



## **Useful to the Lord – Part 5**

### **Ultimate Realities**

**Pastor Mike Fabarez**

It was the Minnesota Vikings against the San Francisco 49ers. The crowd was on their feet, they were yelling, they were cheering. Minnesota's Jim Marshall had outrun everyone for 66 yards after scooping up a fumble. Bruce Bosley was the first to congratulate Marshall when he crossed the goal line and the crowd was erupting. They loved it. The problem with this happy scene was that the Minnesota Viking's Jim Marshall was in the wrong end zone. Bruce was congratulating him because he played for the 49ers and the crowd was happy because they were playing in San Francisco. It was the most humiliating play of Jim Marshall's career. He talked about it. At first, he didn't talk about it for a long time, but then he talked about it in retirement. What a horrible thing it was.

No one wants to score points for the other team. But sadly, in fact, there are several, well-taught, well-meaning Christians who without home-field advantage, with the world cheering on and demonic forces, of course, very happy about it, we are scoring points for the other team. We're doing it sometimes unsuspectingly with not even knowing it. Sometimes we think we're really moving the ball down the field in situations where we're talking about God and we're talking about the Bible and we're talking about Jesus, and we think, well, this is a good thing. When in fact it is, it's really moving the ball in the other direction.

It happens in a subtle way, and I want to show you how by turning you to Second Corinthians Chapter 5. It's happening in a way that you wouldn't think it would happen because we're there thinking I finally get an opportunity to speak about my Christianity to an onlooking world. I'm applying what the pastor keeps talking about in the book of Acts, I'm being a witness to Christ. I'm sharing truth about God with people. And while in many cases it might percolate, it might have some effect down the road, the immediate effect often is a failure. It actually gives non-Christians reasons not to believe it. It has something to do with the manner in which we share this information. Now this is hard for us because sometimes in our fear and our anxiety just to open our mouths about Christ, you know, we consider it a win.

But I want you to look at this passage because I've often referred to it in this series. This is, you know, several sermons into Chapter 13, and we've been talking about being useful to the Lord and we want to be as useful to the Lord as we possibly can. To be useful to the Lord we need to be bold in representing Christ the way that Paul here in this passage was, and we learned so much on his first missionary journey about that. We're in the middle of his sermon in the city in Antioch, modern-day Turkey, hundreds of miles away from his hometown, 300 miles and almost 900 miles away from Jerusalem, where the Church started.

He's representing Christ and I've often enlisted this passage, at least a reference to it, an allusion to it by using the word ambassadors. He was an ambassador of Christ. I want you to be an ambassador of Christ. We talk often about being ambassadors of Christ. But I want to show you the context in which this is put. Because it's not just speaking up about Christ, it's much more than that. If you know this passage you might already be there, in verse 20 is



where we see the word used. It's a powerful metaphor, but if you're thinking of a man with a tie in a white shirt on in some kind of diplomatic discussion with someone, that's not the idea.

And that's cleared up even in the rest of the verse. Verse 20, "Therefore, we are ambassadors," this is Second Corinthians 5 verse 20. "We are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us." Even that's a bit of a strong word, but it gets real strong here. Underline this. "We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God." That word implore is a word that is used for someone begging God for something. I mean, when you just feel desperate in your life, something bad has happened, you're in a crisis and you're crying out to God. It's often used in that vertical direction that someone is pleading with God in prayer, they're begging God. Well, here it's used in a lateral sense, a horizontal sense that I'm speaking to someone else on behalf of Christ. I'm representing Christ, and I'm begging them.

Now most people don't want to see our evangelism as someone begging someone to do something. But that's how this passage begins. Look, all the way back up where you see this ministry of reconciliation discussion begin, if you got an English Standard Version, it's got a heading on it there up at the top of this passage in verse 11. We have a ministry of reconciliation. We're saying be reconciled to God. I have that message. I've been entrusted with that message. Well, it starts this way, verse 11, "Therefore, knowing the fear of God," knowing the fear of God. I understand the fear of God and to put it in the words of Hebrews, "What a fearful thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God." Well, if you're a perfect person, I suppose that's not a fearful thing. But if you are a sinful person, that's a horrifying thing.

To think that me as a sinner before a holy and perfect God, it's just terrifying, even if I'm the best guy in Israel, like Isaiah representing God, I can have a vision of God in Isaiah 6, and immediately start thinking about what a terrible person I am in terms of what I even say. "I'm a man of unclean lips." I mean, you are going to see clearly your own sin and to be terrified and know I need what's about to happen in that Isaiah passage. I need atonement. I need forgiveness. Knowing the fear of God, I've got to get this message of reconciliation that thankfully is available, that Christ has died for sinners. And so look at this word, it says, So what do we do? "We persuade others."

I mean just put that together with the word implore. I'm begging, I'm imploring, I'm beseeching, I'm earnestly asking, I'm trying to persuade you and convince you and talk you into this. Now, if you have very buttoned-up theology, I hope that you do, you can immediately enlist that to try and blunt the force of what I'm saying. You may be saying, "It's not about us. Come on. I'm not trying to talk anybody into this. I certainly don't want to scare anyone into this. I don't want to talk about the fear of God. I don't want to go into evangelism thinking about I'm afraid about the fact that God might cast this person to hell. I don't want to think that way. And I certainly want to think that it depends on my argumentation or my persuasion. I don't want to have to sit here and beg anyone to follow."

OK, well, your theology may be absolutely right, but you cannot use good theology in a bad way. You cannot use theological truths in unbiblical ways, and if you're using your theology to



say, well, it's all about God, born of God, "but not by the will of men, but the will of God," you're quoting John 1. All I'm saying is that's fantastic, but it does not negate the means by which God has established to accomplish the saving of the lost. Oh, if you're going to say he's going to save the lost with or without me. Well, then you sound like the church that was not engaged in missionary work. That you had to have the William Carey, the father of modern missions, argue with a bunch of pastors and theologians who said, "You know, if God wants people in a faraway place to be saved, he's going to save them. He doesn't need us to do it."

They had good theology. They were employing good theology in bad ways. They were using biblical truth in unbiblical ways. And thankfully, William Carey did not listen to them. And he said, "No, I can affirm good theology about God saving people, but I also have to enlist my life the way he's enlisting the means in Scripture to say we've got ambassadors who are imploring and begging people to be saved and they're persuading people, they're engaged in persuasion. Matter of fact, that persuasion may seem so urgent and concerning that if I really understand the fear of God and I want to see people saved because God wants to see people saved it might even be like verse 13, it's like I'm beside myself. That's an old phrase, an old idiom for saying, "I feel like I'm crazy." It's just crazy.

And you might act crazy if you're in a situation where you wake someone up in the middle of their sleep, and whether they're in a cabin on a sinking ship or in an apartment building in a burning fire, you're going to act like you're insane. It's like, "Why are you disturbing my rest?" Well, because if you don't get up and get out, you're in big trouble. You're going to burn. You're going to drown. This is a critical issue. If we're beside ourselves, it's for God. Now, but if we calm down and make this clear, if we rationally explain this, if we can get this in terms that you can understand it, well, then if we're in our right mind, it's for you.

We are so enamored with the truth of the gospel. Verse 14, "The Love of Christ controls us, because we know that Christ died for people" so they don't have to go to hell. We care about that. We care deeply about that, enough to implore and beg people, enough to persuade people, enough to be able to say, "I love Christ enough and the provision of forgiveness that I want other people to get it and I want them to see it and I want to do all I can to get them to see it." And if your theology keeps you from that kind of passionate concern for lost people, then I'd say your theology is being used in an unbiblical way and it's time for us to repent.

Because here's the deal, the manner in which I share the gospel can actually make it easy for non-Christians to not believe it. If I'm not enthralled with the truth of the gospel, if I don't really see the urgency of Christ and what he did on a cross. If I don't see that these are huge issues about the most important person who could ever exist, the creator of heaven and earth, if these aren't things that really enamored my thinking, then I'm pitching this like I'm trying to get someone to sign up for Amway, right? Or to sell oils or something, right? I'm sorry. My concern for my economic advantage should not somehow outweigh my persuasion or my appeal about people getting right with the living God. I've got to have more concern for people than that. I got to have more love for Christ than that. I've got to know that my ambassadorship is not a diplomacy. Sometimes my ambassadorship makes me look like I'm



crazy and beside myself. Because I care about God and the message that he's entrusted to me, a message of reconciliation.

I'd like to see, verse 17, just to pick a few verses out of this passage that are so good. "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he's a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come." I want to hear that. I want to see that. I want more people who don't have a story about that transformation in their life of being God's adopted child with their sins expiated and forgiven and wiped out and canceled on a cross, I want them to have that message. We sat here yesterday in this room with men up on this platform. Three of them shared their testimony. And it's so exciting to hear what God has done. We're seeing people in all kinds of ministries in this church who have been exposed to Christians in our congregation who have an ambassadorship that are passionate about it, that they share the gospel. Not in a way that makes it easy to not believe, but at least to say, "Well, I may not think that this is the message I need right now, but that guy certainly is serious and passionate about it." I mean, that gal seems like she's all about this, and it seems like the most important thing in her life.

You can't be an ancillary concern, like trying to get, you know, why don't you join this club? It's not a small thing to appeal to someone to be reconciled to God. "God gave us," verse 18, "the ministry of reconciliation." We should feel the onus of that responsibility, "That is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them." What an amazing thing, what a loving thing that was. And he was "entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ." But it's not a calm thing, it's not an easy thing, it's not a thing that we don't just somehow dispassionately talk about. "God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God."

Most non-Christians struggle to believe the message of the gospel. Sometimes it's for the sake of the principles and truths of the gospel, but sometimes it's our fault because our compelling and captivating message is not compelling or captivating us. We don't have that burden. When Paul was willing to risk everything to walk into a synagogue in the city in Antioch and share the gospel knowing he could be run out of town, which in fact, if you know the passage in Acts 13, that's where we're headed. He's going to get run out of town. He risked a lot to be a spokesperson and ambassador, a representative to beg and plead and try and persuade people to be right with the living God because they did not recognize the supremacy of Christ, and he was trying to get them to see that.

In the middle of his sermon, we saw the first section of it last time we were together and we saw all of this Old Testament run-up to Christ. And we started with the fathers, the patriarchs. These imperfect previews, we said. We had the conquest. We had Moses first. After that, I suppose we had the fathers, we had Moses, the redemption out of Egypt. We had the conquest with Joshua. We had this picture of Samuel coming along and then the judges, or the judges and then Samuel. Samuel capped that off by putting Saul in place and then David. All these things were all looking forward to something.



Matter of fact, let's pick it up back where we were last time, that transitional verse in our text in Acts Chapter 13 verse 23 when he says, "Of this man's offspring," that's David, "God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus, as he promised." What kind of a Savior and deliverer is that? He talked about all these deliverers in the Old Testament. Well, we said those are imperfect previews. All of them were flawed. All of them could not accomplish really what God needed to accomplish, it was not just some kind of geopolitical safety or some kind of deliverance from an army or some threat of death. It had to do with the second death, it had to do with us being cast out of God's presence because of our sin. We need forgiveness. We need redemption. We need to be right with the living God.

Well, "Before his coming," at least onto the public scene, "John" was out there and he "had proclaimed," verse 24, "a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. And as John was finishing his course," John the Baptist, "he said, 'What do you suppose that I am?'" You got all this, you're wondering and scratching your head, is this the Messiah? "I am not he." I'm not the Messiah. "No, but behold, after me one is coming, the sandals of whose feet I'm not worthy to untie." That's a huge statement, especially because everyone revered John the Baptist. They were afraid, even Herod was afraid to mess with John the Baptist. He ended up doing it because he got tricked into it. After saying, you know what? The real and ultimate deliverer has come, he says in verse 26 to these people sitting in the synagogue, "Brothers, sons of the family of Abraham, and those among you who fear God," some Gentiles here who fear God in this synagogue on the Sabbath day, "to us has been sent the message of this salvation."

This is big. He's not now going to talk about how to overcome the heavy hand of taxation of Rome upon these Jewish people in this, you know, Roman settlement. No, we're not talking about politics. We're not talking about finance. We're not talking about economics. We're not talking about the stock market. The salvation we need is much bigger, much deeper than that. Something ultimate. He says, "For those who live in Jerusalem and their rulers," verse 27. Which, by the way, again, if you took the Roman roads it's 875 miles away. So we're way far away from this, but he says, they're way down there, right?

"Those who live in Jerusalem and their rulers, because they did not recognize him nor understand the utterances of the prophets, which they read in the Sabbath, they fulfilled them," fulfilled the Scripture, "by condemning him." All those leaders, they put him to death. Right? "They found in him no guilt worthy of death." They put him before the Sanhedrin, and they couldn't come up with anything but a few trumped-up charges that they made up. "But they asked Pilate to have him executed." Verse 29, "And when they carried out all that was written of him," including a beating, having his back whipped, having a crown of thorns put on his head, being hoisted up on a Roman execution rack, they had Pilate execute him there, "Then they took him down off that," stake, off that "tree," off that cross, "and laid him in a tomb. But God raised him from the dead."

So this is something ultimate, this is something big, this is something beyond just, hey, you did your thing in this generation. This is something about immortality. This is something about God himself solving a problem. "And for many days he appeared to those who had come up



from Galilee to Jerusalem who are now his witnesses to the people." So many of them being faithful to the call to be his representatives, having seen the risen Christ for 40 days, appearing to many of them, sometimes, as Paul said later, 500 at one time. All this talk of Israel's savior in verse 23 is contrasted with all that stood before it in the Old Testament, all the imperfect previews. And now we have this one that is transcendentally superior, this one that is in a league by himself.

All the rest of the Scripture makes that clear, but you can see it progressing here, even when you get to John the Baptist, we call him, who is out there baptizing, preaching that people would repent. I will say this about him that Jesus comes on the scene and tells everyone, this is the greatest Old Testament prophet. Oh, I know we're in the pages of the New Testament, but this is the greatest of the prophets because he's here introducing as Malachi said he's bringing in, preparing a way for the Lord, the Lord, Yahweh of the Old Testament, taking on human form and living among us. So John the Baptist is the "greatest of those born of women." Here's how Jesus put it, "None greater than John."

And yet, John, as you remember, says it's not only quoted here, but later, as it's recorded in the gospels, he says, "Listen, I'm not even worthy to take his sandals off. I couldn't even stoop down and untie his sandals. I mean, that's how much greater he is than me." The infinite in a category by yourself kind of superiority of Christ is poetically stated with that, "I would be unworthy to take off his sandals." So Christ is the greatest. That's the picture. Christ is the ultimate deliverer. Christ has a kind of deliverance that is greater than anything. To be really enamored with the message, to be really enthralled with the gospel that really starts with you being enamored and enthralled with the person of Christ.

I mean, I just got to say that because if you think commonly about Christ, if your view of Christ continues to cool in your Christianity, if you don't see him the way that he truly is, if you don't see him as the one who really is all-powerful, then you're never going to respond to the commission. Think about the great commission. Matthew 28. He starts that before he says, "Go make disciples," he says, "All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth." So I got something for you to do. "Go make disciples of all the nations baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything I commanded." Well, who are you? Well, I'm the one who has all the authority in heaven and earth. That's a huge, amazing thing.

Number one, if you're taking notes just to think about this key, this ultimate deliverer. If you and I, if we're ever going to be useful ambassadors of Christ, have to have a bigger and higher view of our boss. Number one, we have to "Profoundly Respect the King." We have to profoundly respect the king. If John the Baptist who was, according to Scripture, the greatest of the prophets. He was looking forward to as the greatest prophet in the Old Testament. He was affirmed to be the greatest prophet of the Old Testament according to Jesus. And now the distance between John the greatest and Jesus is infinite, then you ought to think about it that way.



Jot this down, and I don't have time to turn there, but if you went through our Partners program and you're learning evangelism, you probably learned Isaiah 59:2. It was about "your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God." It starts with this in verse 1 that "God's arms are not short to save, he can save." There's a problem, though, in that sin, verse 2... Let me read for you later in that chapter, down in verse 15. He looks around and he says all this stuff that he's seeing, the imperfection, the evil, the injustice, "it displeased him." So verse 16, "He saw that there was no man, and he wondered that there was no one to intercede; then his own arm brought him salvation and his own righteousness upheld him. He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and a helmet like salvation; he put on garments of vengeance for clothing, he wrapped himself in zeal as a cloak."

God said, "OK, I'm going to solve the problem. I've sent the patriarchs, I've sent Moses, I've sent Joshua, I sent the judges, I sent Samuel, I sent Saul, I sent David. But all these imperfect saviors are not going to ever accomplish the eternal things that really need to be accomplished, and that is, that sinners need to be made be right, so I'm going to provide my own Son." The reason that the distance exists infinitely transcendentally between the greatest of the human deliverers of the Bible and the ultimate deliverer of the Bible is because it's God himself solving the problem that we have. He says, "I will provide my own salvation." And so God, this triune fellowship, the second person of that triune fellowship invades space and time and takes on human flesh and says, "Let me fulfill all righteousness and let me now absorb all wrath and I will exchange my life for their lives." It's huge.

I've told you about my stolen Rembrandt that hangs in my office, have I told you about that, that painting? It is worth \$100 million, the real one, I've just got a copy of it. But it's missing. They don't know where it is. It's the picture of Rembrandt, the only seascape he ever painted of the storm on the Sea of Galilee. And I've talked about that before at least once, and I love this picture, I have it, I actually have a copy at home. Maybe it's the real one at home. It's not. And I often when I preach the passage Matthew 8, Luke, 8, Mark 4, three times in the Synoptic Gospels, they all cover the storm on the Sea of Galilee. Such a big, impressive thing. I often say when we're studying it, when we studied it in Luke 8, I said hey, just be careful that you don't just go into this looking for the, you know, the power and majesty and the authority of Christ.

It's a great, Christological passage that shows God's power, Christ's power. But really, it's a rebuke on the disciples who should not have been scared. Christ wakes up and he's not happy. He demonstrates his authority, but he's not happy. And so I'm all for that. I want to emphasize that. I'm not trying to contradict that. That's clearly what we should take away, at least, as the first application of the passage that we ought to trust Christ no matter how bad the storms get. But then you got to stand back and say, but we do learn a lot about Christ. And I know it's a simple thing, and I look at it every day, I have one at home, I have one at the office, I look at that picture, I think this is a big deal. It's a big deal. It's a big deal because he calmed a storm with the word. And it was a bad storm.

The Sea of Galilee is 64 square miles. I don't know how much of that was affected by the storm. I would assume, I don't know, a quarter of it at least, 14 miles, 14 square miles on the



surface of the water let's just say. Storm clouds are the tallest and biggest, obviously, most powerful meteorological things up there, at least in the immediate sky, and they can be 12 miles high. Let's just say 10, it's probably more than that but let's just say we had a 10-mile-high storm cloud that came on, I don't know, let's just make the storm cloud itself four square miles. And these experienced fishermen are out there and it says the waves were breaking over the boat. It's big. In 1992 they recorded 10-foot waves out on the Sea of Galilee. You can go on YouTube and see some of the ones. I don't know if they have any from the 1992 record-breaking, at least modern-day record-breaking storm, on the Sea of Galilee. Because of the slopes and the topography it happens out there.

But here's a storm. It's bad. And let's just say we're taking up four square miles in which that thunder cloud and that big storm is sitting. If you've got 10-foot waves, let's just say, and I'm assuming they were that size or bigger, I don't know. If you think about waves, waves have to be in terms of height and wavelength, one to seven ratio to break. And so we've got some real compacted turbulence of water. The base wave, they call it, how much of the water is turbulent under the water, well based on mathematical equations they tell us, these meteorological guys, that you probably have, if you got 10-foot waves, you got 30 feet of turbulence under the water. You have, let's just say, in this little four-square mile place on this water, surely affecting 14, 15, I don't know, maybe all 60 miles of this surface of the Sea of Galilee.

But in that four square miles 30 feet deep, you've got a lot of stuff going on as Jesus, by the way, is asleep in the hull of this boat. That would at least be 5.6 billion gallons of water that now are like in a washing machine. And by the way, one gallon, I want you to think about this, one gallon of water, think about a jug of milk, but one gallon of water has 10 septillions molecules of water in it. It's 10 septillions so you can do the math. I mean, my calculator didn't go out that far, but this is a lot of molecules bouncing around and you got the atomic structure and you got the nuclei of the atoms. You got a lot of stuff that's just in freak-out mode. Not to mention 40 cubic miles of stuff above the surface of the water, you got 10-foot waves going on and in all of that chaos, Jesus gets up and he says, "Peace! Be still."

And the Bible says immediately there was, and I love the way it's put in two of the gospels, they add this adjective, "There was great calm." Great calm, like immediate calm, like every atom in that water, every bit of that cloud, it just was done immediately. Now, of course, he did that out of a rebuke for them that, you know what, no matter how bad it gets, you ought to trust me and that's the lesson we should first learn. But the second lesson is the lesson they immediately learned, which was, "Who is this?" What authority, what kind of person can command the wind and the seas? I mean, this guy controls weather. I can flap my hands around and move a little bit of air, but I can't stop anything. I certainly can't stop anything of any significance in the environment in which I live. I'm so incapable of that and so are you. And yet here's someone who stands up, and they all stood back and said, "Whoa!" Instant respect.

When Jesus says, "I have all authority in heaven and on earth, and I got a job for you to do," I just want you to elevate your view of this Christ. I want you think about the fact that he



controls all of that. There was a scene there when Peter was reaching for his sword in the garden. Do you remember that scene? They came to arrest Jesus, and Peter pulls out his sword and he cuts off Malchus' ear, one of the guys, the servants who came along with the Pharisees and the leaders and representatives, the temple cops, they came and Jesus tells him to put his sword away. And one of the things he says in response to that he said, "Don't you know that I could call on my Father and he would dispatch 12 legions of angels."

A legion in a Roman army is 6,000 troops, that's 72,000 angels. If I think of what kind of damage can 72,000 angels do, I can go in the Old Testament and look at one angel killing all kinds of Amalekites or, you know, Assyrians. It's like, OK, so an angel... God dispatch one angel to take care of this whole crowd right now, easily, knock you down, kill you. Take your breath away, right? He could stop our beating hearts. So I could call right now and have dispatched 72,000 angels. So Peter, your sword, which clearly is not well aimed, right? You couldn't even hit this guy. I mean, you chopped his ear off. You need to know there's no authority that I lack. I peeled back my humanity on the Mount of Transfiguration, you should know who you're serving here.

When Pilate tries to pull out his business card and says, "You stand before me, you're being silent, don't you know, I have authority to turn you over to be killed?" Jesus answers, "You have no authority were it not given to you by my Father. And my Father is playing everything out after a plan and that plan includes not only my death, my resurrection, but it includes this: that I've appointed a group of people as my ambassadors as means of evangelism throughout the generations and I'm in charge of them. Matter of fact, when I told them to do this job, I said all authority has been given to me in heaven."

If you do not have some kind of hyper-respect for Christ, I can understand why you don't want to talk about Christ with any kind of passion. I can understand that you're not enthralled with the message because you're not enthralled with the one who you're representing. I mean, I get that, but that's not how it ought to be. I mean, the kind of respect that Isaiah had after this vision of God, he was willing to say, "Here am I, send me." He didn't even know where he was going. That's why if I was here preaching at some missionary conference and you're all sitting here, you didn't know and surprise it's missionary morning. If I were to say, "Hey, we need missionaries, I'm not even going to tell you where. Who's willing to sell everything you have and go." There should not be a person in the room if they claim Christ, who doesn't say, "Here am, I send me. I will go wherever he wants me to go. I will go any time he wants me to go. I will do anything there that he calls me to do."

We've talked about that in this series. This ATAPAT attitude. "Paul and Barnabas set them apart for the work that I have for them to do." That was the first week in Acts Chapter 13 verses 1 through 4. Do you remember that? And here they were taking this teaching job at this very comfortable position, really, in a thriving church in Antioch of Syria. And they were like, "Nope, we're going wherever God's telling us to go, and we're going to leave it all behind." And the church looks so easy. But it wasn't. What a sacrifice to lose your two good teacher pastors here, Barnabas and Saul. And off they go. Why? Because they're willing to do whatever God says.



And again, I just wonder if I sit here today, are you willing to do whatever God says? And if you are, I'm just going to ask you again, do you have enough respect for him to do it in the way in which he tells you? Here are some words to implore, to beg, to persuade, to have the love of Christ control you so much so that you're willing to risk the fact that people think that you're beside yourself, because you care about this message and you can bring it up. You laughed at me when we two weeks ago talk about talking Bible with people, remember that? Even the nine o'clock crowd laughed at me. Because I gave you all these one-liners about, well, you know, if they say this, say that, if they say that, say this. You can get to the Bible in any conversation. And I confessedly, humorously showed you turn the conversation to God's truth.

But I just wonder, are you really willing in your laughter about that, which I get, aren't you willing to say I'm willing to be seen as a Jesus freak to the people around me? I am willing because of the one who asked me to do it is the one who can control the seas. Talk about people coming to preach here, there are people who I know, who are just really super hyper-smart. Do you know a few people like that? Just like it's scary. And I'll tell you, I can't help but have this great respect for people who just have this mind that is just sharp and amazing. There are people here in our church too. I talked to others of my pastor friends and say, it's just amazing, our staff, these people have a gift, right? They don't sleep. Most of them for some weird reason, and their brain is just like whatever it is. They figured out they know it and they can look at the situation and figure it out.

One of the reasons I have a hyper respect for Christ is not only the fact that he has raw sheer power and can end everything in a word, which Second Peter 3 says he's going to do one day. But because of his knowledge, there is something that I have in terms of just natural connection between the leader's knowledge and my respect, it just goes hand-in-hand. I think about Jesus. Nathaniel, remember when Nathaniel was called in John Chapter 1? Smile at me if you remember that. Nathaniel, Phillip goes to get him, and when he comes and Jesus says, "Here's an Israelite with no guile." Here's a guy, an upstanding guy and Nathaniel says, "How do you know me?" Do you remember what Jesus' response was Sunday school grads? "I saw you when you were sitting under the fig tree." I have no idea what he's doing under the fig tree. But when Nathaniel heard that he goes, "Surely, you're the Son of God." And he was immediately enamored with the respect of this guy because he knew what he couldn't possibly know unless he was someone with amazing insight.

Of course, he's the omniscient Son of God. And that's an amazing thing. Throughout his ministry, he knew what the apostles were thinking, he knew what the Pharisees were thinking. He said this because he knew their minds or he knew their hearts. It's crazy. And I think about the knowledge of Christ, and when I think about the knowledge of Christ, knowing everything about me, knowing everything about you, knowing everything about the person I'm going to share Christ with this week. He knows everything about all of that. I just can't help but say, "OK, whatever he tells me to do, I'm going to do it." It's not like I can say, "Well, I'm not doing it because you didn't understand this." I have great respect for Christ the more I understand his insight, his knowledge. He knows everything. Think about that.



Did he limit some of his insight in the exercise of his divine attributes during his incarnation? Sure, don't go there, don't check out on me because you've got this theological question. I want you to know, trust me, that he knows your thoughts, he knows what you're thinking, he knows you're weak, he knows the people you going to deal with. He knows it all. And if he tells you to do something, it's not like, "Well, let me see if that's the right thing for me to do or not." We're ambassadors. We're called to passionately represent our king. He has all the authority, he has all knowledge.

Here's something else that impresses me and helps me elevate my respect for Christ. It gives me profound respect for the king. Because let's just connect knowledge and the next thing. When I think about Jesus, he looks around early in his ministry and he says, I chose you, but even though I chose you, here's the thing: "I know that one of you is a devil." Do you remember that passage? One of you is a devil, a diabolos, a slanderer, one who tries to tear down. As John put it later as he looked back at Judas, he said Judas was pilfering the money out of the treasury. He was a crook. It wasn't that he cared for the poor, he was a crook. Now, he could see that looking back at his Excel spreadsheet after he saw the betrayal of Christ. But Jesus knew it from the beginning. I just want to tell you, what does it take for you to have in your inner circle someone you know who's working against you and you put up with that?

Here's the other thing that makes me elevate my respect for Christ, his infinite patience. His longsuffering. That he is willing to put up with so much. I mean, I respect people who have that ability, and I don't have it. I certainly don't have it in the measure I'd like to have it and I look at Christ and I think you are so patient, you are so longsuffering. You put up with me, you put up with my family. You put up with my church, you put up with the people in South Orange County. I mean, you've destroyed cultures because of their sin. You're putting up with the United States right now. You're an incredibly patient God. And to me, that's amazing.

I think of Isaiah 40. In Isaiah 40, it speaks of the Messiah and it says he's going to come and he's going to lead his people like a shepherd and he's going to take the lambs up in his arms and carry them. "He's going to lead those gently and patiently," to inject the word that describes the scene, "those who have young." If you're on a mission and you're leading, which is what the passage is about, the Messiah comes to be the leader, it's like can you just put the kid in the stroller and hurry up? I don't know. There's this great tender picture of Christ just putting up with his people.

I don't know what your list is, but that was my list because I thought pastorally I look at Jesus being so much better and so much more exalted than any Old Testament deliverer. And I think surely Christ had the ultimate supreme position of respect in Paul's mind, as he does in every good ambassador's mind. And I'm thinking, what are the things that should prompt that in my life? I mean, raw ultimate, no one has authority like Christ, no one has knowledge like Christ, no one has patience like Christ. We should respect him, and when he says all authority has been given to me the one that knows everything, the one who is infinitely patient with losers like us, like with Peter, who he says, "Oh, I will always follow you." And Jesus turns around and said, "You're going to deny me before the morning." And yet, you know



what? I'm praying for you. That's just huge. I should be willing to be his ambassador. Passion. Fervor. Profoundly respect the king. He's worthy of us serving, and we ought to serve him.

Here's this indictment of the Pharisees in our passage, go back to it, Acts Chapter 13 verse 26. "Brothers, sons of the family of Abraham, those among you who fear God, to us has been given the message of this salvation." This salvation he's going to impact further in the next week, we don't have time to get to it this week. He's going to get into more of what it's all about, the resurrected Christ, the forgiveness, the things that he's accomplished for us and what salvation means. But the message of this salvation, here it is.

You Greek students can look at this word here. This is the word "Logos," meaning "the word." It's the body of information. We know the context in which he's thinking of it. Look at verse 27, "For those who live in Jerusalem and their rulers, because they did not recognize him nor understand the utterances of the prophets." That's literally the word the "voice of the prophets." And we're not talking about listening to it with your ears. We're listening to it with our eyes and decoding it in our minds because we have to read it, "which is read every Sabbath, fulfilled them by condemning him." That was God's plan, and they've just fulfilled biblical prophecy, prophecy that was written. The voice of the prophets is embedded in what is written. This message of salvation is embedded in the message that is written. The Bible contains the message of salvation, the Bible contains, even in the story of Moses and Abraham and Samuel and Saul and the judges and David, all of them contained the message of salvation, and it wasn't about that salvation. It was about, to put it in terms of First Corinthians 10, "the rock that followed." There was something coming that was ultimate.

Do you want a blending of metaphors here? Daniel talks about that statue of all the kingdoms of the world being destroyed by a rock that comes and grows and takes over the whole world, the rock that shatters the kingdoms of the world. And then in First Corinthians 10 it talks about the fact that the reality of the rock, right? Christ, the rock, is really all of that was ultimately about what followed. The whole Bible is about Christ, clearly. Are there messages and lessons to learn? Well even in First Corinthians 10, a lot. Don't be like them, like they were in the desert, but it's about the salvation that comes in Christ. All the things, as I said last week, the temporal transient things of all the imperfect previews, which may be good, they're not what Christianity is all about. Christianity is about the ultimate, and the ultimate is found in the text of Scripture.

The text of Scripture cannot be learned, like many people learn it, just by knowing the stories and knowing the facts and knowing the data and parsing the grammar and the syntax and saying, "I know the Bible. I can win Bible trivia. I know more Bible than you." Great. That's not the point. The point is to be able to extract the message of all of that. That's an interpretation, but it's more than interpretation. It's an application of it all. Turn with me to John Chapter 5. John Chapter 5 is a great example of Jesus personally confronting people who knew the Bible, but they weren't applying the Bible. Which means they didn't take the meaning of the Bible and put it into practice. Because it's not just about you even interpreting the Bible to know what it means.



What does it mean that Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt? Well, it's historically true. It means what it means in history. Well, what did it mean, though? Well, Jesus was going to be the ultimate deliverer who would free us from our sins. Well, it does mean that, but what does that mean? What significance does that have? Well it has no significance if I don't respond to it. It's why Jesus kept saying things like this, speaking of rocks. Your life will be like a man who builds this house on the sand, or your life will be like a man who builds his house on the rock. And the difference is if you put my words into practice. James Chapter 1, you quote it often, right? "Don't be a hearer of the word, only be a doer of the word." You have to be able to do what it says and the only way to do what it says is to extract not just data, but meaning, not just historical meaning, but truth, eternal truth meaning, and then what am I going to do about it?

And that's the problem with so many people. They don't crave to know the meaning of the Bible, because once you know the meaning of the Bible, the meaning always demands a response. Let's just jot that down before we read John Chapter 5. "Crave the Meaning of God's Words," which sadly had they understood the meaning of God's word, as Peter preached earlier in the book of Acts, they wouldn't have crucified him. But they didn't understand the meaning. They just knew the facts. They just knew the stuff. They knew the verses. They knew the stories. Many of you sit here today knowing the stories. You might say all kinds of things to Christ on Judgment Day. "Well, I knew all this stuff" and he'll say, "Depart from me. I never knew YOU because you never knew me."

John Chapter 5. Helpful discussion as it relates to this problem. Drop all the way to verse 39. Having issues here with people that know the Bible well. "You searched the Scriptures because you think in them you have eternal life." Now I'm thinking, what are you trying to say? That's not true? I think that seems that it would seem to be true. Well, there's truth there, but not in just searching them alone, not even in just knowing the information alone. Here's the problem: they bear witness about a person. "It is they that bear witness about me, yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life." You think you have life because you traffic in the book, but you don't get life by just knowing the information. You don't get life by just being in the church. You don't get life because you can win at Bible trivia.

"I do not receive glory from people," and that really is the diagnosis of the problem, by the way, especially when we're trying to advance the ball in a stadium that's cheering for the other team. It's hard when we want the approval of men. "But I know you don't have a love of God within you." If you did, it would compel you, it would make you crazy in the minds of the world. They wouldn't get you. "I've come in my Father's name and you don't receive me. Another comes in his own name, you'd receive him. How can you believe when you received glory from one another," that's your real priority, "and you don't seek the glory that comes from the only God?" That's all that should matter.

"Do not think I will accuse you to the Father," and I know you're getting really offended by what I'm saying, Jesus is saying here. "There is one who accuses you: Moses, on whom you've set your hope." What are we talking about? "If you believed Moses," if you believe what he said, the meaning of it and you saw the significance of it and you responded rightly to



what it meant, "you'd believe me; for he wrote of me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?" And they're saying, "We don't believe your words, we believe Moses." Christ is saying, "You don't believe Moses." Because you never got to the meaning of those texts.

Israel today, the classic example of that, and I've shared the gospel with Jews in Israel and they know the Bible. And the problem is, they say, "I'm going to put my hope on this information and even this understanding of these truths, but I don't want to see where they lead." Because here is where they will lead. They will lead to the "high and exalted lifted up one," to quote Isaiah 52, who's been sent as the ultimate son of David. But then all of a sudden it says, but "he'll be marred more than any man." He'll be one that people don't even want to look at because he'll be so beaten. He'll be crushed by the Father so that he can become a guilt offering for those who are sinners. He'll become "an intercessor for those who are sinners." The Messiah will be "crushed," he'll be put to death, he'll be in a rich man's tomb. And yet, after all of this, when the Father "sees it and is satisfied," that's the act of redemption, right? "Then he'll be able to divide the spoils with the strong." What? Yeah. He's going to see the light of life. He's going to see days. He's going to victoriously celebrate his victory. How can you do that if you're dead? Well, he's going to do that because he poured out his life, even unto death. Well, we must be talking about eternal matters here.

You hear these stories of women who write inmates in prison and, you know, I don't know, they saw him on the news or whatever, and sometimes you'll see them develop a relationship just through letter writing and they end up getting married to some inmate. Now I don't suggest that, but it happens. And I think to myself, well, how does that happen? It happens because they're taking those letters and they're building a relationship and they're connecting with that information in a way that becomes emotional, becomes whole life, it becomes something where they're willing to commit their lives to that person. But through a bunch of letters in the mail? Yeah. I mean, these aren't guys, depending on the level of security at their prison, they're not just FaceTiming each other. These are people just writing letters.

I think to myself, well, that's a different kind of reading than the person just reading information in the Bible that doesn't get the point of the Bible or the person of the Bible. Read this passage. It's a passage, I mean, I don't know if you've heard this before, Jeremiah 15:16. It's an interesting verse. Jeremiah says, "Your words were found," here it is, "and I ate them. Your words were found and I ate them, and your words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart." I just think that's kind of how a lovestruck woman will read a letter from some incarcerated guy as she's falling in love. She takes those words and she just incorporates them. They become a joy.

I don't know how your Bible study is going, but if it's all about you learning more facts so you don't get embarrassed at your small group, that's not the point of reading the Bible. It's not about you understanding the flow of Old Testament chronology, although I just would hope that you would seek to know that. It's not about you figuring out which gospel said it and how do you sort them out and why is John different than Mark? That's helpful to know and you should seek to know it. But it's about you walking away from your time in the word and saying,



"I understand who he is. I massively respect him and I deeply love him because I know what the meaning of this is all about."

God has sent his Son into the world so I wouldn't be condemned, that I would be saved. That's a huge, huge distinction between the way a lot of people deal with the Bible. It takes a regenerate heart, I get that. It takes this doctrine of illumination we talk about. Let me give you one more, Jeremiah Chapter 9, just jot it down, verses 23 and 24. If you've been around church, you've heard this, "Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, ... let not the rich man boast in his riches, but let him who boasts boast in this," and listen to these two words, "that he understands and knows me." There are two different Hebrew words here. The word "understands" is a word that you might expect, a word about taking information and incorporating it and getting it and understanding it thoroughly. But then the next word, "yada" in Hebrew is the word to like "to know," really know, right? That he knows, he understands. I would always think in the parlance of English we'd say, "we know and understand." He says, "he understands and knows me."

There's that connection between I understood the Bible and I've known the person. Those go together. I just love the way that's put. "Let him boast in that, that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord who practices steadfast love, justice and righteousness. For in these things I delight." I would love for them to know me and what I delight in. I'd love for them to know who I am. That's different than reading a document to pick up the information like you have to take a test on it.

Well, the Bible's message, back to Acts Chapter 13, is about redemption. It's about the death of Christ, which, by the way, redemption has been stolen in modern vernacular today. People talk about redemption like, I don't know, like someone who's gets kind of turned around in their bad situation or they lived in their car and now they're singing on American Idol. That's not redemption. Redemption is this. Redemption is that there is a serious problem you can't solve that costs great, I mean, profound expense to solve that problem, and someone else does that for you. Matter of fact, redemption is first pictured even in the Garden in Genesis 3, when Adam and Eve sinned and they felt great shame and the connection, which is profound and interesting between their nakedness and their sinful shame, God kills an animal, skins the animal, tans these hides, I don't know how long this took, and gave them clothes from a dead animal's carcass. It's just a weird concept. And we've been wearing clothes ever since. I recommend you do it. But think about it.

Can you imagine being there and you feel ashamed and you're hiding in the shadows when God's manifestation shows up and God says, where are you? I'm not sure I want to be seen. And it transfers to this own guilt about the shame of your own reproductive organs. And there you are and God says, "Well, we're going to cover that shame so you can act somewhat normal here with each other and with the world that you're about to create and produce. And so we're going to give you clothes. Now these animals that you've been naming, you got kind of chummy with here. We're going to kill one of them and give you clothes to wear."



It's just a weird concept. He covered them. Which, by the way, is the word that translates later in Scripture, atonement. In Leviticus, it talks about the atoning work of the sacrificial system. It covered sin, and the picture was you bring your animal to the worship service and Leviticus Chapter 1 verse 4, you'd put your hand on that animal. The priest would then accept that animal as though you were transferring your guilt to that animal, and the animal would be slain before your eyes and put on a barbecue, a big hibachi, an altar. And everyone would smell the savory smells of barbecue at church. And the dead animal would be a picture of the death that your sins deserve, but you get out of it all.

That's why this passage, look at it, is all about the death of Christ. "They found no guilt in him." It's just like you had to have a blemishless animal that you brought to worship. "They asked Pilate to have him executed." Executed? Yeah, they killed him. "And when they carried out all that was written of him, they took him down from this tree," a dead body, a corpse, "and they laid him in a tomb." That's what you do with dead bodies. "But God raised him from the dead, and for many days he appeared to those who had come up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are now his witnesses," witnesses to the people. Christ on the cross after being beaten and whipped, and you can imagine, to speak of Isaiah 52, "He was marred more than any man." You picture the crown of thorns, right? Take some nails, a bunch of them and jam them in your forehead and see if you got blood over your face. You're ready for your horror movie interview. It looked horrible.

Then let's have some big, burly Roman soldiers beat you in the face first, because that's what they were doing, repeatedly hitting him in the face. And if you want the full gore, let's take that cat-of-nine-tails that after you were pinned to the post, they stripped your back, you're bleeding. Let's pin that back against that big piece of wood that looks like a telephone pole and stretch your arms out and nail them into a tree. Now you're up there and your face, what does it look like as it had time here in this multi-hour process to swell? Maybe you had teeth knocked out, but I know this, you got blood pouring all over your face. Some of it's starting to dry as you're hanging out there naked on a Roman torture device called a cross.

That's supposed to be some endearing picture of something that we, as Christians, are supposed to be able to cherish, to prize. We're supposed to prize the redemption of Christ. It's bad enough, if you take any modern and you talk about killing animals at church. I mean, you want to shut this church down? Let's just have the instructions from the Old Testament where you bring your animal and we kill them at church. But we're talking about a person here. One last passage. Turn to Hebrew Chapter 10 with me. This is the redemption that is supposed to be the highlight of our theology, the Cross of Christ. When Paul comes to the Corinthians, he says, I decided, and I like the stronger translation of that word, "I purposed to know nothing among you, but Jesus and him crucified." That's what I was about. I want you to understand the crucifixion.

That's just a huge thing to say. Hebrews Chapter 10 verse 1, "For since the law was a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never," the Old Testament law, "by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near." It really didn't fix the problem. Even if you want to stretch the



word atonement, it may have covered the guilt of your sin in the worship service, but it didn't solve the problem. "Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered since the worshipers having once been cleansed would no longer have any consciousness of sins?" No, they did it week after week. "But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year," on and on, every month, every year. "For it's impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins." Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, God says, quoting this passage from Psalm 40 "Sacrifices and offerings you've not desired." But that's not the thing, that's not the thing that you're going to look at and be satisfied to quote Hebrews 10:5. No, "a body you prepared for me."

So the preexistent, pre-incarnate Christ now takes on a body, "a body you prepared for me in burnt offerings and sin offerings, you've taken no pleasure. Then I said, 'Behold, I've come to do your will, O God, as is written of me in the scroll of the book.'" And those Pharisees are going to play right into it and Pilate's going to play right into it, and all of it's going to be accomplished as you crushed the Son as a guilt offering. Verse 8, "When he said above, 'You neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings.' (These are offered according to the law), then he added, 'Behold, I've come to do your will.' He does away with the first," all of those sacrifices, "in order to establish the second." The new covenant. "And by that we will have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."

You have a bloody theology. Think about that. That you are saying this is the mechanism of salvation and you're offering that bloody theology to your neighbor, and he thinks it's crazy. And they did. They thought in the early church that it was crazy. You guys are beside yourself. This bloody Christ. And then you're taking this communion thing, and it looks like you're symbolizing the eating. You're like cannibals. That's what the Romans called the early Christians. They loved each other so much, they called them incestuous. They were so fixated on the death of Christ, they called them cannibals. And I'm just thinking we're so respectable these days that we're actually moving the ball the opposite direction. So often in our respectability of weakly saying, "Hey, I've got some news. Are you interested in talking about spiritual things?"

It isn't the way that an ambassador who understands the authority and greatness of Christ who gets the fact that the meaning of the text is driving us to actually understand and do what it says and those that, let's put it this way, number three, "Prize Christ's Work of Redemption." That we understand that what he came to do, a body was prepared for him to fulfill all righteousness and then die in our place. That should be the fixation of our life. I purpose to know nothing among you. "I decided," as the English Standard Version puts it, "to know nothing among you but Christ and him crucified." That's a kind of focus, right? Take us in a direction that may be a little different than most people might expect from us.

Jesus, after it's all done, said, "It is finished," and Christ, of course, as we'll look at next time in more detail, said "Yeah it is, with this thing called the resurrection." He rose from the dead as the verification and the acceptance of this propitiatory sacrifice. Satisfactory sacrifice. That's what it means. He saw and was satisfied. Guilt offering accepted.



I leased a new car this week. Don't go do that now. It's a horrible time. My lease was up, so I had to go get a car. I don't think most days about my car, I don't drive very far. That's why I can get a little low mileage lease and get a low price on it and all that. But I hated it because I went out there and I'd heard the scare stories. "There are no cars available." So I go out there and I only got one day off, so it's Monday. I'm going to go out and do it. So last Monday I went out and I worked hard to find a car. I said my lease is coming up, I need a new car, go. Nothing. I mean, it was really tough. And everything was like astronomical. Seriously, I ask a guy about one car. I said, Do you have any of these? He said, "Well, we have one. It's \$20,000 above sticker, and I wasn't looking at exotic cars. \$20,000 above sticker. This is with the Ford dealer.

So it was really tough. I thought to myself as I started looking at everything that was out there and even started then looking at my car that I had to turn in, that my lease was up on, and I started to now kind of get interested in all these little features, buttons, even on my car, I had never pushed before. I'm like, Well, this is my car. It had a lot. Does this car have that? And in one day I became someone who all of a sudden was very interested in my transportation.

I just want to say this, I am asking you today, look at the words, to respect and crave and prize something. Those are feelings and you say, "Well, I can't get a feel of that, right? This is about you directing a sense of your value, and it's hard to say, go respect that, go crave that, go prize that, value that. All I can say is the only way you can get that conjured and fueled is to get yourself within it. You get in the details of it. I mean, I'm not a big car guy, but last Monday I was. And I cared a lot about it and because they only had one car, I ended up getting and I really, talk about buyer's remorse, I was struggling on Monday. I hope you didn't see me on Monday night and Tuesday morning. Bad. Because I'm thinking of all the things I didn't get. Not that I need them, right? Like this car I got didn't even have a map screen thing on it, right? Oh, it's got a screen, but you push the button that says NAV on the dashboard. It reminds you that you're a loser, it says this car has no navigation.

And I remember telling people that and they're like, you got your phone, it's fine, I know I got my phone, but I want that button to work, right? I'd like a NAV in this car. I just want to tell you. You'll care about this a whole lot more, if you will immerse yourself in these things. If you haven't read a good book on the Atonement. I mean, I give you books every week on the back. If you haven't really plumbed the depths of the truth of what it was, that your sins were appended to the cross, if you haven't really thought about the authority of Christ, that the incarnation or at the Transfiguration or the glorification in Revelation 1, you could spend all week in Revelation Chapter 1 just examining the glorified Christ. And at the end of the week, I guarantee you will respect the king more profoundly.

If you work hard at understanding the passages that we read every day in our Daily Bible Reading, you need to seek to know the meaning of them. It needs to lead you to the tanning we talk about in partners that we get into the "then" and the "always" and the "now." And you extract meaning and say that meaning is always demanding a response from me. And you say, "God, I'm going to be committed to responding to your work." And if you really look at



what it means, if you're not in any way bearing your sins. You think about Psalm 103 that your sins are separated from you "as far as the east is from the west," if you're a Christian, you can get enamored with all this. Then I say, "Hey, the authoritative one, the meaning of Scripture, the one who died for you, he asks you to go out and be his representative," I guarantee you're going to go out there and advance the ball with passion. If they reject it, they'll reject it because the message offends them. They may think you're crazy, too, but here's the deal. It won't be because you acted like you're trying to sell them something. It won't be like, you know, it is just casually a part of your life. They'll know this is what your life is all about, which of course, it should be for every real Christian in the world.

Let's pray. God, help us now in a society speaking of the crowd that's grown bigger and bigger, cheering for the other side. It's one of the reasons when we get the ball, we're so timid and so hyper diplomatic that we can't even speak clearly about the truth of heaven or hell or redemption of the cross or propitiation or redemption or all the things that matter to you, we're afraid to talk about. So let's take some risks this week and be the ambassadors that were supposed to be, to be appealing and imploring and begging people to be reconciled to God, to know the fear of God, and be able to have a love of Christ control us to persuade people as best we can knowing that all this work is so commensurate with who you are. All our passion makes perfect sense. So give us more of that passion this week I pray.

In Jesus name. Amen.