to the Spirit of God, will be nourished and come to maturity. It doesn't grow up on its own. You've got to help it. Not by doing good but by humbling yourself before God. It's very clear in the fifth chapter of Hebrews that you can have quite a long history of being born again and not be mature. The end of the fifth chapter says, "When it is time that you should be examples teaching others, you need to be rehearsed again in the very early principles of the doctrine of Christ, needing sincere milk of the word because you are yet unskillful in the things concerning the kingdom of God, the word of righteousness." Just time doesn't make it happen. Then what does? Humbling yourself before the mighty hand of God.

We have been brought into Christ to become the workmanship of the Holy Spirit. The second chapter of Colossians teaches that before Christ I was dead in my sins and the uncircumcision of my flesh. My sin problem was cured by offering his death as the atonement. That offering joined me to something that was already accomplished. What I'm left with is the uncircumcision of my heart. Back to Genesis, two things happened on the seventh day: blessing and sanctification. Blessing was defined by David in two ways: "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." That takes us out of Adam and brings us into Christ. But that isn't the end of blessedness because David said there are two aspects. "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will impute righteousness." Paul picks up on it in Romans 4, and he asks, "Was Abraham blessed of God when he was circumcised or while he was yet uncircumcised? He was

uncircumcised, and he received the sign of circumcision of what had already been by faith.” What is our sign? What is your sign? It is not a physical representation in your body. The problem is tied to what it says in Colossians 2 – the uncircumcision of our flesh. The way we manifest that we have been justified by faith is that we allow the Holy Spirit to circumcise us: the circumcision of the heart without hands, the true Nazarite vow, the true way that we come to be nothing, to have nothing, to want nothing. It's not a prayer of dedication in 20 minutes or in 20 days. It is living as a sacrifice unto the work of God in us until He raises us up.

Jesus embraced the weakness; he embraced the hunger. He embraced the thirst to the point that when he went to Cana with his mother, she said, “How about it, son?” He said, “You know, Mom, I love you, and at twelve I subjected myself to you, and in these eighteen intervening years, I have realized that it isn't that I'm supposed to be about my father's business only, but I have come to a greater appreciation of what that means. What that ‘to be about my father's business’ means is that I can of myself do nothing, and I have embraced that as a season, and I can't break that for you. I love you.” I know not all that is written there, but that is what happened. As soon as he passed that test, God cleared His throat and said, “As a matter of fact, Son, it is time. It is time to break the obscurity; it's time to manifest what you have allowed Me to do in your life while you were in Nazareth and looked no different than any other 28-year-old that was there. It wasn't happening on the outside, and there was nothing outside of him that supported what was working on the inside. This growth was designed and framed and implemented by the Spirit of God working in him mightily. What was perceived as God at that time was ‘not working’ on Sunday or Saturday or any day. Hebrews 4 says that if we are going to enter into God’s rest, which is Christ, we are going to have to cease from our works as God did from His. Quit trying to fashion ourselves. Quit trying to obey what it says. Realize that the fulfillment of all that it says here is by one thing – sowing yourself to the Spirit of God. Today. As soon as you realize you are not in that position of humility, that's when repentance should kick in. Get back there by returning and rest. We are not called to live sacrificially; we are called to live as a sacrifice.

In Hebrews 7:20, it says, *And inasmuch as not without an oath he was made a priest.* We have a parenthetical expression here where the author of Hebrews brought definition to the 20th verse. He said, *For those priests were made without an oath.* They were made after the power of a carnal commandment. I want to refine or define what a carnal commandment is as different from an oath. A carnal commandment says, “Do this, don't do that.” It leaves the doing of it on who is commanded, so a carnal commandment is telling you what to do and leaving it up to you to do it. The best that a commandment, the word of God that came from heaven by a mediator, who was Moses, the best priesthood that it could bring forward was a priesthood that kept dying and couldn't make anything perfect because it was anchored in the capacity of man to do the work. But this greater priesthood is the designated destination of a Son. There is only

one purpose of sonship, and that is to become a priest, not to become a priest by a carnal commandment but to become a priest by an oath. Melchizedek is not made a priest by a commandment; he's made a priest by oath. The difference is an oath is God speaking, "I will do this." How do I tap into 'I will do this'?

"Oh, God, have mercy upon me."

John Cheever
Naples, FL
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