

Life

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 03 May 2020

Preacher: Marvin Wiseman

[0 : 0 0] Thank you and great is thy faithfulness and don't you forget. Really appreciate all of you joining with us this morning. Thank you for sharing your time. We do not know how long this kind of an arrangement is going to continue but I do know that the state is at least under consideration for reopening and will be given more final thoughts regarding that from the governor's office perhaps this coming week and we want to advise you that a couple of days ago our Board of Elders met and there were preliminary considerations given to some of the changes and arrangements that will have to be made in connection with our meeting once once we are able to start back up again and we will yet have at least one more meeting before that actual time occurs so be advised that they've already been giving some serious thought to the changes that need to be made in order to provide for everyone's security and comfort as well so thank you for your kindness and your consideration and we do look forward to being back together again as soon as possible also I'd like to say thank you for those of you who have mailed your offerings in to the church we have received them and it is true that some of our expenses are not ongoing but most of them are even though we're not meeting and the building is empty because we still of course have utilities to care for they won't be as great as it would be if we were there every Sunday but our main concern of course has to do with our missions obligations for which we are already committed to a number of individuals and organizations and that's something that continues right on whether we are meeting as a church in the facility or not so thanks to all of you who have remembered that and have sent your offerings in and for those of you who are waiting until we can return together to do that why whatever your pleasure is but again thank you so much for your generosity I'd like you to join me in a word of prayer on behalf of the

Steiger's family I'm confident that most if not all of you have heard of the recent passing of Jean and I have a statement that I would like to read in connection with the arrangements that have been made and you can appreciate that the funeral arrangements being made for everyone all over the country are really radically different now because of what's going on so take this into consideration if you would please Graveside services are scheduled for this Wednesday May 6 at 1 o'clock in Cedarville Ohio The cemetery is located right on Route 72 just north of Cedarville College and due to the current situation with the coronavirus pandemic extra precaution will be in place for those wishing to attend the Steiger's family deeply appreciates all who would like to pay their respects and support Jean's family yet they are also acutely aware of the unusual circumstances and the potential for virus exposure so while all who would like to come and would ordinarily be there this occasion will be the case of the situation is understandably different and the family is much aware of this authorities have requested a maximum of 50 people in attendance but family and close friends of Jean's both in Cedarville and from Grace Bible Church could easily surpass that number still the Stigers cannot and are not asking anyone not to come

So all need to be aware of the extraordinary nature of the gathering and you should feel free not to attend even though you would prefer to be there and the Stigers family well appreciates your kind intentions and sensitivity to the occasion so with all of that in mind Let's bow together in prayer shall we Our Father we Our Father we We understand that there is such an incomparable value placed upon human life So much so that you not only created it and brought it into existence But you and the person of your son actually entered into it in a way That we cannot begin to fathom through that incredible incarnation When the word was made flesh on our behalf And you went to that extreme all because you so deeply value

The lives you have created And you have passed the importance of that value on to us And those of us who have some appreciation of what you've recorded in your word Are able to understand that at least even if superficially Sufficiently so that we too can value life Our prayer this morning is for the Stigers family Who we know to be grieving through the loss of this lovely lady and mother and grandmother And we are so grateful for the testimony that Jean bore to so many throughout the years And for the lives that have been touched by her in so many ways Thank you so much for the memory of her gracious spirit For her pleasant disposition for her sense of humor for her spirit and love For her spiritual interest for everything that made this remarkable woman what she was We are blessed to have known her for so many years She was blessed that you gave her

Ninety-plus years To make the most of while she was here on this earth And indeed she did just that So our prayer is for the family And for the truth that will go forth at the graveside service service that it may comfort hearts that are gathered there perhaps some of whom are wondering what life is all about and we pray that this may be an opening for the Spirit of God to speak to any who may be lacking the eternal life that Christ died to provide for us thank you so much again for her memory and for your watch care and your provision for the Stigers and family friends now we ask for ourselves as we engage the material that is before us this morning thank you for each one who is here with the listening ear to partake of the truth that you've provided for us protect us from error we pray we pray because we are so prone to embrace it unknowingly and then to put it out to others in this there is a positive upside even to that if nothing more than a heightened awareness because no one wants to seriously contemplate our own demise simply because we want to focus on life and living and so events like a world which is precisely what in honor it is regarded as a gracious wake and reminder of our own mortality and another real positive upside to the issue of our own death should cause us to reevaluate and treasure the gift and beauty of life itself we tend to be such that it sometimes takes the threat of losing our life that reminds us of the value of it. And our last message to you spoke of the enormous value of the human life and how it surpasses the value of all other biological life forms.

[8 : 34] We attribute that to our being created and made in the image and likeness of God and that in itself gives us inherent or intrinsic value. It is value derived not from what we can do but solely from what we are. This causes us or should cause us to value human life above all else. And in many cases it works out this way. And it tends to produce people that we call heroes. And they are the latest crop of health care professionals and the police and the fire and the emergency personnel. All of whom often go to extraordinary lengths to protect and preserve these bodies of ours called human.

And what I want you to think about is how do you think God who created these bodies bearing his image and likeness, how do you think he regards them?

All throughout scripture. Great and unmistakable value is placed upon them by our creator.

And in connection with this, I see human life particularly as humanity itself, the recipient recipient of this life has assessed it over the years, over the centuries, over the millennia.

And the conclusion that I've come to is really kind of strange. Because it covers the whole spectrum of value. And the assessment that humanity seems to place upon life is from one extreme to the other.

[10 : 37] The second extreme is to the other. Life is cheap. And life is costly. Two great extremes.

When you think in terms of man's brutality to his fellow man, with little or no regard for another person's life, how easily some can snuff out another person's life without even thinking about it.

When you look at the killing fields of Cambodia, and all the way back to the brutality that the Egyptians inflicted upon the Jewish people when they were slaves there in Egypt.

To the snuffing out of lives of our own world trade centers years ago. To the lives that human beings cost. With the dropping of the bomb on Hiroshima.

To the greater number of lives that would have been lost if that bomb had not been dropped. And there had been the necessity for an invasion of Japan. So we've got this enormous whole spectrum all the way from from life being almost disregarded as of no value at all.

[11 : 55] Particularly when those who are in charge are thinking of someone else's life. To the extremity of great heroics that are expended to preserve and save the life of one individual.

I was reading just the other day. A story that I will remember. Even though I was just a teenager at the time. I guess this will date me. But most of you know my dates anyway. But this was 1947.

And the little girl's name was just burned into my mind. And I never forgot it as a teenager. And some of you who have sufficient years on you will remember the name.

If you don't completely remember the incident. But I do. I do. Her name was Kathy Fiscus. F-I-S-C-U-S. Kathy Fiscus.

Precious little three-year-old girl. Playing and romping with her playmates in Southern California. When she fell into an abandoned well.

[13 : 00] That was no longer used. It was originally providing irrigation for crops there in Southern California. And the well was no longer used. And it had a wooden cover place on the top of it.

And the well shaft was only 14 inches in diameter. And this little three-year-old Kathy Fiscus fell into it. And this was when television was in its very early infant days like 1947.

And I well remember. It was as if the whole nation came to a stop. And everyone. From. Coast to coast was thinking and praying.

And pulling. For little Kathy Fiscus. And the workers. Worked frantically. Trying to reach her in time.

Unfortunately. They were unable to do so. And little Kathy did not survive the ordeal. But that name was just burned into my mind. Kathy Fiscus.

[14 : 06] And I well remember. How the whole nation. And how crews of workers and experts. And every kind of person that you could think of. Was called to the scene. And every effort possible was expended.

To try and save. And save. The life. of this one little three-year-old child. Why? Why?

Simply because they had an appreciation and an understanding of the value and the preciousness of life. Well, I've got a passage I'd like to consider with you.

It's in John's Gospel, Chapter 10, and it too is talking about life. It's a wonderful passage. If you have your Bible, would you come with me, please, to John's Gospel, Chapter 10, and we will be reading down through verse 21.

Jesus is talking, as far as we know, the only ones who were present were his disciples. Well, verse 19 makes it clear that there were some Jews there, and it caused quite a controversy with what Jesus had to say.

[15 : 22] So let's read the passage. Follow along with me, if you would, please. Our Lord is speaking, and in John's Gospel, Chapter 10, he says, Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter by the door into the fold of the sheep, but climbs up some other way, he is a thief and a robber.

But he who enters the door, he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. And to him, the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.

And when he puts forth all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. And a stranger they simply will not follow, but will flee from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers.

This figure of speech, and John, the brother of James, son of Zebedee, is traditionally regarded as the author of this particular gospel.

And he inserts a comment here that says, This figure of speech Jesus spoke to them, but they did not understand what those things were which he had been saying to them.

[16 : 35] I want you to realize something here. John who wrote this was also present when Jesus said it. And he was one of those that didn't understand any more than the others.

Years later, and particularly after the resurrection, there are a whole lot of things that Jesus said that never made any sense to them until after he was risen from the dead.

And then, like a flood, so many of those things came back. So many things they could recall that he said that at the time didn't register with him because they couldn't put it together.

But after the resurrection, that clarified everything. So John inserts this here as he writes his gospel, and this is no doubt years after the event. So we read picking up then in verse 7, Jesus therefore said to them again, Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep.

It's interesting to note that this is particular here. The article is used that particularizes it. He is not a door of the sheep.

[17 : 42] He is the door of the sheep. Big difference. All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them.

Now in this figure of speech, it should be abundantly obvious to us that the point Jesus is making is really quite simple and yet quite profound. He is not talking about sheep of the four-legged variety.

He's talking about human beings. He's using a metaphor, and he is referring to them as sheep. And this is a setting that virtually everyone there was fully familiar with because sheep were so common.

I mean, you needed them for their wool. You needed them for the food that they provided. You needed them for sacrifice and sheep and the care of sheep and everything about sheep.

Very familiar to these people. When Jesus said he is the door of the sheep, he simply meant that in the sheepfold, the sheep were put in like into a corral and that he himself would position himself at the only entrance to the sheepfold.

[18 : 54] And he with his body literally became the door. And no one could get to the sheep without going through that door. And of course, it is a protective mode that he is characterizing here.

And he says, I am the door. If anyone enters through me, he shall be saved. And every time I read the word save and saved in the Bible, which is quite a few times because it's mentioned a lot, I cannot help of a man I knew several years ago by the name of Dr. Marv Rosenthal.

And he at the time was speaking at Word of Life up in Scroon Lake, New York, and he gave his personal testimony. And Marvin Rosenthal was born and reared into an Orthodox Jewish family.

And his family operated a restaurant, a little deli in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. And he was about 16 years old at the time.

And his responsibility there in the family business of running this deli was to be the cashier. And everyone that would come by would pay for their meal and hand him their check.

[20 : 11] And he would, of course, make the change and so on, give them a change. And there was a little lady that lived there in the neighborhood and she was referred to as a home missionary.

And she just made herself available to people in the community and passed out gospel tracts and things like that, attended a local church nearby. And she was accustomed to eating at this restaurant, this family restaurant that the Rosenthal family operated.

And when she came by, she stopped to pay her check and Marv Rosenthal greeted her and she said to him, young man, I just want you to know that I'm praying for you.

And he said, well, thank you. And he went ahead to the business and this went on for a few days. And each time she came by, she would say, and I just want you to know, Marvin, that I'm praying for you.

And finally, he had enough. And he said, you're praying for me? And she said, yes. And he said, what's this all about?

[21 : 17] Why are you praying for me? And she said, well, I'm praying that you are lost and that you might be, I'm lost? Lady, do I look like I'm drowning?

Lost. The only thing I want to be saved from is nuts like you. And he plopped the change down in her hand and hussed her out the door and she went away muttering to herself.

Well, long story short, a couple of years later, Marv Rosenthal did come to faith in Jesus Christ. And I don't know how many times he's recounted this story.

And only heaven will reveal how many times and for how long that little, nondescript missionary, home missionary prayed for Marv Rosenthal. And that word saved, as it appears in the Bible so many times, communicates things to people that causes a lot of misunderstanding because most people, despite the fact that this gospel that is called the good news has been around for 2,000 years, there still isn't anything that is subject to as much misunderstanding as this is, this good news.

And when you use the word saved or that someone is saved or that someone got saved, this sounds almost like a complete contradiction in terms to the average person because you're talking about something that is an already accomplished event.

[22 : 55] Saved. Past tense. And they are perplexed by this because they think in terms of saved, I may be, I may be on my way, I may be working at it, I may be trying harder, but there's no way in the world that I could say, I've got it made, that I'm saved.

You can't say that. You can't know that. No one can know that until the time comes. And there's this little CD that I put out that explains something to that effect talks about the reality of being able to know and how it is connected with and called good news.

And as long as salvation is something you think of yourself as working at or trying harder or hoping that you're going to make it, all you've done is create in your mind a mental and emotional question mark.

You don't know. And many people think you have no way of knowing. And the only way you can find out if you are actually saved, wait until you die and you stand before the judgment seat and then you will find out whether or not you've made it.

And you know something? That's perfectly logical. That seems to be the way the world works. And it is the way the world works. But the God who set forth the truth that we're talking about is not the God of this age.

[24 : 31] We have someone else who is the God of this age and his name is Satan. But God who created all things and has provided a way of salvation is speaking of this and considering in a past tense and it is a reality and it is something that you can do and something that you can know in this present life and time and you can have the peace and the joy that comes from knowing the spiritual emotional relaxation that comes from knowing and you don't have to wait until you die to find out in which case if you're wrong it's too late.

So all throughout the Bible this wonderful thing called saved and salvation is presented and is available and is attainable here and now and there is no thought given in the scriptures of waiting until that time comes to see if you can but that's the way people think.

I know that's the way I thought before I became saved. Let's read on with the text. Verse 9 I am the door if anyone enters through me I am the door he shall be saved doesn't say he will be put on the path and maybe he'll make it.

No. He shall be saved and shall go in and out and find pasture. The thief that's the contrary kind of person comes only to steal and kill and destroy.

I came that they might have life. there is that precious thing that we enjoy and protect and think of so highly life and might have it abundantly and then verse 11 I am the good shepherd the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

[26 : 37] Could that be any plainer to you and to me but it was completely lost on the apostles they just didn't get it they just could not conceive of this one whom they considered to be their master and Messiah as laying down his life for the sheep.

He who is a hireling and not a shepherd who is not the owner of the sheep beholds the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. This is a situation that he's giving that is not terribly uncommon in the culture and time in which they were living and in verse 14 he says I am the good shepherd and I know my own and my own know me even as the father knows me and I know the father and I lay down my life for the sheep.

You know any shepherd who is worth his salt if he is out caring for a flock of sheep and there is some wild animal that is threatening to kill one of the sheep the shepherd of course is going to protect it he's going to do what he can to save rescue the sheep to drive off the threatened the animal that is threatening of course he is but you are not going to find any shepherd of four-legged sheep anywhere who would be willing to give his life for that sheep are you serious a human life for a sheep of course not and I don't know all that much about sheep but I've read a number of books about people who know a lot more about sheep than I do and one of the reasons I think that they are described and regarded as sheep here in the Bible is because they were so common in that day but sheep sheep have a reputation of being really dumb I mean really dumb and skittish you know the psalmist in that great 23rd psalm talks about he leads me beside still waters do you know why the shepherd has to lead the sheep by still waters because if it's running water in a stream they're skittish they're actually afraid of running water it has to be still waters water that's not moving and they can be smelly and they can be dirty and they can be really dumb maybe maybe the application is kind of fitting because morally speaking we can be all these things too we can be lacking spiritual and moral cleansing we can be the filthy rags of of what

Isaiah spoke all our righteousness are as filthy rags we can be all of that too morally and spiritually and it is for those that the shepherd died I lay down my life for the sheep and be reminded again as I said earlier at the time Jesus said this to his apostles they didn't have a clue of what he was actually talking about in verse 17 for this reason the father loves me because I lay down my life that I may take it again and that too was completely puzzling to what was he talking well of course he was talking about the resurrection and then he says no one has taken it away from me but I lay it down on my own initiative think of that the father sent the son to be the savior of the world and the son was willing to do it

I lay it down on my own initiative I have authority to lay it down I have authority to take it up again this commandment I received from my father and verse 19 proves that none of them really understood it all and there arose a division again among the Jews because his disciples were in mixed company there and many of them were saying he has a demon this guy is nuts he's insane why do you listen to him they probably some of those on the outside who were opposites of the apostles probably looked at the apostles who were likely seated or standing there all together and they looked at them and said why do you listen to him what is it with you people why is it that you 12 follow around after this guy when he talks like that what is this anyway and others were saying yeah I'll tell you no it's not a deep these things are not the sayings of one who is demon possessed and not only that but I was there and

[31 : 42] I saw Jesus open the eyes of a blind and a demon can't do that can he so this great controversy continues regarding the person and work of Christ the thing that I want to leave with you that I think is so salient in this passage is the incredible value that the creator of life places upon human life in general and yours and mine in particular if you were in the body of Christ it is that for which he gave his own life and I would be the first to admit that we do not understand how the word became flesh and dwelt among us we do not understand how the incarnation took place we do not understand how deity how God the son became flesh flesh and the son of

God and the son of man so he could have a body to yield to die on that cross as our substitute isn't one of us that really understand that or can begin to plumb the depths of that love but let me assure you that is the message of this book from Genesis to Revelation and as I've told people in other settings if you do not have the person and work of Jesus Christ amply understood and applied to your own life if you are not right about Jesus Christ it doesn't make any difference what you are right about this is the sine qua non of humanity this is that which characterizes not only our present but determines our future and as regards that word saved I'd like to just extend a personal invitation to each of you now

I know most of you who are listening in but I am confident that there are those listening in whom I do not know because they were able to listen perhaps just by audio as opposed to video and we are grateful for each and every one expected or unexpected for whatever reason you are listening we thank you for joining us and I would like you to pray with me now and then we'll try to open for a moment or two of Q&A; thank you father we are truly grateful for incomparable love that none of us can fully understand but that we can embrace it we can embrace it even though we are lacking in understanding because we bring the ability that we do have to appreciate and understand to you and we appeal to you on the behalf of the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ to apply the righteousness of Christ to our account by faith and father if there is one who is listening now who has never made that decision by far and away the most important they could ever make in their entire life may they see the simplicity that is recorded in this passage and realize that he who knew no sin was made to be sin for us so that we might become the very righteousness of God in him such an incredible transaction is why it is called good news and our prayer is that each and everyone listening who has not already been a recipient of that good news would be willing to say even now

Lord Jesus that's what I want I want to recognize and acknowledge my sin I want to repent of my sin I want to thank you for dying in my place for doing for me what I could not do for myself thank you for giving your righteousness to me as a free gift as best as I know how I want to receive it and I do take it unto myself even now and I thank you for providing it trust that you will give me the assurance the light and the guidance that I need from this point on thank you for the good news in Christ's wonderful name amen well I don't know how this Q&A; thing is going to work out but we'll give it a try and see what comes of it and Terry I appreciate you bird dogging this thing and being our technician in charge and where do we go from here and what do we do if you look at your screen

Marv John has a question in verse 16 Christ says he has other sheep is he speaking of non-Jewish believers there that is a possibility and I would not discount it I wish I could say with real certainty that he is speaking of other believers but my tendency is to really confine this to the setting in which I believe it was given and that requires the complete Jewishness of it now later it is going to be open to Gentiles and some scholars feel that that's what Jesus was talking about in the future my own personal opinion is they may be right they may be right but my own personal opinion is the other sheep that he's speaking of the northern ten tribes that had already seceded from the union and were still separate from the union because Jesus was a Galilean and he was from those northern ten tribes but he was also speaking I think of those who were in the south and when he talks about other sheep have

[37 : 46] I and this pastor I think he was talking about those northern ten tribes but in all deference to those who disagree with that I would say I'm not ready to die on that hill they may be right it may be a veiled reference to Gentiles who will be added later although personally I prefer to keep it in the original setting and it is intensely intensely Jewish and the Gentiles are coming along later and they will play a very significant part because they will make up a full 50% if you will the body of Christ so I rest my case with that okay others is that the only question we have other questions in the chat so what I'm going to do is I'm going to unmute you but please make sure all your TVs and sounds are off and be aware that other people when they talk please be very quiet so that we can hear them questions does someone have a question doesn't appear that there are any other questions maybe it's maybe it's in hard due to the newness of arrangement people may be a little more comfortable with questions later on

Gary I assume we'll be doing the same thing next Sunday as we know yes we're going to do this Wednesday night at 7 o'clock we'll have the Wednesday night prayer meeting and then we'll do this again next Sunday so if you have a question and you're not sure how to put it in I gave you Mark's email you can always send him a question via email that will be going to research and have a much better answer if you can join in so you can play with the chat okay thank you very much okay what was your question please someone someone asked a question can future meetings be available live online for shut-ins

I don't know I'd have to I have to consult with with I assume we're talking about maybe when we resume meeting at the church could have like a live streaming I suppose that might be possible I don't know what the technical requirements of that would be but we can certainly take it into consideration yeah well that's about all we can conclude now there is that possibility we'll just see what would be involved in working that out because it would be great for shut-ins and for people like in the winter you know when it's really nasty out and snowy or icy or whatever it would be great if people could get the content at home without having to venture out in the bad dicey weather so that's something to consider and we'll have to give the board of elders a heads up about that and they'll kick that around and

I'm sure they'll come up with something okay Terry anything else no I think let's see Gentiles make up 50% of the body of Christ well that's just a you know I was just thinking in terms of no not not 50% actually Gentiles probably make up a greater preponderance of the body of Christ now because so many so many Jews are are not in the body of Christ by their own decision and I don't know what the actual percentage is I just I just threw that and all I'm saying is the body of Christ is made up of Gentiles and Jews and it's certainly not half and half but I have no idea what the percentage is okay and Lynette wants to know if Marie's there and how you guys are doing yes Marie is here with me and she is positioned across the room and her lazy boy with the blanket draped over her shoulders taking the chill off here in the basement and she constitutes my and she is very well thank you and

Charles asks it is interesting that Paul never refers to the church as sheep well yes I guess maybe it is but I can't I'm not sure that there would be any significance attached to that maybe some would see it being significant I don't know he he refers to as a body as a physical body in first Corinthians 12 he's talking about all of the body parts the eyes the arms etc how all are individual and important and yet they are all members of the body and Jewishness and Gentile doesn't enter into that then he also talks about the church as being a building and that each of us constitute a stone or a building block in the building and you're right he doesn't he doesn't speak of it as sheep but I wouldn't attach any particular significance to that and Marvis Terry when you open all the mics there's a lot of noise and hard to understand can we fix that

[44 : 07] Marvis the only way we can fix that is if people stop talking gee you're asking a lot you just have to make sure that you have all background noise and all background conversation stopped when the mics are on it's probably a person speaking to the person beside them that they think is kind of quiet but it still is picked up by the mic and it comes across as squeaks and squawks is that right that's exactly what's happening well I feel like an electronic engineer with that brilliant okay well Paul does refer to the churches as flock I'm sorry

Acts 20 28 Paul does refer to the churches as flock okay Acts 20 28 as the flock of God which he purchased with his own blood that that that that that that that that that that that kind of pops in my mind and in which case I would stand corrected he maybe doesn't call them sheep but after all what would sheep be but a flock or flock would be sheep so I think that would be a valid reference you know Acts 20 28 and okay well if you're able and available and would like to join with us it's a very informal time and there's just some give and take and some chit chat that goes on at 7 o'clock Wednesday and it is from 7 till 8 and it is a time where you can express any prayer requests or issues that you have that you would like us to pray about and we'd be happy to do that and we will keep you posted and you are as aware of the news as

I am as to when churches will be reopening and it'll probably be on a limited kind of basis I'm not real sure what the arrangements will be with the limitation some people will probably feel uncomfortable attending even when those who are at risk and we just want everybody to know that we completely support whatever your decision is whether it is to be there physically or to not be there that is a personal private decision and no one can make it for anyone else so you just do as it seems good in your own eyes when that time comes and that's between the individual and the Lord we're not ready to tell anybody that they should or should not be there so anything else anybody okay our thanks once again to our chief engineer Terry

Fisher we appreciate your efforts brother thank you for putting us together and we'll look forward to those who can make it Wednesday evening