

**Pastor Tom Mortenson**

**Grace Fellowship Church, Port Jervis, New York**

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**Even Angels Long To Look Into These Things**

**1 Peter 1:6-12**

**Prayer:** *Father God, we just again thank you for who you are, thank you that you laid down your life for us. Not only did you lay down your life for us, you also left us a book. You left us a book with instructions on how to live our lives for you. So Lord again this morning we're going to be opening up that book and we pray for your Holy Spirit who makes the book make sense. Without the Holy Spirit, it doesn't make much sense. And so we pray for the presence of your Holy Spirit. Guide us as we look into your book and make it of permanent value, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.*

*1 Peter 1:6-12 says this: In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith -- of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire -- may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you*

*are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls. Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of the Messiah and the glories that would follow. It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things.*

Well, last time out we spoke of the good news and the bad news of being one of God's own. The good news we spoke about was the treasure. *It's an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you.* And the bad news, if I can call it that, is the trials. Again verse 7: *These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith -- of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire -- may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.* God says the most precious thing to him and therefore to us is faith. Trials are designed by God to refine that faith so that when the great day of salvation comes, we can bring honor and glory to Christ. And if you remember last time out, we saw that captured in the life and death of Cassie Bernall who at age 17 gave

her life to Christ by refusing to deny him even at the point of a gun. In a very real sense her trial did result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ was revealed.

Well, Peter goes on next to tell us that faith itself has within it its own inherent joy. In verse 8 he says: *Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.* You know it starts with all of the dots that had to connect for you to come to the place where you first acknowledge Christ as your savior and then it continues as the dots in your life repeatedly line up to form a pattern not necessarily of worldly success but of a commitment to a trajectory that leads heavenward instead of earthward. You know as Michael Card said, "There is a joy in this journey." And it's a joy that anyone who is not one of his can't begin to understand it, they can't even begin to fathom it. I've seen it in India in people who have absolutely nothing that this world had to offer. And yet just like Peter says, they had the most profound sense of joy I'd ever seen. They were literally watching their salvation playing itself out in time in their lives. Peter goes on to say: *Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, trying to find*

*out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of the Messiah and the glories that would follow. It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things.*

What Peter is speaking about here is the progressive unfolding of truth that we find in the scripture. You see, God chose to reveal the truth of the gospel over the course of literally thousands of years. And for much of that time, even the prophets were in the dark. You see, it was the prophets who revealed this truth on a piecemeal basis and they *"searched intently with the greatest care, trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of the Messiah and the glories that would follow."* You see, the prophets searched intently but they never, they never got the whole picture. Verse 12 says: *It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things.* So these prophets never found what they were looking for and instead God told them that they're serving a future

generation, those who would be privileged enough to hear the entire gospel poured out in real time. Well, everything prior to that had to contend with a fragmented gospel that no one could fully understand.

Now the very first expression of that gospel -- and mind you this is a gospel that defied understanding, the very first part of that came in the beginning in the Garden of Eden directly after the fall of Adam and Eve. We often talk about the rebellion of Adam and Eve, but we need to go back even further than that because there was not actually one great rebellion, there was two. The very first one took place between Lucifer and God himself. And Lucifer was the creation of God. You know, father, son and Holy Spirit as the self-originating and self-sustaining creator gave life and existence to a creature that by all accounts was the highest created being ever. It is this Lucifer who first rebelled against God. And the account of that rebellion and its effects is found in *Revelation 12:7*. It says this: *Then war broke out in heaven. I think about this and I think of all of the video games and all of the stuff that people have all throughout the world are trying to re-create these incredible wars. Here God's saying there was an actual war, it took place between no one humans. A real war. Says: War broke out in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But*

*he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down -- that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.*

Now unless you understand the effects of this first rebellion then nothing else of the gospel is going to make much sense. You see, the earth is fallen and cursed to decay because this premiere angel named Lucifer fought and lost a war in heaven, was cast out of heaven and landed enraged on earth. It was this creature who successfully tempted Adam and Eve to give up their perfection and so cursed themselves and the earth that was given to them as a free gift. And ever since his arrival on earth, this fallen angel has sought to make war against us. *Revelation 12 says: For the accuser of our brothers and sisters, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down.* He was right there at the dawn of creation when Adam and Eve walked in the Garden of Eden. He had taken the form of a serpent and from the start he began accusing God of trying to steal from Adam and Eve something to which he said they were entitled.

Ever heard of Bill Maher? Anybody here know -- anybody know who Bill Maher is, the TV guy, TV host? He's a very famous enemy of Christianity and he loves to point out the absurdity in his view of

Christianity by saying this is a religion that actually believes in a talking snake. Now Mr. Maher is an atheist who believes that we arrived here from nothing created by no one, that simply through time and chance, presto change-o, we appeared. He's a very big proponent of the big bang but I've never heard him give any explanation of where the components of the big bang came from. That's Mr. Maher's absurd little secret. You see, we've got talking snakes and he's got material that composes the entire universe coming from nothing. And I always tell folks that both sides of this argument can be reduced to what somebody else considers to be silliness because in the end even atheism comes down to a matter of faith. And so I choose to put my faith in a talking snake crushed by a God man rather than nothing creating a protein soup that magically turned into human beings. And my point is never, never let the other side try to shame you into thinking that we believe something silly. I think they believe in something even sillier.

Anyway back to this angel Lucifer. He's thrown out of heaven and he's landing enraged on the earth and who does he discover? He discovers a perfect Adam and Eve walking in a garden. And so he takes the form of a serpent and he tells Adam and Eve that God is withholding from them their ability to be just like God and that they needed to rebel, that they needed to disobey and eat the

forbidden fruit so they can become gods as well. Well, as soon as they ate that fruit, they realized that they had been had, that they had disobeyed, that they had committed treason against their creator, that they were no longer perfect like their creator, that they were now fallen and sinful like the serpent, like the devil himself. And *Genesis 3:14* describes God's reaction. It says: *So the LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and all wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."*

This is an astounding statement that God made knowing that it would be thousands of years of prophets searching intently before it even began to remotely make sense. I mean there's no chance whatsoever that Adam and Eve or Cain and Abel or even Abraham, Isaac or Jacob or any of the other prophets would have understood at all what God was very clearly stating here. I mean we can understand it perfectly because we're the ones who've have been given the full revelation of God in a book called the Bible, something you can get for a little bit more than a dollar at the dollar store. Well, God in that book made a statement to the serpent. Actually what he made was a declaration of war. It was a declaration of war between

Lucifer otherwise known as Satan or the devil and the crown of creation, human beings created in God's own image. We have the benefit of the whole gospel revealed over thousands of years to understand what God is saying in this passage. And he tells Eve that she's going to be singled out as the particular enemy of the serpent because the Messiah, Jesus Christ, would actually become one of these same creatures that Lucifer so hated, a human being who would go by the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Now the enmity between Satan and human beings would be focused primarily on women and not men because God in the flesh would come to the earth through the agency of a woman. And I think it's astounding that God in his wisdom gave the ultimate role that a human being would ever have in salvation not to a man but to a woman. Jesus' humanity would come through a female named Mary; his divinity not through a human male but through God's Holy Spirit. God said in *Matthew 1:18: This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit.* Men had absolutely nothing to do with the Messiah coming to earth. There was no seed of a man fertilizing Mary's egg in the natural fashion. Instead God said through an angel to Mary in *Luke 1:35: "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God."* So it's no wonder why the serpent

should be at enmity with the woman. I mean woman represents the greatest existential threat there ever could be to the serpent, to the devil. Mary would give birth to God in the flesh who would come to earth specifically to go to war with the devil, with the prince of earth. That's why in *1 John 3:8* it says: *The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.*

Now I mentioned that there were two great rebellions, one that took place among the angels and another one that took place among us human beings. And the human rebellion I think we know pretty much about. It started with Adam and Eve and it's still being played out to this very day. It's the life that you and I live as Christians. The angelic rebellion that took place in heaven that caused Lucifer to be cast out and sent to earth, that had a very different result. You see, God extended astounding and amazing grace to human beings when they fell. He apparently extended no such grace to the angels. Listen to what he says in *2 Peter 2:4*. He says: *For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them in chains of darkness to be held for judgment. Then Jude 1:6 says: And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their proper dwelling -- these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day. So the angels sin and they receive judgment. We sin and we receive grace. God tells us that Jesus*

Christ becomes one of us, he lives the perfect life, and then he offers up that life at the cross so that we could obtain salvation that was apparently denied to the angels. And that grace is specifically what Peter is talking about. Again he says:

*Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of the Messiah and the glories that would follow. I mean these prophets, they searched intently but they did not find. I mean for all of their insight and privileged ability to bring truth to life, none of them even remotely comes close to the privileges that every single one of us today has. Each of them only got a tiny little glimpse of glory, and none of them had the full picture. None of them ever held in their hands the full and complete revelation of the grace of God revealed through the word of God. None of them can get what we can get for about a dollar at the dollar store, a bible. Think of the prophet Daniel in Daniel 9. He has a vision of the Anointed One, Jesus coming into Jerusalem thousands of years before it happened. Well, Daniel longed for the full picture but he never got it. Zechariah in Zechariah 9 saw Jesus the king riding into Jerusalem on the foal of a donkey, he saw flashes of the coming king but he never saw the full plan of God. Isaiah in Isaiah 53 saw the same King Jesus*

stricken and smitten by God on our behalf. What he didn't see though was the full picture. He didn't see his full triumph over death. And David in Psalm 22 had a vision of Christ crucified that reads like an eye witness account even though the events of David's life took place a thousand years before the Lord Jesus's birth and they were written hundreds of years before crucifixion was even known as a form of execution. This is Psalm 22 starting at verse 6. Listen to what David says. He says: *But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by everyone, despised by the people. All who see me mock me; they hurl insults, shaking their heads. "He trusts in the LORD," they say, "let the LORD rescue him. Let him deliver him, since he delights in him."* Then in verse 11 he says: *Do not be far from me, for trouble is near and there is no one to help. Many bulls surround me; strong bulls of Bashan encircle me. Roaring lions that tear their prey open their mouths wide against me. I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint. My heart has turned to wax; it has melted within me. My mouth is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth; you lay me in the dust of death. Dogs surround me, a pack of villains encircles me; they pierce my hands and my feet. All of my bones are on display, people stare and gloat over me. They divide my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment.* Well, David described Christ's crucifixion to a tee but he didn't know that. You know, the very words that David quotes in *Psalm 22:8*, he says:

*"He trusts in the LORD," they say, "let the LORD rescue him. Let him deliver him, since he delights in him." Those are the very words that his mockers used to shame him 1,000 years in the future as he was hanging crucified. If you fast forward to Matthew 27, it says: In the same way the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders mocked him. "He saved others," they said, "but he can't save himself! He is the king of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and he will believe in him. He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now if he wants him, for he said, 'I am the son of God.'"* In the same way the rebels who were crucified with him also heaped insults on him. And again David prophetically writes in verse 15, he says: *My mouth is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth; you lay me in the dust of death.* Again, fast forward a thousand years to the crucifixion. Jesus himself says: *"I am thirsty."* A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put a sponge on a stalk of a hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips. When he had received the drink, Jesus said, *"It is finished."* With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. And again David prophetically writes in verse 18: *They divide my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment.* Once again we fast forward a thousand years and we have this very event. John 19 says: *When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes, dividing them into four shares, one for each of them, with the undergarment remaining. This garment*

*was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom. "Let's not tear it," they said to one another. "Let's decide by lot who will get it." This happened that the scripture might be fulfilled that said, "They divided my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment." So this is what the soldiers did.*

All of this exquisite detail, it begs the question, how did David know about crucifixion? Well the answer is he didn't. He never got the whole picture. I mean that privilege was reserved for us. You see, it really wasn't David who was writing Psalm 22 some thousand years before it happened, it was the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit that later became Jesus of Nazareth who wrote that Psalm through David. Listen carefully to what Peter is saying here. He says this: *Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of the Messiah and the glories that would follow.* You see, it was the Spirit of Christ within Daniel and Zechariah and Isaiah and David as well as all the other prophets who pointed to the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. I mean the prophets themselves, they searched intently with the greatest of care but they came up empty. The amazing thing is that what they searched for God has placed at our feet. I mean what we

have here is the unspeakable privilege of the full revelation of God. Did I mention that you could pick it up for about a dollar at the dollar store? Yeah, I mentioned that, that's right. But what we often don't have is the good sense to realize the gift that we have been presented with. You see, folks for centuries have longed to see what we have been given to see. And when Jesus revealed to his disciples the meaning of the parable of the sower and the seeds, he revealed something. He revealed that seeing and understanding scripture is a blessing that only God can bestow and that no man has a right to claim. Jesus made that clear in Matthew 13. You know, Jesus had just preached to a crowd that was so large he had to speak from a boat. And as I've mentioned many, many times before, he spoke in a parable and he spoke in such a way that no one could possibly understand what he was talking about. I mean once again, we see the truth revealed in a way that no matter how intently you searched or inquired, you will never discover it. Jesus talks about a farmer sowing seed in four different types of soil. He describes rocky soil and thorny soil and barren pathway soil and good soil. But all Jesus does as he's teaching from this boat is give you a very basic description of what happens to each seed when it lands on that particular type of soil. And then with no other explanation, no illustration, no teaching, Jesus leaves the crowd with this admonition: "Whoever has ears, let him hear." We know for a fact that the disciples were appalled. All of these

people had gathered to hear the master speak and yet he spoke in a way that virtually no one could understand. In *Matthew 13:10* it says: *The disciples came to him and asked, "Why do you speak to the people in parables?"* You know, my guess is that the disciples' question was half question and half veiled rebuke. Jesus, why did you do that? I mean, why do you speak in a way that no one could possibly understand? Listen to what Jesus said. *He replied, "Because the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them."* Jesus goes on to tell them that Isaiah had prophesied of these people's blindness and deafness and then just before he gives them in a private meeting a full explanation of what the parable means, he says in verse 16: *"But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear. For truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it."* Again, if those words sound familiar, consider our scripture this morning. Peter tells us in verse 12 of our text: *It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things.* Peter's saying, what he's saying is the whole of redemptive history from the Garden of Eden through the prophets, to the cross itself to the resurrection has all been revealed in

little bits and pieces throughout the entire word of God. I mean Peter is drawing the biggest of big pictures here. He's telling them that the prophets of old prophesied in part because they only knew in part. But that we who have the untold privilege of having the whole gospel now know what the prophets could only dream of knowing and that is Jesus Christ and him crucified and resurrected, something I found out you can get for about \$5 at Wal-Mart and a little bit more than a dollar at the dollar store.

Just last week we looked at this text in *Hebrews 1*, says: *In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son.* What God is saying is the language I'm speaking to you now is one word: Jesus. That's the language. And what he's saying is he's the one who alone is going to make all of this start to make sense. And again Peter says of the prophets: *They were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven.* And what he means is that Daniel and Isaiah and Zechariah and David and all the others who spoke in these fragmented ways of things that have now been told to us completely by those who preach the gospel by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven have given us at last the big picture. All of redemptive history is now being told not in part through the

prophets but in the whole now by whom? By you and me, who *preach the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven.*

Just what is that big picture? And what does it mean today? Well, as I pointed out at the beginning of this message, there were two very different rebellions among two very different types of creatures with two radically different outcomes. One group was the angels and the other group was us. The angels received instant judgment; we received grace. That grace unfolds piece by piece, bit by bit from the sentence God imposed on the serpent right at the very beginning, telling him that he'd be at enmity with the woman through all of the prophets, each being given piecemeal a further revelation of the truth, that God would raise up a man named Abraham who would become a nation, who would then produce the God man through a woman by the Holy Spirit who would then take on Satan himself by being the debt-payor for all of his sheep. Got to understand, this is the story that captivates the entire universe. Peter himself says: *Even angels long to look into these things.* And as I said before, that English translation barely does justice to that sentence because the Greek word for "long" is "epi thumea" which can be translated "lust." It's not just a longing that the angels have, it's an extreme longing. God says the angels in heaven are transfixed by and obsessed with the gospel. It's a story so fantastic so as to enthrall the entire universe with one

very notable exception: Us. We are at the center of the story. And yet because of the curse of Adam, we are blind, bored and indifferent to the whole story. And if you doubt that, simply strike up a conversation with someone about the gospel of Jesus Christ. I mean we all know it. You can talk about thousands of different things, you can talk about sports and the weather and politics, even talk about spiritual things but say these three words in this order to somebody: "Lord Jesus Christ," say those three words and whether subtly or not so subtly you will be told this is not an appropriate topic, ever. And there's a reason for that. It goes back again to that angel that was sent here and curses this place. God said in *1 Corinthians 1:18*: *For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.* See, that gospel is soundly rejected as nonsense by everyone who is under that curse. That angel who fell to earth and cursed it and us still curses every individual who was outside of God's grace. And again God makes that clear in *2 Corinthians 4:4*. It says this: *The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.* See, the prophets who told us to look forward to the coming of the Messiah, *they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent*

*from heaven.* See, now we have the whole picture. Now it is us who tell angels and powers and principalities just how wise, loving, kind and powerful the Messiah is by demonstrating the outworking of his redemption in our ordinary lives. God chose angels to receive his justice; he chose us to receive his mercy. And did I mention he gave us that revelation in a book that you can get for a dollar down at the dollar store?

Here's when the message becomes very, very practical. Angels, as I've said, they are obsessed with the gospel. Hence they are also obsessed with how we humans live out that gospel. And that gospel is what should occupy every aspect of how we live out our lives. For most people, the first bible they'll ever see is you.

Let me explain how this works itself out. Years ago I was on a field trip with one of my kids and we went to Bear Mountain State Park which to no one's surprise has a bear paddock. It's a big open space so that the bears can do their thing and we humans can watch them. And the way this paddock is constructed, there's a large concrete lip that kind of overhangs the whole thing so the bears can't get out. And this particular morning all of them were tucked away way under that lip so no one could see them. So picture this. There's this large crowd of people and all of us are standing on tiptoe surrounding the paddock and we're all peering

intently to get a glimpse of these creatures. Well understand this, in a sense we are just like those bears at Bear Mountain State Park. There are all kinds of creatures that we have never met, human and non human, who are right now standing on tiptoe to view our lives as expressions of the greatest story the universe has ever known. *Even angels long to look into these things.* And what do you suppose we saw when we stood on tiptoe to view the bears? We saw bears. We saw them eating and sleeping and playing, doing what bears are supposed to do. So what do angels look for when they look into our lives? Well, let me tell you from scripture what they're supposed to see. One of my all time favorite verses is *Ephesians 3:10*. The Holy Spirit is speaking through Paul and he speaks of the very same grace that Peter is speaking about. This is what he says: *This grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the boundless riches of Christ, and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things.* Paul's saying, hey, now I get to tell you the whole story. And Here's why, verse 10: *His intent was now through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.* You see, God's intent here is to display his wisdom, his manifold wisdom. That's wisdom displayed in a thousand different ways. And it's

displayed to whom? Well, he says, well, to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly realms. I mean that certainly has to mean angels as well as other creatures that we've never met. And where is this wisdom put on display? He says through the church. You got to listen. He says: *His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms.* Well, the church is you and me, folks. That's us living our standard every day lives. What I'm trying to say is you may not realize it but we live in a human paddock right here on earth. We've got creatures, both human and non human standing on tippy toe looking intently at everything we do. What do the angels see when they look at our lives? Do they see ordinary people carrying the flow of redemptive history by living out their ordinary lives for the glory of God? It's what they should see. See, the amazing thing is it's not the extraordinary but the ordinary things in our lives that really matter. I was standing on tippy toe at the bear paddock because I wanted to see bears do what bears do. I wanted to see them just being bears. I mean I have no desire whatsoever to go to some bizarre circus and see bears dressed up in tutus holding parasols, riding bicycles and jumping through hoops. That may be amusing to some folks but it's not real at all because that's not how real bears live. The same is true for us. God's angels are fixed on us bringing glory to God through our ordinary lives. Paul says in 1

*Corinthians 10:31: So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.* I mean could anything be more ordinary than eating and drinking? You know, sometimes we set our sights on living like Christian circus performers rather than ordinary redeemed believers. And we convince ourselves that if God ever asks us to go out and slay dragons for Christ, well we'll go happily but that's not likely to ever happen. See, most of us have little dragons that are very, very ordinary and they're right here at home. Dragons who challenge our notion of what it means to live a life for the glory of God. And we need to understand that while we were living out our ordinary lives, extraordinary things are happening all around us. Angels are watching us. A great crowd of witness surrounds us. And we're as oblivious as those bears were. But when we refuse to live like this world wants us to live and when we take the risk of simply telling someone that Christ is the reason why we live, when we gather for a simple meal and take time to offer up thanks and praise to God for it, we are demonstrating the glory of God in the way we live out these ordinary lives.

See, I opened this message speaking about a different type of seeing. In reality it's not really seeing at all, it's being seen. We call it living your life "coram deo." In Latin that means "under the gaze of God." Everything we do in this life is a reflection of the grace and transforming power of the Spirit of

Christ in us or not. Peter tells us that the prophets for centuries desperately searched the scriptures trying to find out what the big picture was. *They were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven.* We've got our bibles. So many believers died so that we could have the privilege of actually owning a bible, which by the way you can get for a little bit more than a dollar at the dollar store. What a gift. We've been given this big picture. You know, there are countries in the world where one person has a bible and they meet surreptitiously at night and they copy pages by hand and they hand those pages out and they're so incredibly precious to those people because they don't have one at the dollar store. We've got dozens of them. We get to see the big picture. But we also get to realize that now we are part of the big picture. And when we reflect that grace by preaching that gospel with our mouths and with our lives, we can be assured that even angels long to look into that. Let's pray.

*Father, I thank you for the privilege that we've been given. I recognize that sometimes when you've been given so much, it's easy to just overlook it and think of it as no big deal. We have been given a revelation that people have died for, that prophets have searched for intently, desperately seeking to find the answer to*

*why we are who we are, where we are. And yet we have it, we have it all. It's all been given to us in a complete revelation. Father, I thank you for it. I pray you would give us an understanding of how precious it is and an understanding that our lives really are speaking to the rest of this universe about the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Give us the ability to live our lives coram deo, under the gaze of God, aware of the fact that we are in our paddock and creatures we've never met are on tiptoe staring, wanting to get a glimpse of this gospel as worked out through our lives. Give us a sense of that, I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.*