

Sermon 1: Looking Through God's Periscope

This session begins our seven-week study by exploring its central theme. Christians should be living their life with an eternal perspective. We need to see the world as God's sees it; looking through His periscope to have His perspective. How does this realization change our way of thinking and acting?

It is probably not possible to effectively live the Christian life (in all its fullness) without embracing an eternal perspective on all we think, say and do in the present. Only by adopting an eternal perspective can we truly live consistently with the teaching of Scripture. Such a perspective offers us some of the necessary resources to make wise, holy, and God-honoring choices in the present, by reminding us that our lives do not end with the death of our bodies, and that we will one day have to give an account of our lives to God. As we saw in chapter seven of this week's reading, "What we do on earth will have an impact in eternity. That is why looking through God's periscope is so important. It helps us make right choices and orders our priorities."

Fast Facts

Each week, we will share a few fast facts with you to help you in thinking about leading the small group discussion.

In our book, *Cultural Captives*, we report several statistical facts providing insight into this week's study.

- The percent of emerging adults (ages 18 to 29) who do not claim any affiliation with Christianity (i.e. Evangelical, Mainline, or Catholic) has grown from about 20% of the population in 1990 to over 36% of the population today. The growth has not occurred through emerging adults turning to other religions, e.g. Islam, Buddhism, etc., but rather through those who do not affiliate with any religion at all.
- Those emerging adults with a biblical worldview (looking across four different surveys) is found to be only about 10% of all emerging adults and a disappointing 30% of emerging adults who claim to be born-again. Thus, the overwhelming majority of born-again, emerging adults do not look at life through a biblical worldview



Christians are called to act as citizens of heaven who have been assigned for a short period to this earth to carry out God's purpose.



Sermon Videos:

Now I'm Bound vimeo.com/probe/promo

Suggested Sermon Ideas

Developing an Eternal Perspective

Time and Eternity

I. Introduction

A. Time famine

1. We need to develop an eternal perspective.
2. Give examples from tombstones, obituaries, etc.

B. Time and eternity

1. We are children of time, but we are going to an eternal world.
2. Paul says “I die daily - every day we are closer to our death.
3. Paul says he does not lose heart (2 Cor. 4:1) – the following three contrast are the reason why.

II. Three Contrasts

16 - “Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.”

A. Outer person and inner person (vs. 16)

1. Though outer person is decaying, the inner person is renewed day by day. This is the process of sanctification. The believer has an inner life.
2. The Christian life is to be lived day by day.
3. We are getting older: Youth, Middle Age, You’re Looking Good
4. Seven decades of life: spills, drills, thrills, bills, ills, pills, wills.
5. As we grow older physically, we should grow stronger spiritually.

17 - “For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.”

B. Present affliction versus the eternal weight of glory (vs. 17)

1. Paul is not minimizing afflictions (beaten, shipwrecked, imprisoned).
2. From our perspective these are heavy and grievous, but they are light when laid down next to glory.
3. Romans 8:18 – “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.”

18 - “So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.”

- C. Temporal and eternal (vs. 18)
1. Contrast between the seen and the unseen.
 2. Faith is the conviction of things not seen (Hebrews 11).
 3. What is God doing that I cannot see?
 4. *Jewish Talmud* - "Man is born with his hands clenched; he dies with them wide open. Entering life, he desires to grasp everything; leaving the world, all he possessed has slipped away."
 5. 1 John 2:7- "the world is passing away . . . but the one who does the will of God abides forever."

These three contrasts are Paul's perspective on life and death, of time and eternity.

III. Six Eternal Perspectives

We do not lose heart because of these six eternal perspectives.

A. Eternal Glory (4:17)

1. Satan holds mankind in bondage to the fear of death (Heb. 2)
2. We know our eternal destination.

1-4 - "Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life."

B. Eternal Body (5:1-4)

1. Paul calls our body an "earthly tent."
2. We move out of our earthly tent and move into God's presence, into a heavenly body.

5 - "Now it is God who has made us for this very purpose and has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come."

C. Eternal Purpose (5:5)

1. Fading mortality is not without design. We are not just marking time in this life. There is a purpose.
2. Non-believers cram life full of activities because that's all there is.
3. Dead Poet's Society - we are food for worms, *carpe diem*.
4. Gladiator - "What you do today echoes through eternity."

6 - "Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord."

D. Eternal Fellowship (5:6)

1. Paul can be confident and encouraged.
2. To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.
3. Philippians 1:21 – to live is Christ, to die is gain.
4. Temporary fellowship with believers, eternal fellowship with Lord.
5. We depart and disengage from the body.
6. The body sleeps, not the person.

7-9 - “We live by faith, not by sight. We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it.”

E. Eternal Fulfillment (5:7-9)

1. Paul would prefer to be with the Lord.
2. Paul’s perseverance was to please the Lord.
3. *Westminster Shorter Catechism*
 - a. First Question: What is the chief end of man?
 - b. “Man’s chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever.”
4. Henri Nouwen - I will be restless until I find rest in my Father’s House.
5. In heaven there is no more guilt, no more anxiety, no more fear.

10 - “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.”

F. Eternal Reward (5:10)

1. For Paul, heaven is not just a destination. It is a motivation.
2. Judgment seat of Christ
3. Christian funerals don’t focus on earthly achievements.
4. Talking about people already saved - salvation is not good works.

IV. Challenge

A. Challenge

1. Am I balancing time and eternity?
2. How are you spending your time here on earth?
3. Quote from C.S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory*

“It is a serious thing to live in a society of possible gods and goddesses, to remember that the dullest and most uninteresting person you can talk to may one day be a creature which, if you saw it now, you would be strongly tempted to worship, or else a horror and a corruption such as you now meet, if at all, only in a nightmare.

All day long we are, in some degree helping each other to one or other of these destinations. It is in the light of these overwhelming possibilities, it is with the awe and the circumspection proper to them, that we should conduct all our dealings with one another, all friendships, all loves, all play, all politics. There are no ordinary people. You have never met a mere mortal. Nations, cultures, arts, civilizations—these are mortal, and their life is to ours as the life of a gnat. But it’s with immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub, and exploit—immortal horrors or everlasting splendors.”

4. “Only one life, twill soon be past. Only what’s done for Christ will last.”