

# On the glory road Evening

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[ 0 : 00 ] Now let me just sum up what we looked at this morning. We looked at the pedigree of a child of God, as we found it in 1 Corinthians chapter 6.

That pedigree was not very comforting, not very flattering. Listen to it.

Know you not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Don't be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves of mankind, homosexuals, nor thieves who steal, nor covetous who grasp, nor drunkards, nor revilers, mockers of God and the people of God.

None of them shall inherit the kingdom of God. And then it says these words, and such were some of you. That was the cesspool out of which the church of Corinth was delivered.

And there was a sense that that was the cesspool out of which our good friend that we went to see and to share in his funeral was delivered from.

[ 1 : 30 ] And we looked this morning, for this I finished, we looked at his pedigree, we found there was nothing in it that he could be proud of, nothing in it that he could trust in, nothing in it that would bring hope to him, and nothing in it that he could die content with.

And that's the same for all of us. There's nothing in ourselves that gives us ground for hope. Such were some of you, the apostle said.

And we found that this was a divine accusation. Such. We found it was a sure description. You.

And we found that it was a solemn warning. Such will never enter the kingdom of God. But we also notice that when the Bible said that such were some of you, it was speaking in the past tense.

That's what this man was, and that's what the people of God were, not what they are now. And we found what they became. Their piety.

[ 2 : 49 ] And we found that at conversion, and we looked at his, that he became a son of God. Three things happened to him, to make him what he was.

Three things happened to everybody who becomes a son or a daughter of God. First of all, we noticed that they were washed, cleansed, from what made up their pedigree, so that in a moment of time, they were as pure as an angel, in God's sight.

Secondly, they were sanctified, set apart. The moment that they came to Christ, they were sanctified. And God put a new spirit within them, a new nature.

And then God came in himself to cultivate the new nature. And then we found they were justified. In other words, freely pardoned, from every sin they ever committed.

If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation. Now that's where we left off this morning.

[ 4 : 01 ] We looked at the pedigree of our friend, and of all Christians, in some way or another. And then we looked at their piety, how they were changed.

Now the third thing, that I want to look at with you, is found in John's epistle, chapter 3, verse 2.

It's very interesting. Listen to what it says. Beloved, now are we the sons of God. That's what took place.

That's what took place. When a man is converted, he's nothing less than a son of God. Before, he's a child of wrath.

He's a son of the devil. As Jesus said to the Pharisees, you're of your father, the devil, a son of the pit. And you may be here tonight, and you're a son or a daughter of the pit.

[ 5 : 06 ] If death will come to you, young or old, you will go to be with your father. Now if your father's God, you'll go to be with God.

But if your father's the devil, you'll go to be with your father. And you'll go to your father's house. Jesus said, in my father's house, there are many mansions.

If it were not so, I would have told you. Many mansions. My father's house, for the sons of God. My father's children.

Oh, but there's many caverns in hell, for the son, of the father, of the pit.

It's outer darkness. His kingdom is not light, it's darkness. His kingdom is not joy, it's fear. His kingdom is not glory, it's domination.

[ 6 : 11 ] So don't be deceived, don't be deceived, says the apostle. Don't be deceived. You're either a son of God, or you're a son of the devil.

You're a child of the king of glory, or you're a child of the king of the pit. Know your father. Before you go out the door of the church, remember your father.

Jesus said, you're of your father, the devil. If you're unconverted, if you don't know Jesus as your savior, really, in your heart, there's your father.

He's an ugly, fearful, malignant, brute. And you're his children. Frightening, you know.

That's what Jesus says. All right then. All right then. But here we come to the person who had the pedigree of the pit, and in a moment it was forgiven, it was washed, it was cleansed.

[ 7 : 18 ] The moment was set apart. Here's a person whose piety began at that time. But you know what didn't begin at that time? The piety began.

But this verse is not about a man's piety. It's a day when piety in its developing stages is over.

It was only a short time in this earth full growth. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it does not appear what we shall be.

I'll look at that in a moment. But we know this. There's some things that we don't know in the fullness, he's telling us. But we do know this. What do we know?

When he shall appear, we shall be like him. For we will see him as he is. We shall be like him.

[ 8 : 21 ] That's a third thing I'm thinking of my old friend this morning. And we thought of his pedigree and his piety, and it was tested over 13 years.

I think now of his perfection. You see, he must be perfect. How do I know? For when he shall appear, we shall be like him.

Perfect. It's a wonderful, a wonderful thought that. Perfect. Well, he wasn't perfect in his 13 years when his piety grew.

He wasn't perfect in everything that he did or thought. He had his flaws. But along with his flaws, he had rich grace that was acknowledged by everybody.

And so we find that this text in John speaks of the third element that we see, his perfection. And in his perfection, as we read about it here, there's four elements.

[ 9 : 30 ] You'll find them in the verse. Four different elements, and they're very interesting. It doth not appear what he shall be like. In other words, the apostle John, who was the nearest to Christ, perhaps, and who displayed the most of love, is saying, well, when I come to the concept of human perfection, I can't describe it.

There's four elements that we read here. The first is an element of mystery. It doth not appear what we shall be.

There's an element of mystery in it. A glorious mystery. mystery. A mystery that one can think into like a maze and still not be sure of what the finished product is going to be like.

It's almost so far beyond the conception of the human mind to be perfect, to be flawless. and John leaves it.

He doesn't fully describe it. He says, it doesn't appear yet what we shall be. I think there's an element of mystery in it. But you know, it's an element of mystery when I think of it alongside my old friend.

[ 11 : 01 ] He's there. Hallelujah. But not only is there an element of mystery I think in this, there's an element of wonder.

He's made it at last. He's in the city of the king. An element of wonder. Why me?

Why him? Well, the element of wonder can never be taken out of the gospel. This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them.

But he not only receiveth sinners and eateth with them, he does more than that. He forgives them, he cleanses them, he dies for them, he puts new life into them, a life that will go on, he calls it eternal life, and in the spirit of his own spirit, he comes into them to cultivate that life.

And then he perfects them. one, there's an element of wonder in it. No, it does not appear what we're going to be like. Oh, it's wonder.

[ 12 : 09 ] Three, I think there's an element in John, it's coming near to the end now, of expectation. You know, my friends, let's, let's get the long, dreary look out of our faces.

Sometimes we've been branded rightly as a church for being long-faced. We've thought sanctification depended on the solemnity of our eyes and our face.

It doesn't. Here's an element of expectation in John is writing a short letter that he says, brethren, it does not appear what we shall be, but we are going to be like him.

Expectation. It's not frothy though. It's not just what we call evangelical propaganda.

In this verse, there's also an element of awe. Brethren, it does not yet appear what we're going to be like.

[ 13 : 26 ] No, but you know, when we get there, we're going to be like him. Yes, that's our perfection.

When he shall appear, it says here. now, this could have a twofold meaning. It could and probably does mean at his second coming.

You see, he will come for his own in two ways. Either in the clouds of glory, and they will be made perfect in an instant, and brought up to meet him in the air, or at the end of the valley of the shadow of death.

I think it was Professor Macleod that said recently, somebody told me a sermon that he was speaking on in the valley of the shadow. And I thought it was very good.

I kept it. I'm going to use it now. He said, in the darkness of the valley of the shadow, when the believer goes along that valley, terribly dark, he can hear the sound of the shepherd staff coming to meet him.

[ 15 : 00 ] He'll be there to meet his people. He's the elder brother. And the apostle says, when we shall see him, we shall be like him.

That's perfection then. And he then says, for we will see him as he is. It's almost the finish of the process that the apostle uses in another part of the scriptures, where he says of the believer is being changed, metamorphized, from image to image.

And this is the final stage of it. We will see him as he is. Now you're going to die maybe tomorrow, somebody. Young or old, what will they say about you when you die?

die. If you're young, your friends will say, oh well, she was very young to die at that age. Isn't it a tragedy?

Or if you're old, they may say, well, they had a good life in this world. Now my friends, there's something bigger and better than that.

[ 16 : 14 ] If you're a child, a son of God, or a daughter of God, your pedigree, no matter how black, has been washed. Your piety is the test that you've been washed.

And if you pass over them, you can expect your perfection. I think of my old friend now, perfect. And you know, as I try to look into the throne of God, I can't honestly, like John, visualize the face of a perfect man.

I can't do it. And I can well understand John saying it does not appear what we shall be, but when we see him, we'll be like him, we'll be like the master.

Okay, that's the third thing. Now the fourth thing came to me actually, I only had three, it came to me about twelve o'clock last night when I was reading the scriptures.

And I thought of how short our time was in this earth. And I was reading in Revelation, as I say, chapter seven, and there I felt that we had the fourth and the final thing with regard to our old friend who's crossed over.

[ 17 : 47 ] First of all, then his pedigree, then his piety, then his perfection. And as I read Revelation, chapter seven, about the great white throne and the numbers that no man could number, and I looked at these verses, I saw his permanence.

The thought is a thought now of permanence. Change and decay, the hymn writer says, in all I round I see, but although that change is not, abide with me.

And where it has, there is development in heaven, there is a permanence that's written into the word of God. And we share it with you, and then we finish.

time is nearly gone. First of all, I noticed that his perfection was permanent. Who are they?

Remember our text? Who are they, and where did they come from? Now the answer here is given quite simply, sir, thou knowest.

[ 19 : 12 ] And he said to me, these are they which came out of great tribulation and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Robes to a Jew was the symbol of their being. A dirty Jew walked about the street in dirty robes, a dirty arm robe in dirty robes.

A clean Jew walked with clean robes. And the robe became the figure of speech for the person. And that's the way the Spirit of God uses it. And I notice here that the perfection of the people of God is permanent.

Who are they? They're the people who wash their robes in what? In the blood of Christ and made them white. And those who are washed in the blood of Christ and made white will never have dirty robes.

[ 20 : 24 ] Their righteousness is a perfect righteousness. It's a permanent righteousness. And when millions and billions and billions of years have gone, the blood that made the robes white will never lose its power.

It ensures the permanency of the sinner's hope. And so I found here that the perfection that my dear brother is now enjoying is a permanent thing.

Two, not only is the perfection permanent here, but where do they worship? Look what it says here. They are there before the throne day and night.

Their worship is permanent. They're before the throne. it's permanent. Day and night, forever and ever, their worship is permanent.

And it is a permanence that is rooted in perfection. Their worship in heaven could not be any more perfect than it is.

[ 21 : 51 ] and so their worship is permanent. And we adhere to that they serve them day and night. Their service of God is permanent.

It's never ending. We demand it that he that sits on the throne shall dwell among them. Their fellowship with God is permanent and it's constant.

Down here in the days of our pilgrimage, our fellowship with God is not permanent. And it's not constant. It fluctuates.

Sometimes it's little, sometimes it's much. Sometimes it's weak, sometimes it's strong, sometimes we're full of peace and sometimes we've got very little peace. there's no permanence in any experience down here.

But there I look and I see a fellowship that's permanent. And if you've lost one and he or she is on before and they're up there, their fellowship is permanent.

[ 23 : 08 ] It may be a year, two, three, twenty, forty. Now it's permanent. Neither shall they hunger and thirst anymore.

Their satisfaction is permanent. Down here the people of God hunger and thirst after righteousness. They want to be better, they want to be more like Christ and they fail.

Up there their satisfaction is permanent. Neither shall they hunger nor thirst anymore. And then it says, neither shall the light of the sun or the moon rest upon them.

In the east they were afraid of the light of the sun. It gave sunstroke, it was dangerous. And this is another way of saying their safety is permanent. Nothing will come to destroy it.

Their safety is permanent. And then we read, and the lamb shall feed them and lead them. they're not going to be robots in heaven, you know.

[ 24 : 15 ] This tells me that their activity is permanent. They'll be doing things in heaven. I don't know what they're going to be doing in heaven. I don't know what the lamb is going to lead them into.

I don't know what the regeneration is going to be like. The new heaven and the new earth where indwell in righteousness. But if you think that the people of God are all going to be sitting in a room like this for all eternity, you've got a big thing coming to you.

No, my friends, he's going to lead them. He's going to direct their living in perfection. What the lamb paid for on the cross will glorify him forever.

The activity is going to be permanent though. And then we read, he's going to lead them into living streams of water. The source of their grace is permanent.

And the pattern of this, remember, were the garden of Eden that were put out of it. They lost the permission to eat of the tree of life. Now the symbol has changed.

[ 25 : 27 ] It's the streams of living water, the streams of the water of life. He's going to lead them into it. Permanent, never going to be taken away. And then you read, and God will wipe away all tears from their eyes.

Their joy is going to be permanent. Their joy. Permanent. And as I think of my old friend who was the joke of the village whose pedigree was fearful.

As I think of the day, as I said this morning, when he got converted and he turned to Jesus and trusted him in his savior, the peace of God came into his heart.

And he said that night, I'll be with you for as long as I live. and he tried for 13 years to live according to the pattern of his master.

He never totally succeeded, he would confess that. But he succeeded in such a way to make other people notice the tremendous change that took place in him.

[ 26 : 46 ] Yes, his piety, it endured to the end of his life, even if imperfect. And then last week, God took him into his presence and immediately he was perfect.

He dwells in perfection. And when I look now and I think ahead to the day when this world as we know it will be dissolved and all the people of God, the sons of God bought by the blood of the land will be brought into the presence of the God.

Oh, it's a frightening thought. Will I be perfect on that day to enjoy that permanence that will never end?

Will you? you? Will you? Only you can answer that question.

And again, as I said this morning, if you're not a Christian, before the devil really not only gets in his hands in you in a way that you'll never get out of them, I say to you tonight, go to the Lord Jesus, just as you are, and say, Jesus, wash me in your blood that you shed on the cross.

[ 28 : 34 ] And Jesus says this to you, he that comes to me, I'll never cast out. I'll deal with your pedigree, I'll help you in your piety, at the end of the road I'll ensure your perfection, and for all eternity you'll have the permanence of the people of God.

Can you find anything better than that in this world? I don't think so. May God bless this word this evening. Shall we pray?

Our gracious God, we ask you just now to help us to rejoice in what lies before us if we're the people of God.

Maybe tomorrow, maybe a year, maybe Jesus will be back before we expect him. But of ways that can be said from your word, for the people of God, it doth not appear what we shall be, but when he shall appear, we shall be like him.

We pray thee tonight for those who are without Christ, who've never come to him personally, who are of their father the devil.

[ 30 : 04 ] what a father to have, what a fearful, cunning, malignant, vicious father to have. Help, we pray thee, those who have him for a father, not to listen to the cooing of his promises, but bring them to his pit, but listen to the solemn warnings and the gentle invitations of Jesus to change their house, to change their father, to change their future, and help such to see that that's why he came to die.

This man receives sinners, not good people, but sinners, and saves them, and keeps them.

May we have, who know thee, O God, a holy expectancy. May we know the best is yet to be.

For Jesus' sake, Amen.