

HOW THE THEN SHAPES THE NOW

SERMON OUTLINE

Introduction

2 Cor. 2:9 – ... “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love him.”

Two ways for the future determine your present:

1. Look to the unseen (divinely-revealed) nature of reality.

2 Cor. 5:1-5 – For we know that if the tent (tabernacle) that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. 2 For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling, 3 if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked. 4 For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened – not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. 5 He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.

1 Cor. 15:51-52 (NLT) – 51 But let me reveal to you a wonderful secret. We will not all die, but we will all be transformed! 52 It will happen in a moment, in the blink of an eye ... those who have died will be raised to live forever. And we who are living will also be transformed. (See 1 John 3:2.)

“The Christian says, ‘Creatures are not born with desires unless satisfaction for those desires exists. A baby feels hunger: well, there is such a thing as food. A duckling wants to swim: well, there is such a thing as water. Men feel sexual desire: well, there is such a thing as sex. If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world. If none of my earthly pleasures satisfy it, that does not prove that the universe is a fraud. Probably earthly pleasures were never meant to satisfy it, but only to arouse it, to suggest the real thing.’”

– C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity

2 Cor. 5:6-8 – 6 So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, 7 for we walk by faith, not by sight. 8 Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord.

1 Cor. 2:10 (NLT) – ...it was to us that God revealed these things by his Spirit ... (who) shows us God’s deep secrets.

• Direct your groaning to God. • Learn to listen to the Spirit.

2. Let this reality settle your life’s ambition.

1 Cor. 5:9-10 – 9 So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat (Greek = bema) of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

1 Cor. 3:13-15 (NLT) – ... on the judgment day, fire will reveal what kind of work each builder has done. The fire will show if a person’s work has any value. 14 If the work survives, that builder will receive a reward. 15 But if the work is burned up, the builder will suffer great loss. The builder will be saved, but like someone barely escaping through a wall of flames.

Colossians 3:23-24 (NIV84) – 23 Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, 24 since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.

John 19:13, 16 (NLT) – 13 ... Pilate sat down on the judgment seat (bema) ... 16 Then Pilate turned Jesus over to them to be crucified.

Purposeful reflecting...

• Continue the “silence experiment” daily. Ask the Lord to speak, then spend five minutes in silence. (Use a timer!) Notice what you notice (maybe take notes).

Experience

• What struck you as personally significant in the message? How might God be speaking to you through that?

• Can you think of ways the Lord speaks “the language of your heart”? If so, what gift do you think He wants to give you in that?

• How might your losses, frustrated desires or disappointments be speaking to you about the possibility of something better and more fulfilling?

Transform

• Does any particular loss, frustrated desire or disappointment ever lead you into negative emotions or perhaps even into unhealthy habits? If so, the next time one of those surfaces, take time to spell out what you’re feeling to God and seek His comfort.

• Read Colossians 3:23-24, and use it to assess how you approach routine aspects of your life, such as your work, your most important relationships, your home life and leisure pursuits. Which area would be most affected if you learned to do it “for the Lord”? What impact might it have on others? Ask God to help you make that change.

Share

• Of folks who know you well, who’d be most interested to hear what you’ve discovered about yourself in relation to God from this message? Look for a chance to tell him or her.

• Where are you most likely to sense the peace of God’s presence? Who would benefit from hearing how you experience Him in that setting? Look for a chance to describe that experience to him or her.