

**“Friends Enjoying God”**  
**John 15:1-17 Pt 2**  
**November 1, 2020**  
**Faith Presbyterian Church – Morning Service**  
*Pastor Nicoletti*

We return to the Gospel of John, chapter fifteen.

Last Lord’s Day we looked at verses one through twelve and focused on Jesus’s image of the vine and the branches.

This morning we will look at verses one through seventeen and focus on the second half of the passage.

With that said, we come to John 15:1-17.

Please do listen carefully, for this is God’s word for us this morning.

Jesus said to them:

<sup>15:1</sup>“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. <sup>2</sup>Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. <sup>3</sup>Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. <sup>4</sup>Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. <sup>5</sup>I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. <sup>6</sup>If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. <sup>7</sup>If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. <sup>8</sup>By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. <sup>9</sup>As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. <sup>10</sup>If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. <sup>11</sup>These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

<sup>12</sup>“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. <sup>13</sup>Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. <sup>14</sup>You are my friends if you do what I command you. <sup>15</sup>No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. <sup>16</sup>You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. <sup>17</sup>These things I command you, so that you will love one another.

This is the word of the Lord. (Thanks be to God.)

“All people are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord endures forever.” [1 Peter 1:24-25]

Let’s pray ...

Righteous are you, O Lord,

and righteous are your rules.  
You have appointed your testimonies in righteousness  
and in all faithfulness.  
Your promises are well tried,  
and we, your servants, love them.  
Though we be small and despised,  
yet we do not forget your precepts.  
Your righteousness is righteous forever,  
and your word is true.  
Even when we face trials,  
your commandments are our delight.  
Give us now understanding as we come to your word,  
that we might here find life.  
Grant this, we ask, for Jesus's sake. Amen.  
[Based on Psalm 119:137-138, 140-144]

## **INTRODUCTION**

*“What is the chief end of man?”*  
“Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.”

So begins the Westminster Shorter Catechism, as we discussed last Lord's Day.

Contrary to the claims and assertions of our culture, which tell us again and again that the primary purpose of human life is human happiness, human success, and human comfort, the Bible repeatedly asserts that the true primary purpose of human life is to glorify and enjoy God, both now and for all eternity.

Last Sunday morning we focused on the first half of that: on humanity's calling to glorify God, by bearing fruit in our lives that bring him glory.

To see that, we focused on the first six verses of this passage.

But this week we consider the second half of our text, and with it, the second half of our chief end. For the Bible, and our text this morning, call us not only to glorify God, but also to enjoy him.

## **WHEN ARE WE TO ENJOY GOD?**

Now, on some level we know that.

There are false versions of that of course, and chief among them is the dominant view in our secular culture that we do not exist to serve God, but God exists to serve us.

That is not the view of the Bible. But the Bible doesn't replace that with cold duty. We are to glorify God. But with that, we are also to enjoy him.

We see this again and again in the Bible, so that if we have spent any time in the word of God, we know that this is part of the Christian life.

We are called to enjoy God.

It's there in the catechism. It's found throughout the Scriptures. And yet ... many Christians push this calling aside, to the margins of the Christian life.

What do I mean by that?

Well, when it comes to enjoying God, we tend to fall into what some have called "all-or-nothing thinking." [See Richard Winter for more on this.]

What I mean by this is that we see enjoying God as something that happens in its ideal form, or something that doesn't happen at all.

And so, for many Christians, we know at least that in heaven we will enjoy God perfectly. We know that in the next life we shall stand before God, and we shall truly know him. We know that at that point he will eliminate all sadness, sickness, pain, and death. We know that in heaven we will be without sin, and will perfectly experience God's love for us, and will fully enjoy God, as we were made to do before sin entered the world.

We know that ... we look forward to that.

But as far as enjoying God in this life ... we don't really expect much.

Maybe we or others we know have had moments or even seasons of spiritual elevation – periods where we experience our Christian life from the spiritual mountaintop – where we seem to experience the presence of God and the love of God in an extraordinary way.

We may hear of such experiences, we may have memories of them ourselves, we may long for them ... but we know that they are not the ordinary day-to-day experience of most Christians.

And so ... while we know that part of our calling – that part of our *purpose* – is to enjoy God ... we don't really expect much of it in this life.

We think of enjoying God as an all-or-nothing sort of thing. It either comes in great spiritual peaks, or it is absent. But it's not a part of ordinary Christian life.

### **WE ARE CALLED TO ENJOY GOD NOW BY BEING HIS FRIENDS**

Which is why we should pay attention to the fact that Jesus, in verse eleven, tells us that everything he says to us here is so that our joy may be full in our relationship with him ... but then everything he mentions here is an ordinary aspect of the Christian life here and now.

Jesus says in verse eleven that he is telling his disciples what he's telling them so that they might have joy in him – so that they might enjoy him and their relationship with him. And what he then

talks about is not the extraordinary heights of Christian living ... but ordinary aspects of what it means to be a disciple – things every Christian is to pursue every day of their lives.

Jesus is not talking about how you are to enjoy God in moments of sublime spiritual transcendence. He is talking about how you should enjoy God this afternoon.

And with that in mind, I want to look this morning more closely at what Jesus has to say to us about how we are to enjoy God.

In these verses Jesus gives us four ways we are to enjoy God. These four ways are not exhaustive, but they are what we find here in the second half of our passage this morning.

Here we see that we are to enjoy God by keeping his commands, by contemplating his word, by offering him our counsel, and by accepting his claim on us.

Commands, contemplation, counsel, and claim.

## **I. WE ARE CALLED TO ENJOY GOD BY KEEPING HIS COMMANDMENTS**

So, the first thing we see is that we are called to enjoy God by keeping his commands.

And we see this in verses ten and eleven.

Take a look at those again. Jesus says:

<sup>10</sup>If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. <sup>11</sup>These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

Once again, did you catch the last link in that chain?

Jesus calls us to keep his commands. And he tells us that he has charged us to do that so that his joy may be in us, but also so that our joy may be full.

Obedience, Jesus tells us here, leads to joy. [Carson, 521]

Or, we might say, one key aspect of how we enjoy God is by obeying his commandments.

Now, why is that?

Well, we might mention at least three ways that obeying God is linked to enjoying him.

First of all, our obedience is a sign that we really have embraced the gospel from the heart, that our faith in Christ is real, and that therefore we can be confident of God's love for us, in Jesus Christ.

True faith means a change to our lives. As John Calvin puts it, the gospel "is a doctrine not of the tongue but of life." [Calvin, *Institutes*, III.VI.4] In other words, it is a doctrine we are not only to speak, but to live out.

Second, our obedience to Christ's commandments is a way of living consistently with reality. If God has made all things – both us and the world around us – then when we live according to his commands, we live according to his creational intent for us and for his world. And we enjoy best what he has made when we enjoy his creation as it was meant to be enjoyed. That's a second reason.

But a third reason is that obeying Christ's commandments is part of having a good, loving relationship with him. And it is therefore a way that we enjoy him.

As we do what we know will make Jesus happy, we show our love for him, and because he loves us, he rejoices in the expression of our love. And we rejoice in his joy over our love for him. This is the same dynamic at work in any relationship. Love is expressed in action. Love received causes joy. The joy of the one we love gives us joy. This is true of any relationship – including our relationship to Jesus. [Carson, 521; Augustine, Tractates LXXXII.3; LXXIII.1; LXXIII.3]

And so, our obedience leads to our enjoyment of Christ – our enjoyment of God.

Now, when we hear that, our temptation, I think is to fall right back into another version of that all-or-nothing thinking that we mentioned earlier. We say “Sure – obeying God will lead to enjoying God. I agree. But our obedience is so pathetic in this life, that surely this is more theoretical than actual. Maybe in a season of extraordinary spiritual fervor – a season of special obedience – *then* we might get a glimpse of this joy, but that's all. For the most part, this enjoyment is part of the *next* life. In the ordinary, day-to-day Christian life, it's not a reality for us.”

That is how we are tempted to think. But that falls into the same errors we have already mentioned. Because our text isn't focused on the next life – it is focused on our Christian life right now. Of course perfect obedience and enjoyment of God will not come until perfection. But that doesn't mean that some level of enjoyment through obedience is impossible now. In fact, if such a thing is impossible now, then Jesus is holding out false hope for us – for as we have said, he is speaking here of this life.

But if we fall so far short of the ideal in this life, then how can this be possible?

John Calvin is helpful here – in a passage we considered Friday night, at the Men's Night of Prayer.

First, Calvin reminds us that we are to set the goal before us that we receive from Christ – the goal of righteousness and obedience towards all his commands for us.

“Let that target,” Calvin writes, “be set before our eyes at which we earnestly aim. Let that goal be appointed towards which we should strive and struggle. For it is not lawful for you to divide things with God in such a manner that you undertake part of those things which are enjoined upon you by his Word but omit part, according to your own judgment.”

In other words, we must not pick and choose Christ's commands to us, we must not lessen them – but we must set them all, in their fullness, before us, as our goal.

But Calvin is not done.

In the very next paragraph he continues that no one in this life, he says: “has sufficient strength to press on with due eagerness, and weakness so weighs down the greater number that, with wavering and limping and even creeping along the ground, they move at a feeble rate. Let each one of us, then, proceed according to the measure of his puny capacity and set out upon the journey we have begun. No one shall set out so inauspiciously as not daily to make some headway, though it be slight. Therefore, let us not cease so to act that we may make some unceasing progress in the way of the Lord. And let us not despair of the slightness of our success; for even though attainment may not correspond to desire, when today outstrips yesterday the effort is not lost. Only let us look toward our mark with sincere simplicity and aspire to our goal; not fondly flattering ourselves, nor excusing our own evil deeds, but with continuous effort striving toward this end: that we may surpass ourselves in goodness until we attain to goodness itself. It is this, indeed, which through the whole course of life we seek and follow.” [Calvin, Institutes, III.VI.5]

Calvin tells us that we must both hold up the fullness of what we are called to before us, and look back, *every day* to find encouragement in even the small progress that we are making in obedience – the small progress that the Lord is making in us.

And in this, I think we see better how obeying Christ’s commandments enables us to enjoy God in our ordinary day-to-day Christian lives.

Of course what we long for is the fullness of our obedience – for perfection in our love for God and love for our neighbor.

But in the meantime, we are to move forward as we are able, and even in that there is enjoyment of God.

Calvin shows us how. We are to look back, again and again, month-by-month, week-by-week, day-by-day, for the slight progress we are making in obedience, and to find encouragement, and even joy in it.

Are you struggling in your obedience now? Even as you keep the goal of perfect obedience before you, can you look back at earlier seasons and see how you have grown? Can you see what God has done in you? Can you see his power over that course of time, and in seeing that can you not only be encouraged, but can you rejoice in it? Can you enjoy God’s grace to you in working that work in your life? And can you then look forward with all the more determination to walk in faithfulness?

If this past week your priorities have been all off, can you live this next week, day by day, striving to keep the priorities of the kingdom of God before you? And as you make some progress over last week, can you, at the end of each day, look back, and see that slight progress, and rejoice, enjoying the knowledge that God loves you and is at work in you, and then setting the goal before you again for the next day?

If you have fallen into sin this morning, can you seek to live this afternoon in greater faithfulness? And as you do, can you pause, hour by hour, and maybe even minute by minute, to see the progress of that minute, and rejoice in God’s grace to you?

Sometimes faithfulness is a minute-by-minute effort. But when it is, it is also a minute-by-minute grace – a gift of God and a sign of his love, which we should rejoice in. It is a way for us to enjoy God and enjoy his love for us.

This is the first ordinary way we are called to enjoy our God: by striving to obey his commands to us.

## **II. WE ARE CALLED TO ENJOY GOD BY CONTEMPLATING HIS WORD**

The second ordinary way we are called to enjoy God is by contemplating his word.

We see this in verse seven, where Jesus urges his disciples that his word would abide in them.

And what is that word that is to abide in them?

Well, it includes his commandments, of course.

But it's also more than that.

He says so in verses fourteen and fifteen. There he says:

<sup>14</sup>You are my friends if you do what I command you. <sup>15</sup>No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.

Jesus here says that his followers are his friends. But as he does, we recognize that he is not using the term “friends” as we often do.

Jesus does not have in mind here the kind of mutual friendship of peers that we primarily think of when we use that word. And we see this in verse fourteen. We are to obey Jesus's commands to us. But of course, the opposite is not true – Jesus's friendship with us is not dependent on his obeying our commands.

And as we speak about commands and obedience, this doesn't sound a lot like our modern idea of a peer friendship at all. It sounds like a relationship between a servant and a master. But Jesus is explicitly contrasting our relationship with him to that of a master and a servant. So what, in Jesus's mind, sets us apart from servants?

Well, there are two things, and one of them has to do with his word to us. [Carson, 522-523]

Again, he says in verse fifteen: “No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.”

Jesus reveals his mind to us. He reveals his heart to us. He reveals to us who he is. He tells us about his relationship to God the Father. He shares with us what he has done, what he is doing, and what he will do. He tells us how he feels about us.

In receiving this self-revelation from Jesus, we become like Abraham and like Moses. In the book of Genesis God speaks openly to Abraham about who he is and what he is doing. As a result, the Apostle James, King Jehoshaphat, and God himself all identify Abraham as a friend of God. [James 2:23; 2 Chronicles 20:7; Isaiah 41:8].

We see a similar dynamic with Moses – in Exodus 33:11 we read “The Lord used to speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend.” [Roberts]

Friendship is self-revelation. You reveal your heart and your mind to those you know and love and trust. You reveal yourself to friends. You reveal yourself to trusted family members. You don't feel the same obligation to reveal your mind and heart to your co-workers, or to those you work for, or those who may work under you. Self-revelation is a different category of relationship – it is a form of friendship.

Jesus revealed himself to his apostles face-to-face. But he continues to reveal himself to us now in his word.

And we should treasure that and enjoy it. For it is one of the ways we enjoy him.

One of the ways we enjoy our friend, or our spouse, or our child, or our parent, is to attend to their words as they reveal their hearts and minds to us. In a true friendship, that is not just a duty, but it is often a joy and a way that we enjoy them. In the same way, God's word to us in the Scriptures is not only a duty we are to attend to, but it should be a joy – and a way that we enjoy him.

In the Scriptures God reveals his mind and his heart to us. In the Scriptures he tells us who he is and what he has done. In the Scriptures he tells us what he loves and what he hates. Our calling is to attend his words, to receive them, to contemplate them – to turn them over in our minds ... so that his word abides in us.

And again, we need to avoid all-or-nothing extremes as we think of this. Of course it is wonderful when we have a moment or a season where God's word is especially sweet to us, and in every verse we seem to experience his presence in an extraordinary way. That is wonderful.

But our desire for that should not cause us to discount or discard the ordinary ways we are to enjoy God through his word to us.

In various relationships we may have seasons where we feel especially close – where conversations seem to connect in extraordinary ways. And those are wonderful. But we are to enjoy our loved ones in our ordinary interactions as well. And so it is with God and his word.

How do you need to attend more to God's word, and to approach it as his self-revelation to you? How do you need to attend to it more often? How do you need to attend to it more deeply? How do you need to come to it not only as a duty, but as a way to better know who he is – as a way to better enjoy him?

The second way we see here in this passage that we are to enjoy God, is by receiving and contemplating his word, so that it abides in us.



### **III. WE ARE CALLED TO ENJOY GOD BY OFFERING OUR COUNSEL TO HIM**

The third ordinary way we see in this passage that we are called to enjoy God is by offering our counsel to him.

We see this in a couple places. We see it in verse seven where Jesus says, “If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.”

We see it again in verse sixteen where he says essentially the same thing.

In both cases Jesus here calls on his disciples to make their requests known to God – to give God their counsel on what God should do.

Now, though Jesus states no qualifications on what God will grant, we know from the rest of Jesus’s life and teaching (and the Scriptures as a whole) that such qualifications exist. We won’t get into the details here, but we can say with confidence that Jesus is not promising that God will become our slave and do whatever we ask him, so long as we ask it the right way – that’s not what is in view here.

But what is in view – what Jesus assures us of – is that God will hear and attend to our words spoken to him. We are assured here in Jesus’s words that the prayers we bring to God are taken seriously and considered. And we see in verses fourteen and fifteen that his receiving our words in this way is also associated with us being his friends.

In fact, we said earlier that there are two things in this passage that set us apart as Jesus’s friends and not just his servants. The first was that he reveals his mind and his plans to us. The second, which we see here, is that he calls on us to give him our counsel. And this too is a Biblical concept.

We mentioned Moses and Abraham as two who are identified in the Old Testament as relating to God as friends. Moses, we read, conversed with God face-to-face like a friend. Often this involved God revealing himself and his plans to Moses. But we also know from Exodus and Numbers that many of those interactions involved Moses bringing his counsel to God and even reasoning with God about what God should do with Israel.

And the same was true with Abraham, whom the Bible identifies as a friend of God. In Genesis 18, before destroying Sodom and Gomorrah, God says to himself “Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do?” And God’s answer is no – God decides to reveal his plans to Abraham. But the conversation doesn’t stop there. Because God then allows Abraham to speak his counsel – his advice – to God. In the verses that follow there is a long back-and-forth – what almost feels like a negotiation between Abraham and God, as Abraham counsels the Lord to alter the parameters by which he will apply judgment – and God not only allows Abraham to do that, but he engages in the back-and-forth with him, and in the end he takes Abraham’s advice.

This interaction should seem absolutely bizarre to us, but in fact, it is a reflection of the fact that Abraham was not just a servant of God – he was a friend of God. And true friends are allowed – true friends are expected to speak their counsel into each other’s lives.

Which is part of what it means to be Christ's friend. As theologian Alastair Roberts puts it: "It is a remarkable thing to be described as Christ's friend. A friend is someone who is not just a pal or a buddy – the friend is someone who enters into another's counsel. We're not just servants doing Jesus's bidding from afar, but those who take an active role in shaping things." This is, in fact, what we do in prayer. [Roberts]

And this is an astounding honor. We are not even worthy to stand in God's presence, and yet he asks us to give him our counsel, as he runs all things from his throne in heaven. [Augustine, Tractate LXXXV.1]

We heard last Sunday night in our evening service from Pastor Shiv Muthukumar on prayer. If you were not with us last Sunday night, I encourage you to go to the website and listen to that sermon. It was both convicting and encouraging.

I won't repeat what Pastor Muthukumar shared with us now, but what I want you to see from our text this morning is that part of being God's friend is offering him our counsel – is praying to him and providing our input as to how he should run the world as he sits on the throne of the universe.

And that too is not just a duty we have as Christians – it is a way that we enjoy God.

And it's that way with any of our relationships. Think about it: When a friend asks for our advice on a situation and they really listen to us ... when one of our children comes to us for help with something and they really attend to what we say ... when a parent or someone we look up to, to our surprise, asks *us* what *we* think about a decision they must make, and they really listen to our thoughts – in each of those situations we experience the joy of a right relationship ... a relationship where we are loved and taken seriously. And that is true even if in the end the person we speak to does things differently than we suggested. They may know better than us, after all. But they listened, and they valued our thoughts.

This is a way that we enjoy other people – that we experience their love and find joy in our relationship with them.

And it is also a way we are to enjoy God, and experience his love, and find joy in our relationship with him.

Maybe moments of joy and emotional connection with God in prayer are common for you. If so, that's wonderful. But if not, then you need to know that moments of emotional bliss and special spiritual warmth are not the only ways we are to enjoy God in prayer.

With every prayer we offer, we should have full assurance that God is attending to our word – to our counsel to him. Every time we pray, we should have confidence that, in Christ, God takes our words seriously. Even if in the end his actions in the world will be different from what we ask, we have assurance that he hears us, that he wants our counsel, that he values the thoughts we communicate to him. And knowing that should give us joy – it should be one of the ordinary ways we enjoy God.

So ... the first ordinary way we are called to enjoy God is by keeping his commands.

The second way we are called to enjoy God is by contemplating his word to us.

The third way is by offering our counsel to him.

#### **IV. WE ARE CALLED TO ENJOY GOD BY ACCEPTING HIS CLAIM ON US**

Fourth and finally, we are called to enjoy God by accepting his claim on us.

Hear again verse sixteen – Jesus says to his disciples:

“You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.”

As we hear these callings – to obey God’s commands, to receive and contemplate his word to us, to offer him *our* counsel ... if we have any self-awareness we must quickly realize that we deserve no such role.

Christ may call us to obey his commandments, but we know how much we fail. We know to some extent we will always fail – we will always fall short in this life.

Christ may want to reveal himself to us – but we are far too dull to receive and contemplate his word. The proof of that is that even though every single one of us has access to the word of God, more often than not we neglect it – we leave it closed and set aside. And when we do attend to it, we often find ourselves perplexed and unsure what to do with it.

Christ may ask us to bring our counsel to him, but if we know ourselves, then we know we are not even competent to run our own lives. How on earth could we offer counsel to the Almighty Maker of heaven and earth?

And so we may, in some subtle way try to withdraw from those callings. We can call it a form of meekness or lowliness. We can say that we’re just being modest. We can settle for a mediocre spiritual life of neglecting these very things, and we can call it humility.

But Jesus will have none of that.

These callings are not based on your deserving them. They are not based on your having, in some way, merited them. They’re not even based on your choosing them. You never applied for this role. You were drafted for it. And humility does not withdraw from such an appointment – humility accepts the call, and obeys the commandments of his King.

Jesus says: “You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.”

You were called to bear fruit – to strive to obey the commands of Christ your King. You were called to abide – to receive and internalize the words of your King to you. You were called to offer your counsel to Christ your King – to bring to the Father your requests.

You were called. You were appointed. Of course you're not worthy of the role. Of course you're not up for it. But that's not the point.

The point is that your place with God, and your ability to glorify God and to enjoy him are not rooted in your choice of Christ, but in Christ's choice of you. He has decided to use you in this way. And he is able to bring fruit from you, though you could bear nothing on your own.

He is able to make you to not only glorify God, but to enjoy him.

As Augustine put it to his congregation: "See then, beloved, how it is that He chooses not the good, but makes those whom He has chosen good." [Augustine, *Tractate LXXXVI.3*]

Jesus can enable you to glorify and to enjoy God right here and right now.

And so abandon your all-or-nothing thinking. Abandon your determination to either make it on your own or to give up on your Christian walk. Abandon your insistence that God either give you spiritual bliss or leave you to enjoy the sinful pleasures of this world.

Jesus calls you to follow him. He calls you to glorify him and to enjoy him in all sorts of ordinary, day-to-day ways.

And so, follow him. Cling to him by faith. Strive to obey his commandments. Receive and reflect on his precious words of self-revelation to you. Offer him your feeble prayers, knowing that he takes your counsel seriously. And do it all in the confidence that he has chosen you and appointed you to this role.

In all these ways, enjoy the unmerited favor of Christ your King. Enjoy him now, that you may enjoy him forever.

Amen.

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**This sermon draws on material from:**

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**For more on "all-or-nothing thinking" see:** Richard Winter's book *Perfecting Ourselves to Death: The Pursuit of Excellence and the Perils of Perfection*. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2005.