

# Making Plans to Grow in Godliness

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well, our last class today, and there's two things, kind of two directions I would like us to go this morning. One involves a bit of a look back, and by that I mean I want us to review some of the things that we've covered.

We've been ten weeks covering this material, so we're not going to review everything that we've considered. This would be a good time for us to break out into groups and to discuss different things, even the way we're going to do this this morning.

But we'll seek to do it in a large group like this, and even if you don't speak out, at least I trust your mind will be thinking through some of the things that we've covered and see some of the applications of those items in the case that we're going to look at.

So that'll be our look back, but then I also want us to take a look forward. By that I mean looking at when our growth and godliness will be complete.

We're people who need completions. We don't work on something anticipating that there will never be a completion to it. Some event situations we're involved in take a little bit more time before we see the completion of it, and others shorter time, but at least there are completion times, and so it is with our growth and godliness, and we want to take a look at that as well this morning.

[ 1 : 36 ] But let's start with our look back, and for that, I want to use a case study that I'll ask some questions about, and this is a completely fictitious case study.

We haven't changed the name of, in this case, the guilty to protect anybody, so it's just something that Carol made up for us to think about and consider.

So let me first read that through, and then we'll ask some questions. Mary finally found a free day to work on her Sunday school lesson for next Sunday.

This would have been her quarter off from teaching, but Sarah, the other lady's class teacher, had asked her to fill in so she could travel to her nephew's graduation.

Reluctantly, Mary had agreed. I don't think I should have to fill in during my only break from teaching. Why can't the pastor call someone else? Why do I always have to be the one?

[ 2 : 40 ] Sarah's not that close to her nephew anyways. I think she just wanted a week off. After getting her husband off to work, her children off to school, and her morning household chores complete, she was settled at her desk by 9.30.

She struggled gathering her thoughts for the class, and by 10.30, not much progress was made. She dug in, determined not to waste her morning. Her plans were just gathering momentum when her phone rang.

It was a school calling. Johnny had forgotten the notebook he needed with a critical assignment. Could she please bring it right over? The teacher was willing to grant him mercy, as he'd always been responsible in the past.

Oh, that boy, doesn't he think about anyone other than himself? Just when I was making headway, but I can be back in 20 minutes and still have time for the lesson.

Driving out of her neighborhood, she noticed her husband George's car driving toward home.

What's he up to now? He's supposed to be in meetings at office all day.

[ 3 : 49 ] He better not be expecting me to stop my work and get his lunch ready. Well, by the time she returned from school and went into the house, her blood was boiling.

She nearly knocked George over as he was getting some juice out of the refrigerator. Don't expect me to fix your lunch. You told me you would be in meetings all day. I've had nothing but interruptions all morning.

I have to get this Sunday school lesson ready because Sarah had to go see the nephew. She doesn't even like graduate. I feel like everyone expects me to serve them.

With that, she headed for her desk to work on her lesson. Kind of comical at times. I had Carol cut it back because I didn't think I'd be able to read everything else she put in there. But you can see, certainly fictitious, none of us would struggle with something with issues like that. Well, indeed, we do, and Mary was.

[ 4 : 50 ] But let's take a look at this situation and start out with this question. Understanding Mary's a Christian. Being a Christian, what foundational truths or gospel truths will help Mary end up glorifying God and growing in godliness through this situation?

Another way to ask the question, what gospel truths can Mary focus on to gain hope in a biblical response in this situation?

We hear a lot about the gospel and the gospel for our everyday lives. Well, what are some of those truths that Mary can draw on that will help her down this path of glorifying God?

Roger. You're concerned about when anything is Mary, but only one thing is necessary. All right. And what is that? And that is, you know, being focused on doing what the Lord places us on like that day and to do it in a gracious way.

Yeah. So what do we know about God that will give her hope in that situation? The fact that she can handle this situation in a different way than what she has.

[ 6 : 10 ] Dale. The son's little teacher has a need. The son has a need. The husband has a need. And she is there to fulfill. That we are to fulfill the needs of others.

God meets their needs through what? Okay. So something we know of God is God is the one who provides and meets the deepest needs that people have.

And the gospel truth in her life is that he has done that in her life. And so there is a way out. There is a way through this situation. She can be a person of hope because what Jesus Christ has done for her in the gospel, in believing the gospel.

Well, I can keep on preaching here, but I want you to be answering the questions. Karen. I think of the acronym, YANGO, you are not your own. All right. And she belongs to Christ.

And whatever he brings her way, he will provide her with the grace and the strength to fulfill that. All right. There's a couple different things that Karen has mentioned there.

[ 7 : 20 ] You know, she is not her own anymore. I mean, we could look at that as, oh, shucks, I want to be my own. Or we can say that with great rejoicing, praise God that I'm not my own, that Jesus has died on the cross and purchased me and brought me into something else, brought me to himself.

Great riches in the gospel that we can apply in our daily life in situations like this that will help us through them. So let's not leave the gospel and those gospel truths at the door of our salvation, our Christian life, when we first came into relationship with God, with Jesus Christ.

These are truths that we have to keep meditating on and give us hope in situations like this. What else can you draw upon? Yeah, Becky. I think about the fact that Jesus came not to be served, but to serve.

And so, what example of what he's done and not to do as well is just being told to serve? Yeah.

Yeah. And we can think of what's the main way that Jesus served, came and gave his life.

And so, as she looks upon Jesus and the great sacrifice that he did and performed on her behalf, I guess filling in one Sunday isn't that big a deal, would it be?

[ 8 : 53 ] Even if it was for somebody who was going to a graduation of a nephew she didn't even like or know or whatever. But an opportunity to serve like that because her Lord and Master served her in a way far, far, far beyond what she's called to do at this time.

Jim? Something that my wife has to remind me of is that God's not going to give me more than I am. Yeah. I don't want to get stressed to you. Yeah, yeah.

And our next question, we're going to focus on some of those provisions that God has given us four times like this. Somebody else had a hand up as well?

Yeah. I noticed that she kept maybe changing the whole scenario of why the person was not going to be there for the Sunday. So she even started learning about it.

Yeah. And making it even worse. Yeah. Yeah, and when we think of what God has done through Jesus Christ in the gospel, he's brought us out of darkness into his glorious light.

[ 10 : 08 ] We've been saved unto a newness of life. She doesn't have to go back to that old way of handling things. I mean, some of that she's carried with her into this new life in Christ.

You know, she's established a way of thinking in those days prior to knowing Christ and maybe even since coming to know Christ since we live in a fallen world and are exposed to a lot of those ways of thinking.

But she doesn't have to live there in her mind and in her words and in her actions because all that's been accomplished in her salvation in Jesus Christ.

Somebody else. Yes. Thank you, Romans 8, 28. God works all things for the good of those who love him and are called according to his purpose. She meditated on that.

She would know that God is sovereign. He's controlling all these events. There's no accidents.

Everything is happening to bring her and greater and greater and greater. Yeah, all these things that we hold so dear at the time of our salvation, our justification, but sometimes tend to forget at times like this when we also desperately need it when we're being delivered from, say, in practical ways, that power of sin now.

[ 11 : 32 ] And we usually think of those truths as just applying to, well, I've been delivered from the penalty of sin. But now I'm living in the present here with some continuing sin that exists outside of me but also inside of me.

But I've also been delivered from that as well. And as Pastor Gerizzo said, God is sovereign. And we can give thanks to God for that. We don't hold that over our heads and our daily walk as something, oh, great, you know, there's nothing I can do about this.

God is sovereign. God is sovereign. We rejoice in that and in his sovereignty's accomplishing and working out a grand purpose for his glory and for my well-being and my welfare.

So all these truths come into play for Mary and for us as well. Well, good. Now let's consider while she's here and all that God has provided for her, what are some of those provisions that God has made for her growth and godliness in this situation?

What provisions can she draw upon that she can meditate upon that, you know, I'm not here on my own. What has God provided for her successful move through a situation like this or even correcting a situation like this now?

[ 13 : 00 ] Provisions God has made, resources we have in Christ. Karen? Calling out to the Holy Spirit and looking to him to help you and throughout all these situations you never once have called out to God and said, this is beyond me, I need your grace and strength to get through this.

Yeah, a couple things you've mentioned there. The Holy Spirit that's dwelling within us, calling out, prayer that we can go to God and call for help, so a couple resources like that.

What else? resources that she has that she can meditate and even draw upon to move through now this situation to the end glorifying God.

The Word of God. Certainly, we don't want to miss that resource and she has been missing that resource. We don't see that here either to draw upon that and really focus on what is true, what is right, what's really excellent and praiseworthy.

I want to be over here and be a person of peace, but this is the pathway that I travel down for that. And she's not availing herself of that resource of the Word of God and setting her mind on those things that are true and right and good.

[ 14 : 24 ] Other resources? She didn't begin preparing, asking God to help. Yeah, yeah, she could have started right there realizing that, okay, I'm up against something, I'm recognizing a struggle already, there's early warning signals within my heart, within my feelings that I'm experiencing here that I know lead me down this path.

God, help me not to go down that path. So calling upon God for that help. Pastor John? Maybe even asking her husband to pray for her. Yeah.

Yeah, remember, we're growing together in godliness. So many times we want to hide the fact that I'm struggling. It'll show a sign of weakness to somebody else and I don't like to be seen as weak. I like to be seen as someone who has it all together and can go through this myself. I don't need your help, I'm okay. That's not the way God's designed it for us.

We're designed as a body of Christ for that's one of those specific reasons is to, as Pastor John said, call upon each other, listen, I'm struggling, I need your help right now and using that resource.

[ 15 : 41 ] Anything else? Is that all good? Okay, well, we'll keep on going. I mean, other things that she could be focusing on, you've mentioned a number of these, other believers, prayer, counsel, God's counsel for life, the Holy Spirit, and some of these other things that are true, the fact that Jesus is our advocate, you know, she's not having, she has sinned in this situation, she's not having to go to God herself and kind of correct this on her own without an advocate that Jesus Christ, the

righteous one, and so that's a tremendous resource that as we look at Jesus and his present ministry on our behalf, I don't have to sit back here kind of in this, having this pity party of, oh, poor me, you know, I've done this, how am I ever going to make this right?

Well, there are things to make it right, but we have to understand that Jesus has already made it right and is interceding for us on our behalf and making provision, accomplishing everything we need so that we can go and confess our sin to God.

Lots of other things there too. All right, well, Mary in this situation is learning she does have some spiritual enemies working against her growth and godliness and glorifying God.

What are some of the challenges and spiritual enemies quite possibly working and that are involved in this situation to hinder Mary in her endeavor to glorify God?

Yeah, yeah. Yeah, we live in a world that doesn't operate according to God's counsel, counsel that is good for us and leads us down paths of righteousness paths that lead to our peace and joy even when we're in this fallen world.

[ 17 : 44 ] But we still live in a world that has so many different voices speaking to us, information, counsel, that's not according to God's counsel.

And when we take in that counsel and start living by that counsel, then we end up with a Mary who's bumping into her husband, you know, being short with her husband, accusing others who, you know, quite possibly are just going through life without any intention of hurting her, but she's living by this counsel.

And when we live by that counsel, that's when life becomes hard. And eventually, like the foolish man who builds his house upon that kind of sand, life has a way of collapsing.

And that's what's happening to Mary in this situation. Life is becoming harder. The walls of her house that she's tried to build on all this sand is crumbling around her.

and she's feeling the pressure and the weight of that, whereas she could have been one following the principles, the counsel of God, building on a lot of solid rock in this situation, even if it was a situation where the lady was trying to get out of teaching class.

[ 19 : 13 ] Even if it was that, she still could have built on solid rock and had a life that was established, fixed, peaceful, and could have moved through it and transitioned it in good relationship with God, fellowship with God and her husband and her son and even this lady as well as she returns good for what she thought was evil or wrong on behalf of the other person.

So yeah, that worldly thinking. Anything else? Challenges that she's facing, enemies that she's facing. A selfish heart.

Those deceitful desires, remember we dealt with some verses, that one that usually comes to my mind is in 1 Peter 2.11, abstain from fleshly lusts that wage war against your soul.

In Ephesians 4, put off the old self which being corrupted by its deceitful desires. All these things still exist within us.

As I said earlier, we've brought these things with us into this Christian life and they need to be put off certainly but they're still there in Mary and unfortunately she has chosen to live by those deceitful desires to give in to them instead of what the Holy Spirit probably was doing in her life and trying to draw her and lead her in paths of righteousness for God's glory and her welfare as well.

[ 20 : 46 ] All right, we've got to keep going certainly and maybe her own ignorance of what it means to glorify God maybe she doesn't understand some of the things that we've been talking about and someone needs to come alongside her and help her see and understand these truths.

Well, we know Mary didn't respond in a way that glorified God. What thoughts or words or actions could you pick out of this case study that would help you understand and see uh-oh, things aren't going well for Mary here.

She's not going down this path of glorifying God or even if it was you as you take time to reflect back okay, I messed up here, I sinned, what did I say, what did I do, what was my thinking that led me down this path?

What would you pick out from this situation as you see that again? Yes. I see a lot of eyes. Yeah, yeah, a lot of eyes. That would have been a real good indicator to her.

Accusing others of her own sin, doesn't he think of anyone other than himself? Yeah, a lot of assumptions. Don't we go down that path?

[ 22 : 01 ] She didn't talk to any of these other people to learn what was in their hearts. Just out of what's transpiring in her heart, she's drawing conclusions about other people that really are similar

to what she's experiencing.

So she's putting on them what she's not seeing in her own life and what is controlling her. So, those are the kind of thoughts that are taking place.

And what did it lead to outwardly? What do you see outwardly? or hear outwardly in Mary? Kind words to her husband?

So she's lashing out based on her assumptions. Yeah, yeah, lashing out with her words, accusations. I mean, you can see just all the relationships being torn apart.

And unfortunately, she's not seeing it at this point. Or if she is seeing it, she's not caring because there's something bigger that she's wanting in this situation.

[ 23 : 08 ] And it's not the preservation of God's glory and relationship, fellowship with him and with other people, not living in harmony with God and other people at all. I mean, you can see just, and most of us would say this isn't a big deal situation.

She didn't murder anybody. But this is a big deal situation in Mary's life and her relationship with those in her family, those people in her church with God, her creator, her Lord.

Lots of things going on in this situation. Well, how come Mary responded that way? How come we saw these things, these words, and these actions coming from Mary?

It was in her heart. Yeah. So, but who was she blaming? Was she blaming her own sinful heart?

No, she was blaming outer circumstances, other people, interruptions, and this lady that asked her to take the lesson, and now her husband, and now her son.

So all these problems are experiencing are not from within me, it's all your fault. Now, that's an unbiblical conclusion about why we are at where we're at when we're sinning in our daily life.

[ 24 : 27 ] And we learn that from James 1, 12 through 15, it all comes from within. Luke 6, 45 as well, and James 4, 1 through 3.

Well, now, what does biblical repentance look like for Mary? Is there any escape? Is there any way that she can correct this mess that has been made now?

Now, what does biblical repentance look like for Mary? Yeah, confess sin to God and the appropriate people.

Now, her Sunday school, the other teacher knows nothing about it. She doesn't need to go to the other lady and say, listen, when you asked me to do this, I thought this about you and that about you, and the person's eyes are getting bigger.

My word, I didn't know you were such a terrible person. So now you got trouble in the other. No, they didn't know, but God knew, so she's confessing this to God, her wrong heart attitude, wrong loves, etc.

[ 25 : 35 ] But also, she did speak unkindly to her husband, so she needs to go back to her husband as well and confess that to him and ask his forgiveness. And we went over that a while as well.

So, yeah, what else would be involved in biblical repentance for Mary? in order for her to grow in godliness. She needs to go to scripture and get her rightful place of where she is and where God is. And then from there to repent God for putting herself above him and just spending that time repositioning herself at the bottom of the chart.

Yeah. Yeah. And meditating upon that before even going to other people. It's just getting that right relationship established. Yeah. So there's going to be a time.

She needs to spend some time in evaluation. What went on here? What happened? She's calmed down. She's gone back to her husband probably and asked forgiveness. Or even before that she sat down and how did I get to where I'm at here?

[ 26 : 51 ] You know, what did I want so badly that I was willing to speak that way and think that way and act that way? Oh, yeah. And quite possibly, what was it that she wanted so much?

Can you pick out anything quite possibly? We don't know. We're not sitting here talking to Mary so we don't want to be a fool and speak without asking questions. But Mary's not here this morning so what quite possibly could it have been that Mary wanted so badly that she was willing to act this way to get it?

Yeah. Easy day. It's my time to be off. This is my time off. And because I don't get my time off I go on the attack.

She wanted that so big. Is it wrong to have time off? Well, no, it's not. But if it becomes so important to us that we're willing to sin in order to protect it or sin because it was taken from us, then we know it's become something that we love so much that we love more than God and his honor and his

glory.

All right. Well, that's good. There's other things that I would like us to spend time on, but we have to move on. And as Mary continues to evaluate and make some specific plans, we talked about the importance of specific plans for growth and godliness and the importance of putting the plan into practice, persevering in that plan with certainly humble dependence upon God, the indwelling spirit, encouragement, accountability with my brothers and sisters in Christ.

[ 28 : 38 ] Well, as she does that, well, we can expect some progress, some growth in godliness. It might look something like this chart. Not that we have to chart everything, but we're good Americans, we like charts.

And so it might look something like this. And the cross representing, say, the time of her salvation or justification. And at that time, coming to the knowledge of the truth and Christ, no longer suppressing the truth, pushing it away in unrighteous living, but instead receiving the counsel of God with gladness and humble obedience.

And now she's making progress and growing in godliness. She's learning that this is what the human life really is. It's life lived in relationship with my creator and listening to his counsel that I need as his creature and living that out every day, even in a fallen world.

And that's what leads to blessings that was sweet to her at her time of salvation. temptation. But there are times, as we saw in this case study, that temptations do come along.

And she has that, she's at that point where she's got to make that decision. You know, the flesh is in conflict, wrestling against the spirit, the spirit against the flesh.

[ 30 : 09 ] She's sensing that going on inside her. And so she's got to make this choice. Which way am I going to go here? Am I going to give in to the flesh and go down this path of not loving God and eventual sinning that we saw in James chapter 1?

Or am I going to listen to God's counsel and keep in step with the spirit and manifest the fruit of the spirit and continue to make progress and growth in godliness?

And that's kind of the different paths that we take. Well, hopefully, next time she'll take that path of following God's leading in his word.

But there could be other times that she might face trials in life as well that would put her at the place of having to make decision again.

How is she going to respond to the trial? Is the trial going to be a time where it reveals something in her heart? Which would be good. It's good for us to experience the trials, the hard times, because it does reveal quite possibly where we're loving something else more than God.

[ 31 : 17 ] and his counsel. It's a test to our faith, which is much more precious than gold that's refined by fire. So if gold is refined by fire to bring out the purity, why wouldn't God do that as well in our lives and put us in the heat of trial to bring some of that debris to the surface so that we could put it off?

Well, if some of those things are revealed, then we can acknowledge them, confess them, put them off, and replace those with habits, thoughts, words, and actions that are characteristic of true righteousness and holiness in the person of Jesus Christ.

And she can continue to grow in godliness. But then also it might be a way of growing in godliness we learned about was confrontation, biblical confrontation, admonition from brothers and sisters in Christ which is a good thing, which is what we want to do more and more.

And again, if she is a wise person, a wise man will hear and increase in learning, growth and godliness continues. But if she acts like the fool, then she can expect that the way of the transgressor is hard.

Life will be hard again. That's what she was experiencing in this situation. Life became hard. And even during life circumstances that are hard, life doesn't have to be hard for us.

[ 32 : 52 ] We can still be people of peace and rest and the fruit of the spirit in hard circumstances. So all these different things, and there's other things that we could add to this chart, but what we're recognizing is there's continual progress and growth and godliness and leading to an upward progression of growth and godliness that does have a time of completion.

So all that was looking at the past. But the last few minutes that we've got, let's take a look at what's coming in the future. John makes reference to when that transformation into the likeness of Christ will be complete.

and how as we focus on the reality of that event, we're even now, we're motivated to pursue growth in godliness.

So it's not wrong to be heavenly-minded of the future. Some people say you're so heavenly-minded and you're no earthly good here. No, the very opposite is true.

if you are heavenly-minded even in regard to the future eternal, complete redemption, that will make us very good even when we're here on the earth still.

[ 34 : 12 ] And John's letting us see how that is true in 1 John 3, 1 and following. How great is the love the Father has lavished on us that we should be called children of God, and that is what we are.

The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known, but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself just as he is pure. In verse 1, John begins by encouraging us to see or to consider, to think about, and to think much about the love the Father has lavished on us that we should be called children of God.

And that is what we are. You think he wants to get that idea across to us that we're children of God? So we need to understand who we are and who we are as children of God is because God has lavished his love upon us.

God I mean the word is one of those words. I don't even know what the proper grammar of it would be but the word as it's written really gives you the feeling of what it's trying to communicate.

[ 35 : 33 ] It's lavished his love. He has lavished his love upon us. Well he says the world doesn't know us as children of God because they didn't know Christ.

But now we are children of God. And then he moves their attention to the future. He says we don't know all there is to know about what we will be like in heaven as sons of God.

There are some things we just cannot comprehend. God has chosen not to reveal everything of what our existence will be like as children of God in heaven. It's certainly beyond our ability even to comprehend now.

I mean it's going to be a glorious thing. But we just can't comprehend it all. But there is something that we do know.

He says we know that when he appears we shall be like him for we shall see him as he is. When he appears those who are his children have been waiting a long time for a second coming to earth.

[ 36 : 40 ] But just because we've been waiting a long time doesn't mean it isn't going to happen. John isn't writing here with uncertainty about the future.

But with confident expectation that what has been promised will come to pass. So it's not a matter of if it's going to happen.

It's just a matter of he's uncertain about when it's going to happen. It is going to happen. So when he appears and even Paul writes about this in Colossians 3.4 when Christ who is your life appears. It's not well if he does. No it's when he appears. It's going to happen. Then you also will appear with him in glory. And it's even an answer to Jesus' prayer in John 17.24.

He said Father I want those you have given me to be with me where I am and to see my glory. Now it's interesting even as I read that verse thinking about what seeing him results in in 1 John 3 and seeing what Jesus is praying for here.

[ 37 : 56 ] And it's not like well I want them to see me in my glory. Ain't I special? And he is. If there's anybody worth saying that it's Jesus Christ.

but even gave me a picture in the heart of Jesus I want these people to experience what it's like to be like me.

I want them to see me in my glory. And when we see him in his glory we shall be like him which will be the greatest thing that could ever happen to us that we can't imagine what it's like.

We can see it a little bit because when the growth in godliness takes place in our lives it does bring that joy. When we handle a situation properly according to God's counsel it brings joy to our hearts because we've actually lived out the image of God of Christ and when we do that there is a joyfulness to that.

So can you imagine what it will be like when we are actually like him in completion when we see him as he is? That's beyond my comprehension but it's going to happen.

[ 39 : 11 ] I have to finish up here. We shall be like him for we shall see him as he is. Our bodies certainly will take on their glorified form. I have to just move through some of these verses.

Philippians 3.20 and 21 the end of the verse says Paul's reminding them about our citizenship is in heaven. He talks about the time that God will transform our lowly bodies so that they'll be like his glorious body.

So there is that time. We won't wake up in the morning anymore. Oh man, this bone of mine or this leg, Joe, your leg won't be a problem. Even your artificial leg won't be a problem anymore.

But all of that, our bodies will be transformed into his glorious body. But also in character, the Spirit of God has been working in us, moving us from glory to glory while we're here in this world.

So we've got to realize that what the Spirit of God has been doing since we become a Christian will have a completion time. It's not just our physical bodies that will be transformed.

[ 40 : 17 ] Our very character will be transformed. We won't struggle. Mary won't struggle anymore with these issues of heart. And neither will we. It's that which God has predestined to come to pass.

What he's been working to accomplish in those that love him. Romans 8, 28-29. And it's what Jude wrote about in Jude 24. It closes out his letter to him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy.

And that's what's ahead. All this will take place when we see him as he is. Wow. I mean, it's clearly implied here, I think, that when we behold Jesus as he is, there will be a completion of our transformation into the likeness of Christ.

See that correlation? When we see him, we shall be like him. you know, and when I saw that, and even in this verse here, you think, well, what influence does that have on our present growth and godliness?

Well, he says, everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself just as he is pure. If this is what I'm going to be in the future, then why wait? Let's run after it now.

[ 41 : 46 ] God is working to accomplish that. He's given me all the resources that I need to head in this direction now, not just for my eternal state.

So because this is my hope, a very real hope, I'm going to run after it now as well. I'm going to purify myself even as he is pure. I'm going to be in agreement with God and what he's doing in my life and with what the spirit of God is giving me desires to do.

I am really going to make it my hope, my purpose, to run hard after Christlikeness. Well, with this hope of future and complete transformation, when we see Christ in all his glory, with all again the graces that God has provided, with our eyes still fixed on Jesus, I mean, it makes sense now more and more of why God says fix your eyes on Jesus, why Alan Beardmore last Sunday spoke of seeing Jesus, looking on Jesus.

us. We still do that now. If what in the future, looking upon Jesus, brings it to completion, it makes much sense that we would be doing that now here too.

So in very practical ways, while I'm here, I'm looking at my Savior, learning of him, listening to his counsel. And as we do that, we finish the class with the reality that we will grow together in godliness.

[ 43 : 19 ] And that is good. That is a beautiful thing that God has done for us while we're here waiting for the completion of our transformation into the likeness of Christ.

Let's just bow together and thank God for that. Father, this morning, you've been gracious to us, far, far, far beyond what we deserve.

Thank you that you've acted out of who you are as God and not out of what we really deserved as sinful human beings. For what a blessed hope you've given us, Father, to look forward to Jesus coming again, for what we can participate in now in growing together in godliness, that you would be magnified, Christ would be magnified.

We look forward certainly to the day of completion, but until then, we count on and humbly call upon you to make it true of us in our daily walk, in our thoughts, words, and actions, in Jesus' name.

Amen.