

SUNDAY SERMON

Willow, Alaska

Date: March 6, 2019

Scripture Reading: John 17:3

Text: Multiple

Subject: CONFESSION OF FAITH SERIES – Eternal Life and Judgment

7. Eternal Life and Judgment

And this is life eternal, that we might know Him the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent. And on the contrary, the Lord will render vengeance in flaming fire to them that know not God and obey not the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Jn.17:3; He.5:9; 2Th.1:8; Jn.6:36.

Think of it! Eternal Life! What is the meaning of eternal life? The word "Eternal" was brought into the English language from an old French word. In this case, the word "eternal" is used as an adjective which describes life. It means infinite in future and past duration; without beginning or end; that always has existed and shall always exist. Consider that you and I, who are of God's elect are brought into a life which always was and always shall be. We are vitally joined to Jesus Christ by God's election of grace; by our being chosen in Him before the foundation of the world; and consequently living with him, dying with him, and being raised with him – and now seated with him in the heavenlies. In other words, in election and salvation, we are joined to him who always has been and always shall be. That is life eternal – to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent.

Therefore, we affirm in our confession of faith a life that is eternal – always has been and always shall be.

Joh 17:3 (KJV) *And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.*

Beloved, what does it mean to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He hast sent? All men know about God by the evidences of nature, because the heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth his handiwork. God shows this to all men because this demonstration of God in the heavens silently speaks to men in every tongue and language, so that none are excused. All know that God is, therefore, “the fool hath said in his heart, there is no God.” So all men know ABOUT God, but only some of the many know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent.

The evidence of this (that all men know – but don’t know the true God) is clearly seen in the seventeenth chapter of Acts where the Apostle Paul, being in Athens, Greece. The philosophers of Greece had brought Paul to Areopagus (Mar’s Hill), because he seemed to them to be one who set forth strange gods; because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection. The greeks had many, many gods which they had created in their own minds. They knew of the God who was unknown to them because they had erected an altar with this inscription: “TO THE UNKNOWN GOD.” Paul said to them, “whom ye ignorantly worship – him I declare unto you. See that? The knowledge of the infinite and true God comes through one declare him by preaching. Paul made it clear to them:

Ac 17:24-32 (KJV) *God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; **25** Neither is worshipped with men's*

hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; 26 And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; 27 That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: 28 For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. 29 Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device. 30 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: 31 Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead. 32 And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter.

What was the result of Paul's preaching to them of their UNKNOWN GOD? See it? Some mocked. Other said, We will hear thee again of this matter. So Paul departed from among these idolatrous Greeks. God had done his work among them. While some scoffed – and some said, We will hear you again – “certain men clave unto him, and believed: among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them. These few came to know the true God, and Jesus Christ whom He had sent. These few who believed the true God, and Jesus Christ whom he had sent, had eternal life.

Heb 5:8-10 (KJV) *Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; 9 And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them*

*that obey him; **10** Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec.*

O, how wondrous! Jesus Christ, the Son of God is the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him. Scripture tells us that he is the author and finisher of our faith.

Now, let us consider the last sentence of our confession regarding eternal life and judgment.

“And on the contrary, the Lord will render vengeance in flaming fire to them that know not God and obey not the gospel of Jesus Christ.”

This is what scripture teaches of those who do not know God and obey not the gospel of Jesus Christ. If that company of Greeks who heard Paul that day on Mars Hill continued in unbelief, we know this scripture includes them. They, like others who know not God – and who obey not the gospel shall be judged with everlasting punishment. They will suffer the punishment for their sins.

2Th 1:7-10 (KJV) *And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, **8** In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: **9** Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; **10** When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.*

Some who do not believe the Holy Scriptures deny that the punishment is everlasting. This passage says it is everlasting? What does everlasting mean? The word "everlasting" is also an adjective which describes punishment and destruction. The OED defines it as: lasting forever; infinite in duration. Consider these word of Jesus about the fires of hell and the corrupting body.

Mr 9:43-50 (KJV) *And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, **into the fire that never shall be quenched: 44** **Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. 45** And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, **into the fire that never shall be quenched: 46** **Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. 47** And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: **48** **Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. 49** For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt. **50** Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his saltness, wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another.*

The danger of not doing this. The matter is brought to this issue, that either sin must die, or we must die. If we will allow deceitful sin in our bosom, it will betray us; if we be *ruled* by sin, we shall inevitably be *ruined* by it; if we must keep our *two hands*, and *two eyes*, and *two feet*, we must with them be *cast into hell*. Our Saviour often pressed our duty upon us, from the consideration of the torments of hell, which we run ourselves into if we continue in sin. With what an emphasis of terror are those words repeated three times here, *Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched!* The words are quoted from [Isa 66:24](#).

(1.) The reflections and reproaches of the sinner's own conscience are like the *worm that dieth not*; which will cleave to the damned soul as the worms do to the dead body, and prey upon it, and never leave it till it is quite devoured. *Son, remember*, (As God said to the rich man in hell) will set this worm of conscience gnawing; and how terrible will it bite that word ([Pr 5:12,23](#)), *How have I hated instruction!* Damned sinners will go on into eternity accusing, condemning, and upbraiding, themselves with their own foolishness and unbelief. How this will at the last *bite like a serpent*, and *sting like an adder*. (2.) The wrath of God fastening upon a guilty and polluted conscience, is the *fire that is not quenched*; for it is the wrath of the living God, the eternal God, into whose hands it is a fearful thing to fall. There is no grace upon the souls of the damned sinners, and therefore there is nothing to alter the nature of the fuel, which must remain for ever burning; Nor is there one drop of water to cool their burning and parched tongues. And one man said, The punishment of the wicked is *to live for ever dying*, and to be *for ever in pains and griefs that never cease*.

Notice this beloved. When the saints of God are on the new earth – when the new heavens and new earth come – we, all of us, shall see the carcasses of those who have transgressed against God – for their worm shall not die, neither shall the fire be quenched.

Isa 66:22-24 (KJV) *For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain. 23 And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD. 24 And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.*

This proof text sets forth the two – some to eternal life and some to eternal judgment.

Joh 6:36-37 (KJV) *But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not. 37 All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.*

Which are you, dear hearer? Will you be of those who have seen and believe not? Or of those given to Jesus who come to him and shall never be cast out? Will you hear – believe on the Lord Jesus Christ – confess Him before me – and be saved?