

Titus 1:4-8 – February 28, 2021

Get Your Affairs in Order

JD Farag

All right, good morning, and welcome to our second service on Sunday mornings. We have two services. The first of which is the Prophecy Update, and then the second is our verse-by-verse study through the Bible. We have completed 2 Timothy and now are in the Book of Titus. We began in Chapter 1 last week, and today we will pick it up in verse 4 and, Lord willing, will make it through to verse 8. That will be our text, and if you don't mind, we're going to get right to it. I'll ask those of you if you are here; if you're able to stand, you can follow along as we read it. If not, where you're seated is fine.

Beginning in verse 4, Chapter 1, Paul, by the Holy Spirit, is writing and says to Titus, "My true son in our common faith, grace, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior. The reason I left you in Crete [verse 5] was that you might put in order what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town as I directed you. An elder [verse 6] must be blameless, faithful to his wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. Since an overseer [verse 7] manages God's household, he must be blameless, not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather, [verse 8] he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined."

Let us pray if you would please join with me. Lord, thank you for Your Word, this portion that we have here before us today in Your Word. Lord, we need for the Holy Spirit at this time to settle our hearts and enable us to focus our attention, give You our undivided attention so there is no distraction that would keep us from hearing what the Spirit would say to us, Your church today. So, Lord, Your servants are listening. Speak, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen and amen. You can be seated, thank you.

After seeking the Lord concerning the text that is before us today, I sensed that He would have me to talk about the matter of getting our affairs in order. I am keenly aware that this sermon title can seemingly sound morbid by virtue of how physicians say to their dying patients when they don't have much time left. But it is my belief that the clarion call for us today, especially with everything that is happening in the world today, is that of putting our spiritual house in order. We don't have much time left, and that is what I want to talk about today.

If you will kindly allow me to, I want to start with a fascinating account recorded in the Old Testament Book of 2 Kings. It is actually in Isaiah 38 as well and even in 2 Chronicles. It's an account concerning Isaiah, the prophet, warning King Hezekiah. It's in verse 1 of 2 Kings Chapter 20, "In those days Hezekiah was sick and near death. And Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amos, went to him and said to him, 'Thus says the Lord. Set your house in order for you shall die and not live.'"

The reason I am starting with this account is because Hezekiah responds to this. He responds to this prophecy by crying out to the Lord, pleading with the Lord for mercy, and the Lord harkens unto the voice of his cry and grants Hezekiah another 15 years of life.

But we read it's not for his sake, but for the sake of Israel, and here is that thing, sadly. He would, during that time, become lifted up in pride, ultimately leading to his fall. But in the end, he did take heed, and he did set his house in order.

Enter our text today where Paul, writing to Titus, explains the reason that he left him there in Crete. It was for the purpose of putting in order what was left unfinished, and specifically by appointing elders in every town as Paul had directed him, and to have them set in order what had seemed to be in a state of disorder. In other words, there was some unfinished business, and Paul is writing to Titus and saying, this is why I left you in Crete. Similar to why he left Timothy in Ephesus, to put in order, there's some unfinished business here, and you need to appoint elders and get in order, set things in order.

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I would suggest that if there was ever a time to set our spiritual houses in order, that time is now while there's still time to do so. It's for this reason that I believe it is apropos to compare the getting one's affairs in order in the physical sense to the spiritual sense. This because in the physical, there are these checklists of financial and legal matters when you know that you don't have much time left. You have to get your affairs in order.

Well, so too, is there a spiritual checklist of sorts as well. This spiritual checklist is actually found in verses 6 through 8 here in Titus Chapter 1. I was able to count a total of 14, and we are going to go through them.

But before we do, I think it is incumbent upon me to first preface them by noting the context in which this was written. We affectionately refer to Titus and Timothy as the pastoral epistles because these are directives, really the qualifications for those that are overseers, those that are deacons, those that are elders, those that are certainly pastors.

When we were in 1 Timothy Chapter 3, we approached it from that aspect, the qualifications for those that serve in the Ministry and it is really a little bit more extensive, even exhaustive in 1 Timothy Chapter 3 than it is here in Titus.

Now again, as I sought the Lord, I really sensed that if we were to approach this again from the perspective of this is what the qualifications are for overseers. You're looking at me and going; this is for you, Pastor. We don't need to be here. We can just leave now, right? Heads bowed, eyes closed, we'll slip out. You are the Pastor; this is what you need and the elders. You should probably have your elders here too and while you're at it, get your deacons here too because these are the qualifications for overseers, and that's fine; we did that in 1 Timothy 3. Thank you for joining us during that teaching.

But I think the Lord has a word for us today in this passage. I think that word is that it is now the time to get our spiritual houses in order because you see the whole point of these quote-unquote "pastoral epistles" was this. If someone doesn't have their house in order, how do you expect them to serve in the church if their house isn't in order? In other words, they're disqualified because they don't have their house in order, their spiritual house in order, and so they are disqualified from serving in or being an overseer in the church.

It's for this reason that I want to take this template, as it were, and superimpose it on our lives as Christians in these last days. In other words, I'd like for us to use this and view this through the lens of getting our affairs in order in our Christian lives.

Thank you, Lord, for reminding me of this as I was thinking about it this last week. Judgment begins in the House of the Lord. Judgment begins in the House of the Lord. This is the clarion call, again, I believe, for us as Christians is to get our house in order, get our affairs in order because there is no more time left.

It's my hope and my prayer that in so doing, we would give the Holy Spirit unfettered access to any deep recess in our hearts that needs to be put in order that needs to be set right. It's not right, and you know it's not right and the Lord has been, not condemning, convicting you in that still, small voice of the Holy Spirit. When the Lord does that, we're prone to just like, blow Him off, shine Him. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

We were talking about this on Thursday night. It has to do with taking responsibility, taking blame for your sin, and calling it sin. Let me explain and expound on it for a moment. I think it is going to be germane to our understanding.

Do you know what we do? We don't call it sin. We call it an issue. I have just this one issue in my life. Really, it's an issue? It sounds so much better, doesn't it? It is kind of like adultery. Oh, don't call it

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that. It was an affair. Oh, it was an affair. No, it was adultery! You've sinned! Yeah, but it is just this one issue, this one... No, it's sin. 1 John 1:9, If we confess our "issues," He is faithful and just to forgive us and cleanse us of all of our "affairs."

See, when you relabel it, and it is no longer sin, how is God going to forgive it and cleanse you of it? We fight the cleansing work of the Holy Spirit, the purifying, sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. It is not like sin is bad because it is forbidden! Sin is forbidden because it is bad. This is a loving, heavenly Father who loves us so much that He wants to spare us of needless consequences and pain and suffering when we sin. He wants us right, whole, holy, as we will see here shortly. Let's jump in:

Number 1: Blameless. This is a word that kind of jams people's gears, crashes people's hard drives, that's, I guess, the up-to-date metaphor. This does not mean sinless. It means having nothing in our lives that the enemy can use to accuse and bring blame and reproach on the Gospel. And even if we're falsely accused or falsely blamed for something for which we are blameless, it won't stick. That is being blameless. You cannot be blamed. You're living your life above reproach.

1 Thessalonians Chapter 5, the Apostle Paul writes in verses 23-24 says, "May God himself, the God of peace sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul, and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

I want you to listen very carefully to verse 24 because this is a game-changer. "The one who calls you is faithful, and He will do it." This is one of those places in God's Word where we would do well to understand where the emphasis is. Do you know how you can change the whole complexion of a verse by way of the emphasis on the words in that verse?

Example: "The one who calls you is faithful, and He will DO it." Okay. "And He will do IT." Okay. Here is what I think it should be. "And HE will do it." Implication: You won't because you can't. He sanctifies you. It's the power of the Holy Spirit to live a holy life.

Early in my Christian life, oh, my goodness, I tried in my own strength, in my own efforts. I would make commitments and promises and vows, oh, God! Just like that too. I put reverb in it, too, because it's more holy that way. I vow to You... It's just like I can almost picture my loving Heavenly Father in heaven going, don't do that again because you are going to do that again.

I mean, isn't it true, especially at the beginning of the year we make those resolutions. What a joke! If you are anything like me, I think it is about January 3rd now where you just blew it. Hey, here's one. I was talking to somebody about this the other day. Boy, the enemy will use this to heap condemnation on you.

You start off well-intentioned: I want to read the whole Bible in a year. You start off, and you are doing great, January 1st. Well, it is New Year's Day, and you've got the day off, why not? That works. January 2nd: You are in a hurry, but okay, I got it. January 3rd: Aggh, and then you get behind. January 7th: Maybe next year, right?

HE will do it. I have heard it this way; it's called the 3-step approach. Step 1: Realize you can't. Step 2: Know HE can. Step 3: Are you ready for it? Wait for it. Let Him. Let Him do it. He doesn't need your help. It is almost like I can hear the Lord say to me, you want to help me? That is adorable.

You know, like when your kids are young, right? They want to help you, hey, Baba, I remember when my boys would say, Baba, can I help you? I'm like; you're so stinking cute, okay, fine. I know I have sentenced myself to about 6-7 hours to undo what they did trying to help me. It was cute, and I got some pictures out of it. It's almost like the Lord's saying, you want to help me? Don't help Me because you are going to get in My way. Let me have thine own way because I am the Lord, and I do it, and even if you wanted to do it, you can't do it anyway. It has to be the Holy Spirit of God that

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sanctifies you through and through and makes your whole spirit, soul, and body to be kept blameless. It is called sanctification.

Number 2: Faithful to his wife. Now some of your translations render it, "the husband of one wife," and this has led to much debate among Bible commentators. It really carries the idea of being a one-woman man, not a womanizer. To me, it speaks to having one's marriage in order, especially in these last days.

I want to draw your attention to if Ephesians 5:21, not 22. Don't turn to verse 22 because 21 comes before verse 22. You know what is in verse 22. I don't have to tell you. "Wives submit to your husbands." There, now you don't have to look it up. I want to talk to you about the verse before that one, verse 21. Oh, guys, they just read it real fast, read it through and they get to verse 22, no, no, not so fast.

Why? Because verse 21, Paul, to the husband and the wife says, "Submit to one another." What? I'm not submitting to her. I'm the man of the house. I wear the pants in the family. Cool. She's going to tell you which pair of pants to wear. This is not supposed to be a teaching on marriage but...

He doesn't just stop there, "Submit to one another." He expounds on it as to why. "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ." When you have a husband and a wife whose marriage is in order, and they are submitting out of reverence to Christ, one to the other? Whoo! That is a wonderful marriage. Marriage can be heaven on earth, or it can be hell on earth, and it need not be the latter.

Now let's talk about children. Why are you responding like that? Listen, believe me, I would love to skip over this one and go on, but we cannot get away with that.

Number 3: Children are not wild and disobedient." Oh, my; oh, dear. Here is the thing, parents, when it comes to having our house in order: One of the things I'm learning as a parent, I don't say I have learned it. That would be disingenuous. I am always learning. You know, before you had children, you were the perfect parent, right? You read all of the books. You're like, man; I've got this. Then your first child is born, and you're like, What! You are throwing the books in the rubbish. You realize I know nothing about parenting, and then the second child comes along, and you realize, I know absolutely nothing about parenting.

But here is one of the things I'm learning about parenting: We as parents must earn the respect of our children. It's something that is earned, and it's sacred, and when we earn the respect of our children, it lends itself to their obedience. Stay with me on this.

I will use myself as an example. I will take one for the team. There have been times in my parenting where I've had to humble myself and go to my children and ask for their forgiveness, and unbeknownst to me at the time, it had such a powerful impact on them from that time on. They often times remind me of that. The reason I had to go to them and ask them to forgive me is because of the fourth one on our checklist.

Number 4: Not overbearing. This has to do with having our house in order with a benevolent leadership, not an overbearing dictatorship. Ephesians 6, you might want to stick around in Ephesians 6. We're going to be there a little bit longer. Verses 1 through 4, Ephesians 6, parents, we love the first part of this until we get to verse 4. That's another verse that we just kind of read over real fast.

Verse 1 says, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord." Yeah! "For this is right." Yes. "Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with a promise." Actually, it's the only of the ten commandments that has any grace. All of the other nine commandments are, "Thou shalt not... In the day that thou-est does-est it, thou shall surely die."

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And then you get to the Fifth Commandment, which my mother and father made me memorize: "Honor thy father and thy mother so that the days upon the land which the Lord they God giveth thee may be long." See, I can still remember all of these years later. Isn't that interesting?

The number 5, the number of grace, the Fifth Commandment is the only commandment that has any grace. What is the promise? Where's the grace? Well, if "You honor your father and mother [verse 3] it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on earth." And don't imagine this as man, if I honor my father and mother I'm going to live to be 180 years old. It has with it the idea of a fulfilling life, a blessed life.

But then there is verse 4. My children memorized this verse. It sounds like yours did too. "Fathers, do not exasperate your children. Instead, bring them up in the training and the instruction of the Lord." The fear and the admonition of the Lord. I'll tell you, sadly, how many times in my frustration did I exasperate my children? I mean, just frustrate them to no end. Well, I am getting really convicted, so we're going to move on to number 5.

Number 5: Not Quick-tempered. Of course, this is convicting too. I am busted on all 14. In fact, I could add to the list of my own. Not quick-tempered - not having a short fuse. This speaks to controlling one's anger. Bringing it under the control of and have it be tempered by the Holy Spirit in how we conduct ourselves.

Getting back to Ephesians, this time in Chapter 4:26-27, this should send chills up and down anyone's spine when it comes to anger. Paul writes, "In your anger, do not sin." Here is why: "Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry and do not give the devil a foothold." Did you catch that? So, let me see if I got this straight. In my anger, I can sin, and in so doing, I basically give the devil an open, blank, signed check to fill in the amount as he wishes. That is what he's saying. I have opened the door. Now Satan has his foot in the door, and my anger opened that door, and now you can write the next chapter in that book.

Number 6: Not given to drunkenness. One whose house is in order is not playing around and partying. Especially now, are you kidding me with everything that is happening in the world? It's been said that the world is not a playground. It is a battleground. The problem is that, and we talked about this Thursday night. This is one of the dangers of abundance and having it too good for too long. You forget the Lord, and you are given over to hedonism and the pursuit of worldly pleasures.

I'm going to tie this one together with Number 7: Not be violent. Now, this speaks to being considerate and gentle, not mean, not abusive in the physical sense certainly. But I would argue even more importantly in the verbal sense, being verbally abusive in the way that you speak to people—having a short fuse, being verbally abusive. I tell you, it does a lot of damage at a time and period in human history when we need to get our house in order.

Listen to what Paul wrote to the church in Rome in Chapter 13. I'll read verses 11 through 14. He says, "And do this, understanding the present time, the hour has already come for you to wake up from your slumber because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is nearly over. The day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh."

If you walk in the Spirit, you won't fulfill the lusts of the flesh. As a young believer, I never could quite wrap my mind around what that really looked like. What does that mean: Walk in the Spirit, and you won't fulfill the lusts of the flesh? Well, the Lord, as He is always so faithful to, really ministered to me what that really means. I see it like this, and I say it like this, and I teach it like this: Be so busy in

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the Spirit that you don't have time for the flesh. You're so full of the Spirit; you don't even have an appetite for the flesh.

The best illustration, if you have a better one, let me know, but this is the one that I have. It's a food illustration. I love food illustrations because I love food. So here is the illustration, right? You invite me over for dinner. Of course, you can't now because of COVID, but let's just say hypothetically for purposes of illustration that you did. On the way over to your home for dinner, I drive by Taco Bell. It is a weakness. I have confessed this... Yeah. The 12-pack of tacos, they have a variety pack, too. And the drive-through so convenient. Of course, when I am on my way to your place, there is nobody in line, so it is kind of like - I hear this voice, "JD..." "Oooh." I give in, and I go through the drive-through, and I wolf-down 12 tacos, a burrito supreme, a chalupa. That is enough. Then I show up at your place, and here you have made this, I mean, unbelievable, magnificent, delicious dinner, and here I am - I am so full. I can't eat another bite, not even if it is a taco.

Do you get where I am going with this? Let's flip it around. I go to your house for dinner, and I have a wonderful dinner. I mean, it was such a blessing, the fellowship, the food, and the fun, and then I drive home, and I drive by Taco Bell. It doesn't have to whisper. It can, JD, hello! I am like, no need. I am full - of the Spirit. I have no appetite for the flesh, not even a temptation. I mean, it is a temptation before; after? No. I am full of the Spirit. I'm walking in the Spirit. I'm living by the Spirit. I am not going to fulfill the Taco Bell flesh if I can just say it like that. You get the point.

That's what Paul is saying here. We have been invited to a dinner, the wedding supper of the Lamb. It's going to be a feast and a celebration! Let's not fill ourselves up - with the things of the world, the fleshly appetites. I'm really still convicted so let's see if we can find something, maybe a little bit of a breather here.

Number 8: Not pursuing dishonest gain. Do you know what this speaks to? It speaks to the integrity of our financial affairs and our attitude towards money. This is a biggie. The late Larry Burkett, the founder of Christian Financial Concepts, used to say it like this, "You can tell a person's spiritual condition by the way they handle money." Money is a spiritual barometer. The way your attitude is toward money, the way you handle money says a lot about you.

1 Timothy Chapter 6, it's one of the most misquoted verses in all of the Bible. I want to read beginning in verse 6 through verse 10. Paul says, "Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out." True dat! [That's true!] That it's not in the original. That's in the JDV. "And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition."

Verse 10, here it is, "For the love of money [not money, the love of money] is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."

I think about this with what is going on in the world right now, and we like to say it like, hey, it is all going to burn. You cannot take it with you. What is it about us that doesn't actually believe that and live like that? You would think that somehow, we are going to be able to accumulate and take with us that which we accumulate here on earth. It means nothing. It means nothing.

How many people on their deathbed, having amassed great amounts of wealth, would gladly give it all away because it can do nothing for them? "What shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world but loses his own soul?" Again, money is not evil. It is the love of money. Money is amoral. It can be used for immoral purposes, and it can be used for moral purposes. But the thing with money is if you love it and pursue it and accumulate it, it can destroy your life. It can destroy your life.

I am going to package the last six on this list together, and I think you will see why here in a moment.

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Number 9: Must be hospitable. This carries with it the idea of being friendly and inviting to foreigners and strangers.

Number 10: Love what is good. This is loving what is good and of God and not loving the things of this world. There is a constant tension this side of heaven between the world: Being in it - but not of it. The pull from it, the attraction in it, because we deal with the big 3, right? The world, the flesh, and the devil, and sometimes the things of this world can be very enticing. Again, there is nothing wrong with having things in this world. It is not what you have. It is what has you. We are in the world; we are not of the world. But we are not to love the world or the things in the world because if we love the world and the things in the world.

The Apostle John, by the Holy Spirit, says, "The love of the Father is not in us." James, oh, my goodness, he is just... he is so not gracious at all in the way he deals with this issue, and you cannot blame the guy. I mean, this was the half-stepbrother of the Savior of mankind, Jesus, born to Joseph and Mary. Can you imagine that - growing up in a household where your half-brother was God and perfect? I mean, I would be like James too. He pulls no punches. He just tells it like it is.

Do you know what he says about being friends with the world, loving the things in the world? He says you are an enemy of God! How about that? Boy, that will preach, huh? Of course, people won't come back. I want a "feel good" sermon. I am not talking about you, of course. Tell me what I want to hear, not what I need to hear.

No, we need to hear this. You love the world, do you? You are committing spiritual adultery! How about that? You love the world; you are friends with the world. Beware when all men speak well of you. You are too comfortable with the world, the things of the world. You are a "Dead Duck with a capital Dead and a capital Duck, too. You are a sitting duck, too for the enemy. Ask Peter, by the way. He got a little bit too comfortable warming himself by the fire of the enemy, and he denied the Lord.

Number 11: Self-controlled: This has the idea of being sober-minded and taking seriously the things of God. This by no means, means we don't have a sense of humor. If that was the case, I would just leave now. Because God's got a sense of humor, doesn't He? But there is a time to be serious and sober-minded, take seriously the things of God.

Number 12. Upright. Again, by way of a reminder, this is a spiritual checklist to allow the Holy Spirit unfettered access to that recess in our hearts to search our hearts and see if there be any wicked way in us, anything that needs to be set right and put in order. Such is the case with this one, upright. Do you know with this means being just and right in our dealings with people, doing the right thing because it's the right thing. That's being upright. That is walking in integrity.

Number 13: Holy. This one is kind of like blamelessness is misunderstood. If you are anything like me, and I suspect that you are, whenever you read verses about holiness, particularly where God says, "Be ye holy as I am holy." I have to be holy like... How am I going to do that? You're not. The Holy Spirit is going to do it. I know it is deeply profound: Holy life/Holy Spirit. Let me try that again. Right? The Holy Spirit in you enables you and empowers you to live a holy life. Do you know how I see holiness? I see it as whole-ness, full-ness. Not half-ness; full, whole, made whole, made holy. It's the work of the Holy Spirit because "Faithful is He who began that work to complete it."

Number 14, the last one: Self-disciplined. I mean self-explanatory, right? No? Self-disciplined? We talked in the first service in the Prophecy Update about being self-deceived. Do you know what being self-deceived is? It's being deceived by yourself. Again, I know, deeply profound. In other words, you can deceive yourself and become self-deceived so much so that you believe your own lies - self-deceived. Well, on the other side of that is self-disciplined. You can also discipline yourself.

If you can deceive yourself, you can discipline yourself. Wait a minute. I am not a very disciplined individual because I tried to read the whole Bible in a year, and I made it to January 2nd. I don't have

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that discipline, right? So how am I going to do that? I am so glad you asked. Answer: You're not; the Holy Spirit is.

Galatians Chapter 5, we know it well. I am going to read verses 22-23. "But the fruit [hang onto that word] the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control." That sums it up. "Against such there is no law."

Okay, stay with me. Let's talk about this. This is not the gift or gifts of the Holy Spirit. That is something entirely different. Because a gift is something that you are given, that you receive, and you got it! It is not a gift. I wish it were because it is a done deal. A gift? I got it. I wish it was a gift of love. God, I need to be more loving. Here's the gift of love. Ah, thank you, Lord.

I'll go down the list. Joy, I need the gift of joy. It is not a gift. It is a fruit. Do you know the thing with fruits? They take a long time to grow. Years ago, this was on the mainland, and we had just bought our house. We had this big backyard and this fence. It was just the fence and the yard, and I thought we need to plant some shrubs.

I don't know if you know what arborvitaes are. We don't have them around these parts, but they're just a shrub. They create a hedge. It was kind of a bigger lot. I will never forget this. It is like it was yesterday. We planted 53 of "them things." We bought 53 of "them things," and I had a brother in Christ, a friend of mine, help me plant them. That was my first mistake. I couldn't afford to have somebody do it, so I bought them, and there we go to plant them. They're less expensive when they are smaller, right, because if you buy the bigger ones, you pay through the nose for those things.

We could not afford it, so we bought the little baby, little itzy-bitsy arborvitaes. All 53 of them, and we planted them. After they were planted, I stood there in my backyard, and I am looking at these things going. They are really small. I wish they would grow faster, so I went out, and I bought Miracle-Gro. I did. I bought lots of it actually. You know, I don't follow directions. Come on, guys, right? We don't follow directions. On the back, it says for this amount, you use this amount, and you go, no, I am going to double it. Oh, man, God has protected me from me so many times! So here I am spraying this Miracle-Gro on them and watering them, and I am yelling at them, grow already!

Years later, we move here. I happened upon photos of our house on the mainland for sale. This was when it was sold the next time. It had pictures of the backyard and my arborvitaes were like 15, 20 feet high! Of course, it was 20 years later.

You see where I am going with this. I will try not to be too silly in my illustration here, but you get the point, right? It comes with time as you grow in grace and mature in Christ. Would you agree with me, for those of you that have been walking with the Lord for any length or period of time, maybe some for over 20 years, 30 years, and you look back... Don't do that too much because it is so disheartening, right? Man, I was horrible. Yes, you were.

But you have matured spiritually, and now the fruit has grown. You're more loving; you're kinder. How about this one: You are more p-a-a, patient. I don't care how much Miracle-Gro you buy for that one. That one goes really slow. It's kind of like that prayer, Lord, give me patience and give it to me, now! It's fruit that grows, and it is the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

I would just encourage you in closing. Again, allow the Lord to search your heart, search the areas of your Christian life that need to be set in order because now is the time to do it. Get your affairs in order. The Lord is coming back, and it is sooner than any of us, myself included, can even begin to realize.

We will have the worship team come up. Please stand, and we will close in prayer. Loving Heavenly Father, we readily admit and humbly confess that it is impossible for us, absent the Holy Spirit in our lives. So, Lord, I suppose our prayer is, and rightfully so, fill us afresh and baptize us anew in the

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Get Your Affairs in Order

JD Farag

power of the Holy Spirit because, Lord, we want to be numbered amongst those of whom it can be said, their house is in order.

Lord, we know there is not much time left. There are areas in our Christian lives that need to be set right, perhaps relationships that need to be made right. Relationships where we think of ourselves being the ones being wronged when in fact, we are the ones who have wronged, and it needs to be set right.

Lord, I thank You that the Holy Spirit convicts and that there is no condemnation for those of us that are in Christ Jesus. I thank You for the still, small voice of the conviction of the Holy Spirit, just putting Your finger on that area and just ever so gently and lovingly saying, I want to remove that. It's taken up residence in your Christian life, and it's hurting you. It's harming you. Truth be known, it is destroying you. Maybe it is a root of bitterness that has been germinating and sprouting, and it's bearing up bitter fruit. Lord, we need the Holy Spirit to be able to set that right.

Lord, thank you for the Holy Spirit. In Jesus' name. Amen.