Meet Your Maker
The Great White Throne
Troy Knight

Key Scripture:
Revelation 20:11–15 (NLT)
11 And I saw a great white throne and the one sitting on it. The earth and sky fled from his presence, but they found no place to hide. 12 I saw the dead, both great and small, standing before God's throne. And the books were opened, including the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to what they had done, as recorded in the books. 13 The sea gave up its dead, and death and the grave gave up their dead. And all were judged according to their deeds. 14 Then death and the grave were thrown into the lake of fire. This lake of fire is the second death. 15 And anyone whose name was not found recorded in the Book of Life was thrown into the lake of fire.

1 Corinthians 3:10–14 (NLT)
10 Because of God's grace to me, I have laid the foundation like an expert builder. Now others are building on it. But whoever is building on this foundation must be very careful. 11 For no one can lay any foundation other than the one we already have—Jesus Christ.
12 Anyone who builds on that foundation may use a variety of materials—gold, silver, jewels, wood, hay, or straw. 13 But on the judgment day, fire will reveal what kind of work each builder has done. The fire will show if a person's work has any value. 14 If the work survives, that builder will receive a reward.

Matthew 25:24-30 (NLT)
24 "Then the servant with the one bag of silver came and said, 'Master, I knew you were a harsh man, harvesting crops you didn't plant and gathering crops you didn't cultivate. 25 I was afraid I would lose your money, so I hid it in the earth. Look, here is your money back.'
26 "But the master replied, 'You wicked and lazy servant! If you knew I harvested crops I didn't plant and gathered crops I didn't cultivate,
27 why didn't you deposit my money in the bank? At least I could have gotten some interest on it.' 28 "Then he ordered, 'Take the money from this servant, and give it to the one with the ten bags of silver. 29 To those who use well what they are given, even more will be given, and they will have an abundance. But from those who do nothing, even what little they have will be taken away. 30 Now throw this useless servant into outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

TALK IT OVER

Start talking. Find a conversation starter for your group.

- Pastor Troy reminded us that God wired us for a specific purpose. What is one spiritual goal you are hoping to achieve or an area you want to grow in this semester?

Start sharing. These questions are to help get your group thinking and to create openness.

- Why do the earth and sky flee from Jesus on the Great White Throne in **Revelation 20:11-15**? How does this image impact our view of Jesus?

- What distinguishes the "Books of Deeds" from the singular "Book of Life"? Why is impossible for anyone to enter heaven based on their own works?

- How does an already burned match explain why believers skip the Great White Throne judgment? In what specific ways does Jesus absorbing your punishment free you from spiritual guilt?

- According to **1 Corinthians 3:10-14**, how does God evaluate our motives and "building materials? How can we evaluate if our work has any eternal value?

- What drove the wicked servant in **Matthew 25:24-30** to hide his master's silver? Why is spiritual "retirement" unbiblical, and how can you actively build God's church today?

- How do worldly pleasures keep people from fully surrendering to Jesus? What steps can you take today to stop "waiting to live" and experience true peace in Christ?

Start doing. Commit to a step and live it out this week.

- Identify one talent or resource you are hiding like the wicked servant. Commit to investing it in God's kingdom this week by actively serving, giving, or praying for others.

Start praying. Be bold and pray with power.

- Father, thank You for being both perfectly just and gracious. Thank You for Jesus, who took our punishment so our names could be in the Book of Life. Give us a bold passion to fully commit our lives to Your kingdom. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Part 2: Devotional

Born Twice, Die Once

In his message this weekend, Pastor Troy highlighted a profound spiritual reality regarding our eternal destinies: you either get to be born twice and die once, or you are born once and will die twice. This concept is rooted in Jesus' teaching in John 3 and the sobering reality of Revelation 20.

1. The Necessity of the Second Birth In John 3, a highly respected religious leader named Nicodemus came to Jesus under the cover of night. Nicodemus had dedicated his entire life to keeping the rules, but Jesus told him plainly, *"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God"* (John 3:3). Physical birth—being "born once"—is not enough to inherit eternal life. Because we inherit a corrupted, sinful nature, we must experience a spiritual rebirth. When you place your faith in Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit regenerates your heart. You are "born twice".

2. The Reality of the Second Death If a person rejects the grace of Jesus Christ and insists on standing before God based on their own "Books of Deeds," they will face the Great White Throne Judgment (Revelation 20:11-15). Because every human falls short of God's perfect, holy standard, strict justice demands payment for sin. Revelation 20:14 identifies the lake of fire as the "second death". Those who refuse to be born spiritually will die a physical death on earth, and then tragically face this eternal, spiritual separation from God. They are born once, and die twice.

3. The Promise of the Burned Match Why don't believers face the second death? As Pastor Troy explained using the analogy of a burned match or a controlled forest fire, fire cannot pass where fire has already been. Jesus Christ absorbed the blazing wrath and judgment of God on the cross on our behalf. Because our sin was judged in Christ, we are forever shielded from the Great White Throne Judgment. Our names are permanently recorded in the Lamb's Book of Life.

Reflection: Have you fully surrendered your life to Jesus to experience the "second birth," or are you still relying on your own good deeds? How does the terrifying reality of the second death compel you to share the grace of God with those around you?