



The Power of God's Word – Part 2

Standing in Awe of the Gospel's Greatness

Pastor Mike Fabarez

Well, be honest with me. Have you ever found yourself reading the Bible and feeling like it's just a chore, it's an assignment, it's some kind of obligatory Christian duty? Or have you ever rushed through your time in the Word, whatever that looks like, and by lunchtime you have not thought about it again, you couldn't even recall what it is that you were reading or studying or journaling about? Has there ever been a time where you've sat through a sermon and afterwards all your friends are raving about it? Maybe I'll pause there to see what your response to that question is. (audience laughing) Let's just imagine for a minute that's happened. If that's ever happened and you've said, wow, I don't remember what Pastor Mike was talking about. I don't even remember the topic. I don't even remember the passage. I mean, if there have ever been times like that, and I think most of us, unless you're a brand-new Christian, there are probably more of these kinds of insipid, casual, kind of disconnected engagements with the Word. We've all had them, more than we care to admit. And I just want us to think about this as we should, and that is the problem is not with the Bible. That's not the problem. The problem is with us.

When we have those kinds of disconnected encounters with God's Word, this problem lies with our thinking about God's Word. The problem lies with how we approach God's Word. The problem is really what we think God's Word is. And if we don't have the right kind of calibrated thinking regarding the eternal Word of God, then we're not going to respond to it the way that we ought to. And of course, you can say, well, this is the Spirit's work, and I understand all that. But what God wants to work in you is the kind of reverential approach to the Word of God that allows you not to have these casual kinds of, you know, a swing and a miss on trying to get something out of the Word. I mean, God's Word is living and active and sharp and God is requiring of us that we kind of shake free from this casual approach, this kind of just non-sacred sense of what it means to be reading and thinking and hearing about God's eternal Word. So I want to this morning, let the second half of Second Corinthians Chapter 3 get us out of this low view of the glorious truths that are spoken of here. I'd like this text to shake us free from this passive approach to Scripture and replace it with something that if we have this right, the way this text is presenting us with a new mindset, it will forever really change your encounters with God's Word. It's just something we have to continually remind ourselves of as we come to God's living Word.

So let's take a look at this as it compares in this particular text, Second Corinthians Chapter 3 verses 7 through 18. We want to compare, as Paul was doing here, the greatness of the Old Testament, which confessedly it has with the surpassing greatness or glory, as the word is used here in this text, of the New Testament. Follow along with me here. Starting in verse 7, I'll read to the end of the chapter from the English Standard Version and here's how it reads. "Now if the ministry of death, carved in letters of stone," now you're picturing Charlton Heston, I hope, holding these or whoever the new guy is. Only a few elderly people laughed at that. Nobody remembers that movie? Okay, yeah, yeah. You're just too tired and too old to respond to me, apparently. (audience laughing) That's what I remember, at least.



Carved in letters of stone, here is Moses with these tablets, the Ten Commandments. And now it's called, interestingly enough, the ministry of death. If that "came with such glory," you saw the movie, you've read the book, "that the Israelites could not gaze at Moses' face because of its glory, which was being brought to an end." And he means every time he has that encounter with God, the glowing nature of the reflecting radiance of God's glory, however that was manifested to Moses, it was seen by the people. But because it faded as the hours and days went by, he would cover his face with a veil.

And if that was so glorious, that the guy who is relating the truth to the people, if they were just so wowed by the fact, listen to this guy, he's bringing the words of God and his face is shining. If that's the way people listen to the old covenant, it says, "will not," verse 8, "the ministry of the Spirit have even more glory?" Wouldn't it rivet us even more? Wouldn't it even be more great and more surpassingly glorious? Verse 9, "For if there was glory in the ministry of condemnation," and there it is again something negative about the Old Testament. Not that we're supposed to decouple or detach ourselves from the Old Testament. We're certainly not. But it's talking about the purpose ultimately of the Old Testament. Well, we'll get into that. That ministry of condemnation. If "the ministry of righteousness," then the New Testament, it "must far exceed it in glory." Well how far? Well, it says in verse 10, "Indeed, in this case," it says, "what once had glory has come to have no glory at all, because of the glory that surpasses it." And it's not that the Old Testament doesn't shine as God's God-breathed Word. Clearly it does. It's described that way in the New Testament. And Jesus repeated the sentiment of Isaiah 40 that it would endure forever.

But the reality is, it's like you with the best flashlight you can conjure up from your kitchen drawer and standing out in the middle of the desert and shining it and having everybody be so impressed by the way it lights up some cactus tree or whatever they call it, a cacti, right? You see this cactus and it's, like, wow, that's great. And then the sun comes up and in midday you can turn your flashlight on and it is no big deal because the sun far outshines whatever light was brought by the Old Testament. It's surpassed! "For if what," verse 11, "was being brought to an end came with glory," and it not only brought to an end in terms of the shining radiance of Moses' face, but it was brought to an end in terms of its ultimacy. There was something even more glorious. "If what was being brought an end came with glory, much more will what is permanent have glory." You ought to sit back and recognize it. You look to the right side of your Bible, these 27 books of the New Testament, and it far outshines the left side. This is something amazing. And Paul says, "Since we have such a hope, we are very bold."

Now, to get back to what he started, you should look back at verse 4. "Such is the confidence we have through" the ministry of "Christ" here he says, "toward God. Not that we're sufficient in ourselves," verse 5, "to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God." What? You and Titus and Timothy and your traveling missionary band, what is that? Well, "he's made us sufficient to be ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit. For the letter kills." That's why he calls it a ministry of death or a ministry of condemnation. We'll talk about that. But the spirit gives life. So this comparison here, he's saying "we're very bold," verse 12 says, in proclaiming this, "not like Moses, who had put a veil over his face so



the Israelites might not gaze at the outcome of what was being brought to an end," it continually dimmed. "But their minds were hardened. For to this day," the Jews, if they're just focused on the old covenant and they don't accept what the old covenant was looking forward to, if they reject Christ, well then that same veil remains unlifted. They really can't see the glory that's there because it's speaking of something new. "Only," it says at the bottom of verse 14, "through Christ is it taken away." Yes, to this day whenever Moses is read a veil lies," not just over their physical eyes, it lies "over their hearts." They don't get it. "But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed."

"Now the Lord is Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, with unveiled faces," look at this great analogy tied together, "beholding the glory of the Lord," we see now directly the greatness of God's plan, his redemptive plan that's spelled out in the new covenant. He says, "We're being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit." We'll unpack all that, but think about this. We're not trying to hide the fact that the power or the glory or the radiance or the gravity or the Old Testament word "Kavod" is the word "glory," the gravitas of this message, it's not fading, right? It only gets better. So we're not like Moses hiding our faces, so to speak, right? We're with unveiled faces and we have something that is permanent and something that is great. And this whole expression here is clearly starting as we see in verses 7 through 11, just comparing the two and saying, well, one was great and it did its job, but the other one now is far surpassing it in glory. Let's just put it this way. Number one, you need to "Honor the New Testament's Greatness." We don't decouple ourselves from the Old Testament. We don't abandon the Old Testament. We understand the law. We use it rightly, as Paul said to Timothy, but we understand that the New Testament is so much greater. What are you talking about?

Let me turn you, once you write that down, to Romans Chapter 8. I hope you know what a great chapter of Scripture this is, Romans Chapter 8. Look at the last six words of verse 2 in Romans Chapter 8. Once you get there, I want you to see these words. It says the law of sin and death. The law of sin and death. Do you see those words? The law of sin and death. Those six words, the law of sin and death, are what we learn from the Old Testament, right? There is an equation that the Old Testament is giving us a set of commandments and those commandments, as we said last time we were studying here in Second Corinthians Chapter 3, the end of the law leads us to Christ because Christ has to do what the law can't do. Because the law, all it does as Paul has said in great detail in the book of Romans, is it points out how sinful we are. It shows us that we fall short. And he even talks about seemingly esoteric things, like coveting, this little private thing that goes on in the corner of my heart. And had the law not been clear, like that little thing right there, that's wrong, I wouldn't even know. But now that I know, I see it everywhere. And the law points out my problem of sin. And sin, here's what the law says, if you don't do the right thing, you deserve judgment, you deserve a consequence, you deserve to be in trouble with your creator. And the word for that in Scripture is death.

And death, of course, is not just your spirit leaving your body and biological death and having to bury your body in a graveyard. That's not the ultimate problem. The ultimate problem is



what the Bible says, it's called the second death, where God looks at you now, puts your body back on you in an immortal form and says to you, "Depart from me, I never knew you." That would be the ultimate, where you don't get God and you don't get any of his riches, any of his blessings, or any of his glory. You're away from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power, as we often quote from Second Thessalonians Chapter 1. That would be the worst. And that's the problem that the Old Testament is pointing out. That's why it's called this ministry of condemnation, this ministry of death. That's why it's described in a way that's negative. The letter that kills, the Old Testament letters, starting with those tablets, it tells us we deserve to die. It tells us we don't deserve fellowship with God. This is what the law does. It's the law of sin and death. Those two things are tied together.

Now, you sit here today, I hope, recognizing that you're a sinner. Well, here's the great thing. The left side of your Bible will continue to remind you that even the best among us, and it's careful, whether it's David or Noah or Abraham, none of them are perfect. They all fall short, even though they're relatively better than the next guy in the story, right? Lot's better than Abraham. David's better than Saul. We see those things in relative terms, but ultimately we see they have feet of clay and everyone falls short of the glory of God. We all agree with that. Now, here is the problem. I read about all of that and I recognize that all of them deserve to be cast out of the presence of a perfect God. But look at the first part of verse 2, "For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free," right? Not in and of yourself, not by the magic wand, not out of divine fiat, just out of nothing, God says, hey, you're done. But "in Christ Jesus," he set you free "from the law sin and death." So there's a new law now. And instead of the word sin that leads to death. Now, there's the word Spirit that leads to life.

Now, you were with us last time, I hope. If not, listen to the sermon of the first half of Second Corinthians Chapter 3, right? The reality of passages like Jeremiah Chapter 31, or Ezekiel Chapter 36, echoed in the teaching of Jesus in John Chapter 3 that Nicodemus was castigated for not knowing, is the fact that the Spirit was going to get involved personally in people to invade their lives, change their wiring, give them a new spirit, and then his Spirit, God's Spirit, is going to be within them. And he's going to, the strong words in Ezekiel 26, are "cause you" to keep my commandments. You're going to follow along and keep my precepts and my rules. You're going to do what I ask because I'm going to change you from the inside out and the Spirit of God is going to be prompting you and motivating you and convicting you and driving you along. God's going to do something that ultimately will not only make your sanctification a reality as imperfect as it is, but it's also going to immediately by the act of God justifying you by placing you into Christ, he's going to solve all the problems of you deserving punishment.

Look at verse 1 now. "There is therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." Why? Because in Chapter 6 it said, because you've been placed into his death. You've been placed into Christ. And Christ has done, it says now in verse 3, what you couldn't do by just trying to keep the law. "For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do." Whether you're David, Abraham, Noah, or Daniel, or whether you're just you and me, we couldn't do it. The law, we know what it is, we don't measure up, and we can't do. But "by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh," having all the attributes of humanity here,



"and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh." What kind of flesh? Flesh that did everything right. Do you remember the Ten Commandments, to think of the law here? You had guys like the rich young ruler in Matthew 19 coming and saying, well, I've done all that. And Jesus lets him play that game for a while, then finally gets to the first tablet of the Ten Commandments and says, let's talk about the first thing on the tablets that Moses brought down from Sinai, "No other gods before me." And let's just talk a little bit about your money, rich young ruler. And let's just give that away and follow me, because here I am, the authority telling you to depart with one of your idols. He says, no, I can't. He went away weeping and sad because he had a lot of wealth. And Jesus then turns to his apostles and he says, hey, look, how hard it is "for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." Idolatry is real. The guy's sitting there talking about, I've kept all these commandments. I've obeyed my parents, honored them, all that. And I just, I always say when I read that passage, I'd like to call his mom up for a minute. Let's talk about that. I just want you to think about that.

The Bible is very clear. The implication of Exodus 20 we find in the book of Ephesians, and that is that as a kid you're supposed to obey your parents. That's what you're supposed to do, right? No one's done that. Even the guy, the rich young ruler in Matthew 19 hasn't done that! You and I have been disobedient to our parents. Now, you might have been more obedient to your parents than I was to mine or the guy sitting next to you. But we all fall short. But here it says in this text, "God sent his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh." But here's the thing, Jesus may have looked like the average teenager. He may have looked the average 12-year-old, but he wasn't sinful. He was without sin. And he came *For* sin. Two things. To live a righteous life so that I could be seen as someone who perfectly obeyed my parents. And the rich young ruler could, and Peter could, and Thomas could, and Philip could, and Nathaniel could, and you could, and I could. We could be seen as having all the righteousness of Christ imputed, credited to us. And then he would come *FOR* sin. How'd that happen? Because he died on the cross. I mean, he condemned sin in the flesh. So my sin, the things I've done wrong, right? That's transgression. The things that I failed to do, that's just falling short, that's called sin. And the things I twisted, the things that God said I just kind of twisted it my own way, that is called iniquity. All those three things God has said I took all of those and I condemned them on the cross.

So now, humans have human righteousness available to them in a perfect Christ in the likeness of sinful life, but he wasn't sinful. And then he dies for sin, so that, it says in verse 4, "in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us." Now, think about that. "The wages of sin is death." Now, the law is really simple, keep the rules and you're good. I couldn't keep the rules. The Old Testament continues to remind me I can't keep the rules. But here's the deal. Christ kept the rules for us. And then all my sin could be laid on his cross. And "God made him who knew no sin to be sin," for us, Second Corinthians Chapter 5 verse 21, "so that in him I might become the righteousness of God." Why? Because I need an association with Christ. I have to have Christ die *FOR* me. I have been placed into Christ's death so that his penalty would take away my sin and his righteous life could be imputed to me. That's the transaction of the New Testament. The New Testament is great because it explains all that to us. It tells us that's how it works, and it shows you with great accuracy, with



a red bullseye painted, here is what you need to trust in, the death and life and burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Now that's going to change you. Look at the bottom of verse 4, "who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit." As imperfectly as we do, ask James, "We all stumble in many ways," but that picture right there, it will change us. More on that later. But right now we just need to say that's what the New Testament is all about. And what I want is verse 1, "there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." That's an amazing thing because everything you've ever done wrong, you should be punished for. But you will stand before God and he will say, come in, welcome in, welcome into "the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world," perfectly qualified because you're in Christ. That's an amazing truth that the Old Testament did not give you with any specificity. That's a huge thing. If you don't celebrate the 27 books in the New Testament that are explaining all of this by God's Spirit, the God-breathed work as I'll show you in our small group study questions. You go to like Second Peter Chapter 1. God moved these apostles along, just like he moved the prophets along, to write exactly what he wanted to say, not only about the law, but also about the Spirit coming and fulfilling all righteousness in Christ and then drawing us to himself to say trust in him, "in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us." God looks at you as one who perfectly obeyed his parents.

Now, I need to say this. I don't want you to oversimplify this sermon by thinking, oh, I guess all those people in the Old Testament went to hell then. That's not how it works. What were they supposed to do? If they were going to be right with God, they didn't have the death of Christ on a cross, you're right, they didn't in time and space. But certainly, God knew the plan from the very beginning. God planned the plan from the very beginning. So this is no like, well, I guess they're just going to be sent to hell until Christ dies on the cross, right? Saints have the same response that we're supposed to have. Matter of fact, you can look at passages like Isaiah 30 verses 15 and 16 talk about the concepts of turning, the Greek word "Shuwb," but the word "repentance," repenting and trusting. Right? We have the same exact verbs in that you'll find your salvation. But you guys wouldn't do it. But you needed to. You needed to repent and trust. Now, the difference in the Old Testament is that the Old Testament is describing to us how the rules are going to remind us we can't keep the rules. And if you're going to be forgiven for breaking the rules, you can read Psalm 51, Psalm 32. Yes, there's forgiveness in the Old Testament, but it's based on something that was not clear. As it says in the New Testament, the Old Testament saints and even the angels were longing to look at how this was all going to play out and it plays out in God fulfilling the requirements of the law in the earthly life of Christ who takes on humanity. That was a mind-blowing thing for angels and for humans. God becomes a man and walks among us, lives the perfect life, dies an unjust death so that my sin can be seen on his cross and his righteousness can be seen in my life, and therefore God is going to accept me as we just sang, clothed in Christ and his righteousness. That's an amazing truth.

And we've got to stand back and say, that is so huge and it ought to grip us every time we open our Bibles and start to look at anything it says about this. Yes, they're saved by the same response, only they're just throwing themselves on the mercy of God. "God, have



mercy on me, a sinner." That's great. Now we know how it's done. And we know the object of our trust is not just God's goodness and God's mercy and God's patience and God please just somehow, please. And I got animals I'm killing and I got all these things, candles and incense, and I got priests with all the jewels on their breastplate. It's just, what is this all about? Well, it's about something that's coming and you can't see, it's just "a shadow of things to come." But one day people on the other side of the cross are going to see it clearly. You know how privileged you are to see that, that David never saw it, that Abraham never saw? Abraham could only see when he got to be with God after his death. He saw and he longed for the day of Christ and then it came and you and I have been reading about it our whole lives, some of you for decades. The life and ministry of Christ. Honor the New Testament's greatness.

Psalms 119 talks about David just looking at the Old Testament law and saying, I thank God for it "seven times a day." I mean, I think Christians should thank God for his Word, the New Testament, 14 times a day. The surpassing glory of what we have to read and to ponder. Oh, I know we don't get to see it, neither did the Galatian Christians in the first century. Paul said, "Before your eyes," Christ was "portrayed as crucified." Well, they didn't see it with their physical eyes, but they saw it in their mind's eyes because the Scripture talked about this. And then we don't have a temple. We don't have priests. We don't have sacrifices. We don't have candles. We don't have incense. We don't have the washing basins. We don't have this edifice called the temple. We're meeting in a business park in South Orange County. And all we have is the teaching of the Word. And the Bible says to us that's far greater than all that stuff in the Old Testament. You ought to stand back and say, God, we honor your Word and we honor the New Testament. If you start to stand in awe of the New Testament, that's a good place to start.

But look back at our passage, starting in verse 12. Paul, again, as I reminded you when we first read this, he says, we have hope in this. We know it's true. We know it works. We know it is efficacious, and the story changes lives. So we're very bold. Not like Moses, right? We're not sitting here veiling our faces, but this isn't getting dimmer, this is getting brighter as it ends the passage. But it says in verse 14, "But their minds were hardened. For to this day," because their minds are hardened, "when they read the old covenant, that same veil remains unlifted, because only through Christ is it taken away. Yes, to this day whenever Moses is read, the veil lies over their hearts. But when one," this is a great word, "Epistrepho", it's the word, it is a synonym of "Metanoia," the word to "repent." When one repents, "when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed." I know last time we were together we looked at regeneration and we kept talking about the doctrine of regeneration and I really leaned in to say, are you sure you're regenerate? And I hope that at least helped you to test yourself to see if you genuinely are a Christian and that's good. But let's stand back today, if in fact you did that hard work, if not go back and listen to that sermon and take it seriously.

But now let's just stand back and say what a big deal this whole thing is, that a veil is removed, that eyes are opened. And I just want you to stand back and really respect what is happening when someone becomes a Christian. And if you look back in your life, I want you to think about what a big deal this is. And I want to think about this because Paul says I'm very bold about this, just like he says in Romans Chapter 1, "I am not ashamed of the gospel,



for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes." So you and I, as Christians, have experienced this eye-opening power of the gospel. Jot it down that way and let's examine it. Number two, "Respect the Gospel's Eye-Opening Power." You need to stand back just like you respect and honor the New Testament. I need you to really think this is huge what the gospel does. The good news that is embedded throughout the New Testament is reminding us that God is opening blind eyes.

Now I know that's a metaphor and I rarely put those in my points, right? I don't want to analogize my points. I like to be concrete with them, but this one I just think is helpful because the whole passage is steeped in this idea of hardened hearts, meaning you don't see what you should see. And "see" means to perceive and understand and accept and embrace. Now, what is it that we don't see? Well, if you read your Daily Bible Reading yesterday and today, this weekend we've been reading in our New Testament reading in John Chapter 9. And if you've read that passage, and this morning's passage is the second half of John Chapter 9, where there was a blind man. Yesterday we started in verse 1, where this man was born blind and everyone thinking about what your friends often think, that only bad things happen when you do bad things. That's called in the Old Testament the retribution principle, and they often taught that to one another. But then God had to break in and say, no, no. Let's look at Job. Let's look at other situations. Sometimes bad things, as people put it today, happen to good people. And that's part of God's economy. That's part of God working all things together for good.

But here's the reality. You just need to know that when it comes to this man born blind, as they said what happened? Because it doesn't make sense. Because he hadn't done anything and he was born that way. Did he sin or maybe it was his parents? Is God punishing the parents because the child's born blind? And Jesus says neither. Now it's going to end, and I'd like you to look at the end of this chapter. It's going to end with this blindness being a metaphor for spiritual blindness of not seeing the truth, okay? But it starts with something that very much mirrors the fact that everyone is born not seeing the truth and we inherit this from our fathers. And Jesus says this is to show the glory of God. That's why this man is physically blind and can't see. And for us, though, it's going to illustrate in Chapter 9 the fact that we need to see and we don't see, and God has to come in and bring our eyeballs to life. And this is the power of the preaching of the gospel, of the reading of Scripture, of the understanding that someone has when you relay to them the New Testament truth. This is a powerful thing.

So go to the end of this. You might remember if you read it. I don't need to, you know, and infinitum go through all this, but if you look at the end of this text. The Pharisees, this guy gets healed of his blindness. Everyone was getting in trouble because Jesus was becoming popular, so the leaders of the synagogue were kicking people out of the synagogue if they confessed that they believed that Jesus was the Christ of the Old Testament, the promises and the prophecies. So it was a touchy situation. The parents of this man, who was of age, as it says in the text, were brought in and interrogated, and they didn't want to go on the record because they didn't want to get kicked out of the synagogue. So the guy gets interrogated and at the end of all this discussion about blindness, it's clear that it's becoming a metaphor for them not understanding something. And in verses 40 and 41, here's the punchline of the



whole story. "Some of the Pharisees near him heard these things, and said to him, 'Are we also blind?'" I'm catching your drift here, Jesus. Are you telling me that we're blind?

Now we've shifted from physical blindness, obvious, to you're thinking we don't get it. Are you saying we don't get it? We don't understand. Is there something we're missing here? Is that what you're trying to say? And of course, they've already said to everyone who's suggested that, well, you're crazy. Of course, we know what we're talking about. "Jesus said to them" this, here's the punchline, "if you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, 'We see,' your guilt remains." If you were blind, you would have no guilt. But now that you say we see "your guilt remains." Now, you say, right? That's the thing. They say that they see. So if you would just admit that you're blind, well, then we could solve your ultimate problem, the problem of the Old Testament, the ministry of condemnation, the law of sin and death. You know, teachers of the law, you lead the synagogue. You don't measure up, no one in your congregation measures up. Now, you would have eyes to see that your guilt could be removed if your eyes were open, but you'd have to admit that you're blind. You'd have to admit that you're guilty. You'd have to admit that you're a sinner.

The number one thing that happens in your life, if you sit here today and you're looking at me as a real Christian, this is the thing your neighbors do not get, right? Your coworkers do not understand this. If you ask them if they're going to heaven. Most of them believe there is a heaven and they say, oh yeah, I'm going. Why? Because I am a good person. That's what they say. And what we sit here and say, if you say you're a Christian and your eyes have been opened the very first thing your eyes are open to through the Spirit's book, right? He wrote the New Testament, he wrote the Old Testament, and here's what the Spirit is saying. And what he's trying to do as this is written and perceived by you, as the Spirit starts to open your eyes, he convicts you of sin, righteousness, and judgment. And your eyes are open to the problem of guilt. And you have to say you're guilty. See, and that's what your neighbors, your co-workers, your relatives are not willing to say. They don't want to say they're guilty, I'm not a sinner. I'm not the kind of sinner that should go to hell, that's for sure. I've seen the Farsight comics. I'm not going there. Occasionally, there are cultural references that I need you to keep up with here in the sermon. (audience laughing) Farsight? Anybody? Am I that old? No one's seen the Farsight? All right, sorry. We can edit all that out for the radio.

Listen to me. We have to recognize, they say, I'm not a sinner. Here's the thing, you need to know you're a sinner, that's the first thing. And real Christians can nod at me right now because you know there was a time you thought you were going to be fine on judgment day and you recognized, usually with a kind of real grief and a kind of just, I mean, talk about kavod, a heaviness, I'm a sinner and I know I deserve to hear "depart from me." I know, I deserve that. You get there and he says, that's key. Then your guilt would be removed. Then we could fix the problem when the Spirit opens your eyes to see that. Now, there's more going on in this passage. Let's go up. I mean, look at verse 32. When they pull the blind man, the formerly blind man in, and he starts lecturing them almost inadvertently, but I think he's leaning into it a little bit. Verse 32, "Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone has opened the eyes of a man born blind." This is insane. And "if this man were not from God, he could do nothing," because that's what they were saying. You can't be a



follower of this guy, can you? And "they answered," here are the leaders of the synagogue, "you were born in utter sin, and you teach us?" Do you know the degrees that we've had? Do you know the seminaries we've graduated from? "And they cast him out." So he's done. He's lost his card to the synagogue.

Verse 35, "Jesus heard that they had cast him out," and he went out and found him, "and having found him he said, 'Do you believe in the Son of Man?'" Do you believe in the Son of Man? Now that phrase, every time we run into it in the New Testament, I try to remind you of where it came from in Daniel Chapter 7. Now I know it's a lot in the book of Ezekiel. But Daniel 7 gives us this great picture of the Son of Man, "one like a Son of Man, coming before the Ancient of Days, and he was presented before him." And everything in Daniel is about a coming kingdom. And the coming kingdom is going to have a king and it's going to be better than all the kingdoms of Babylon, Assyria, Medo-Persia, the Romans. It's going to be the ultimate kingdom and it is going to displace all other kingdoms. And that king it says that all authority, all worship, all glory, all power, all riches, all should belong to him. So we are supposed to be the people who give our allegiance to the one like the Son of Man, the Son of Man. And Jesus says, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" Now he's been in the synagogue, he hasn't been reading anything, but he's been hearing people read to him, this blind man. Now he is seeing, and he answers, "Who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?" And Jesus said, "You've seen him." There's a loaded phrase, right? It's the first guy you saw. "And it is he who is speaking to you." It's me. And "he said, 'Lord, I believe,' and he worshiped him."

By the way, the first thing on that tablet that Moses brought down off of Sinai was, you don't worship anybody else, you only worship God. I mean, the elaboration in Exodus 34 verse 14, is "God is a jealous God, whose name is jealous." You don't worship anybody but God. And now this man says, Son of Man, yeah, Daniel 7, all allegiance, all worship, all glory, all dominion belongs to him. Everyone should worship the Son. Or as it's put in Philippians 2, "every knee should bow ... every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord." And guess what the Father has done? Now, he's glorified in that. "To the glory of God the Father." And this man formally blind bows down here and says I worship you. And Jesus goes, now you got it. The second thing the veil removal does. Not only does it show you you're a sinner, it shows you the supremacy of Christ. Here's another thing your neighbors won't understand. Not only do they not say, oh, yeah, I'm guilty, I deserve to go to hell, you've said that if you're Christian. Number two, we're here you're singing songs about Jesus as though he's deified. They might think some historians are going to think you're like the Romans. You've turned your emperor into some kind of deified God. You guys are crazy. He's not God.

I've taken my humanities class. I know this historic figure of Christ. I can't deny there was a Christ. But come on, you made him out to be God? That's crazy. Maybe that's the Constantinian thing Dan Brown was talking about. I don't believe any of that. I can't believe you sit there and you really mean those lyrics that you sing at church? And we're saying, yeah, because God has opened our eyes to the supremacy of Christ, this is God in human flesh. This is the fullness of deity dwelling in bodily form. And we are reading about in the New Testament the righteous, strong right arm of the Lord providing salvation, right? And this salvation is spoken of in the first person as Yahweh. So Yahweh sends Yahweh to go and



solve the problem. But the Father and the Son are distinctive persons. And then they come here in this discussion in the Upper Room talking about the Father now sent me. I'm going to go back to the Father, but he's not going to leave you an orphan and we're going to send the Spirit. And the Spirit now is going to do his work for the next now at least 2,000 years. And we have in this world a book that the Spirit wrote that the Spirit wants to work in your life, in your eyes, to open them up to say you're a sinner, but here's Christ, the hero comes onto the scene, God in human form.

And then look at this next chapter, Chapter 10, I'm the good shepherd, right? That's the heading on the English Standard Version, at least, and he talks about being the good shepherd. There are a lot of people who want your attention and allegiance, but they're thieves and robbers. Verse 2, anyone "who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the gatekeeper opens." And that's just an interesting phrase. And if you think about the Spirit being involved in all this, he's the one opening your eyes, the big gates of your eyelids get opened here and "the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out." There's the verb. Verse 4, "When he has brought out all of his own," these are his people now, "he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice." Now I know we're mixing metaphors here, but the veil has been opened to where you see your sin, you see the greatness of Christ and you see that you need to follow that Christ.

Now here's the thing, right? We don't have Christ to follow. Where is he? In Barstow? Is he in San Diego? Did he go to El Paso? Where is Jesus? Oh, he's enthroned in heaven. But here's the deal. The Spirit of God wrote this book, 27 letters of the New Testament, put there in our Bibles in propositional phrases and sentences and clauses and verbs and nouns and adjectives, and there it is saying to us what Jesus is, what he did, what he accomplished and how he wants us to live. And it's filled with all this information. The Old Testament reminds us we're sinners, and we see that played out in the narrative, and now Christ has come, the prophecies are fulfilled, and now we see our sin, we see his greatness, and we see we need to follow him. And the problem is we have pressure from our world, we have pleasure from our flesh, we have spiritual pressure against us to say, I don't want to follow him.

Think about just the pressure from your coworkers. You're going to go and live for Christ and follow him. What does that mean? That means every day I look in a book and I see what Christ is all about. Now I have to follow him. I have to now embody his principles, his priorities, his virtues, his attributes, all the communicable attributes of the Father. I have to try to do that. And that should be my thing. I should hear his voice and follow him, I hear his voice in the pages of Scripture. And now what am I supposed to do? I'm supposed to do what he does. I'm supposed to echo and reflect what he is. And I have all this pressure. Your coworkers don't mind if you're a good, honest guy, but don't go too far with all this, don't threaten the bottom line, when we answer to the board, when we answer to our shareholders or whatever you answer to. And yet here's what the Bible says. You should be looking over the shoulder, Colossians Chapter 3, of your boss seeing the ultimate one, you serve Christ Jesus, the Lord, and you should be serving him and therefore you're going to say, I'm going to follow him in a world, even if they're all against what I say. I'm going to follow him because I hear his voice and my eyes are open to the need that I have to follow Christ.



As long as we're taking a survey of John, go to John Chapter 11. What does the top of John Chapter 11 talk about? The death of Lazarus. Do you remember this story? Here's John Chapter 11. Lazarus dies. He has this discussion starting in verse 17 that's headed in our editorial heading at least, I'm the resurrection and the life. We get to that phrase in verse 25, "Jesus says to Martha, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone,'" verse 26, "'who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?'" There are a lot of things about do you believe. Do you believe I am who I say I am? Do you believe I'm the good shepherd? Are you willing to follow me? And now do you believe what I just told you? And that is that you deserve death. That's what the whole Old Testament was about. You deserve to die. You deserve to be excluded from God's blessings. You deserve that. Now do you believe that I can solve that problem? Do you believe that I am the one who fixes all of that? Verse 27, and "She said to him, 'Yes, Lord; I believe that you are,' the Messiah, 'the Christ, the Son of God who is coming into the world.'" Everything the Old Testament said about solving our problem and all those prophetic pictures of what was coming, I believe you're the one.

Now, this is where we are very different than every other religion out there, including those that bear the name of Christ, many of them, who are constantly getting you to say what your neighbor still says, even if they're religious kinds of people. If you ask them if they are going to heaven, they say, I hope so, and I'm trying. And you've got to realize the gospel of grace is completely different than that. You could be the worst person in this country. You could be murdering and cannibalizing toddlers, let's just get gross. And you could in the last 30 minutes of your life as you're incarcerated in the high maximum security prison, you could open up a Bible, you could read the words of the Holy Spirit codified in sentences, the Holy Spirit can open your eyes and you can see your sin and your guilt, you can confess that sin, you can see the greatness of Christ, the only hope that you have, you can see that he is one that you need to follow. And you can now put your trust in the fact that if you would trust in him, he has solved everything that you need and you will have eternal life, and then you can drop dead 30 minutes later and that man who was the worst in our country would be your brother in Christ being in eternity with you.

Now, tell that little parable to your neighbor and see what they say. Are they going to like that theology? They're not going to like that theology because they don't understand grace. I've known a lot of people who have really chafed against my preaching when it comes to sin. They don't like it. And they've really fought me. And I personally sat down after the sermons and I've taught... I think of one man in particular in my mind right now, and he did not like it. I hate the fact that you constantly talk about all this. Then he became a Christian. And now I watch him sing the song, "Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me." And he means it. And I think to myself, what happened? His eyes were opened. And he realized, no matter how relatively righteous you are Christ can save the foremost of sinners by the same mechanism that he saved the Boy Scout who helps old ladies cross the street. Because all of us fall short, whether you're David, Daniel, Noah, or Abraham, or whether you're the worst, Saul of Tarsus. The grace of God takes your life and exchanges it for Christ's life, takes your sin, places it on his cross. It's all finished and satisfied. The



resurrection proves all that. He conquers the law of sin and death. Like a human being can't fly up in the air at 30,000 feet. And the law of the Spirit and life, let's call it drag and lift and all the rest aerodynamics, can get you flying thirty thousand feet for as many hours as you can handle and we broke the law.

How do we break the law of gravity? Well there's a new law. This is the reality of the New Testament gospel and we can read about it every single day and it is here. It opens eyes. The miracle of regeneration, to see your sin, to see Christ's supremacy, to see our need to follow him, to see the fact that our assurance of eternal life is based on his work, not ours, that's huge. Once you've seen Christ for who he is and the power to open eyes, let's just end this in verses 17 and 18 with the fact it will not leave you where you're at. We've really been talking here about regeneration or what we might call in theology, justification, the imputation of Christ's righteousness, that legal fiction that Luther talked about, the fact that I'm a sinner, but now I'm perceived as righteous before God. I mean, that's an amazing fact, right? Whether you're a cannibal of toddlers or whether you're just the average taxpaying Orange County person who's idolized whatever, pleasure and comfort or whatever your life is about. Your life has been exchanged for Christ. You're clothed in righteousness divine, as we just sang.

Now, where does that leave us? Well, we're justified. Now what? Verse 17, "Now the Lord is the Spirit." Now this is not a conflation of Christ and the third person of the Godhead. They are clearly distinctive persons. We learn that in the Upper Room Discourse. But you know, the Lord is not only the Father who architected the plan of salvation, but the Lord, as it says in the Old Testament, is also the right arm of God that comes and accomplishes salvation. And the Lord is also the Spirit who is lifting the veil from the eyes of people. The Lord is the Spirit. And where the Spirit of the Lord is there is freedom. What kind of freedom? The kind of freedom that no longer keeps you bound to the sin of gravity, in this case, the law of sin and death. You get freed from that. You're a sinner but you don't have to die. You're a sinner but you don't have consequences. You are a sinner but you're not condemned. So I guess that leaves us as a sinner. No, it changes us. Verse 18, "And we all, with unveiled face, beholding," the greatness, "the glory," the gravitas, "of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this all comes from the Lord who is the Spirit."

Now the Spirit's work is what's going on in our church. It's what's going on in your home. It's what's going on in our small group. It's what's going on in our youth ministry. It's what's going on in their lives, the Spirit, right? The Father enthroned in "unapproachable light." Of course, he knows all things. He's perceiving everything everywhere and the Son has all the glorified attributes of divinity and yet he sits according to the Bible at the right hand of God but the Spirit is dispatched to do his work in building the church here. Of course it's Christ's work but it's the Spirit is the agency of his work and here we have the Spirit who is trying to do something to get you as you see all this, as he's lifted this veil from your eyes, he convicted you of sin, righteousness and judgment and now he's saying look at it and become more like it.

Now in the Old Testament, we had breastplates and turbines and we had all kinds of things. We had censers and sacrifices and smells and bells and everything that was going on in the



Old Testament. Now what do we have? We've got a book, and the book is telling us about transcendent truths. It's like John Chapter 4, talking to the Samaritan, when you say in that mountain, we say in this mountain. But you know what? There's a coming of time and it now is when you're supposed to worship God in Spirit. It's not about the place. It's not about the bells. It's not about the smells. It is about Spirit and truth. And you need to worship God that way. And now we're here, and the truth is found, codified in your Bibles. The Old Testament? Essential. Got to have it. But it leads us to the New Testament. And the New Testament is the solution. It's the grand, glory-laden solution. And now if you look at that, if you stare into it like James said, "Into ... the law of liberty," it frees us. And now we become an effectual doer because the Spirit's going to be saying, every time we read the Bible and there's truth, the Spirit will go, yeah, yeah, it's talking to you. Yep, yep, do that. And you become a doer of the Word. You'll be blessed in what you do.

Number three, let's put it this way, "Study the Spirit's Word to be More Like Christ." That's the Bible. It will transform you from one level of Christ-likeness to the next level of Christ-likeness, to the next level of the Christ-likeness. Sometimes you'll see two steps forward and one step back. I get that. But you're going to keep making progress, and you're going to move forward if you approach the Word like it is the law of liberty and you stare at it. And we just don't approach it for what it is. "It is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword." Let's just turn to that passage as long as we're talking about it. And as we turn there, I just want you to think about that. Why would I want to be like Christ? Well, according to James Chapter 1, if I do what it says, and of course the Spirit is cheering for me to do what the book that he wrote says, well then we'll be blessed in what we do. Remember the blessings of the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew Chapter 5? Blessed are those, blessed are those, blessed are those, blessed are those. That what? All these things that look like Christ. All these things. Right? We're the kind that "hunger and thirst for righteousness," we're the kind..., and it goes down this list, and I think all of that looks like Christ, so I will be blessed. So this is a good thing. It's holding out for me this promise.

So I want to be more like Christ. Well, how does that work? Well, according to Hebrews Chapter 4 verse 12, I've got to use this thing that goes down, look at the last phrase, it "discerns the thoughts and the intentions of the heart." It convicts me. That conviction is though we didn't get it, look at verse 13, because we are totally exposed to the sight of God. And if you're thinking rightly about God, you know he knows everything, not just what you do, but what you think. And you're naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give an account. So I know when I read the Bible that's living and active, it gets down and starts to kick me sometimes right in the face and saying, Mike, stop. Mike's changed. Don't do that anymore. You've got to start doing this. You've heard it enough times, now do it. That's called conviction. The Word of God is effective in convincing you. And if you read the Bible and study the Bible approaching it for what it is, God's living and active Word, the Spirit of God wrote these words so you would become more like Christ, it's going to have to convict you to be less like the old you. And that means conviction. Get ready for that.

That's why some people who aren't Christians, they just want to go to a place that just pats them on the head for wherever they're at. They love sermons about how God loves you just



the way you are. Let's just think about that phrase in light of everything we've talked about this morning. Let's just do it in light of verses 17 and 18. He wants to change you. And to change you, you're going to have to be convicted through the preaching of the Word, through the reading of the Word, through reading good Christian books that talk about the Word. We're going to have conviction. And there's nothing better than the Word of God to convict us. Go a chapter later, Chapter 5 verse 12. Hebrews 5 verse 12. He said you guys, "by this time you ought to be teachers." But you haven't learned enough about the Bible. "You need someone to teach you," you've got to go back to the "basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, for everyone who lives on milk." If you're just going back to your favorite eight verses of the Bible, you're unskilled in the word of righteousness. You need to be skilled in it. Not a neophyte, not a child. "Solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice." Circle that and draw a line back up to the first part of the verse. What constant practice of what? Right? Solid food. What is that? Verse 13, "skilled in the word of righteousness." I want "solid food." I will "have by the power of my discernment trained by a constant practice," and what will I be able, "to distinguish good from evil."

See if you're not wise you will not be able to discern the difference between what is good and what is evil. You won't be able to discern the differences between what's good and what is better, and what's better and what's best. You won't be able to do that. Wisdom is being able to do that, and Christ was able to do that. Would you say Christ is the personification of wisdom? Of course he is. And here's what I'm saying. You read the Bible, here's one thing it's very effective to do, Chapter 4 of Hebrews, to convict you. Chapter 5, oh, it's certainly going to make you wise, and the more you spend time in the Word, the wiser you're going to be in this world. Let's go to the next chapter, Chapter 6. Look at verse 9. He's just really given some hard words, the hardest words in the book. And he says in verse 9, "Though we speak in this way, yet in your case, beloved, we feel secure of better things -- things that belong to salvation." I've just talked about, by the way, this will help you interpret the first eight verses, talking about people who aren't saved. But I'm thinking you are saved, you're really saved. And so, I'm thinking we're going to see, "things that belong to salvation."

Now what is that going to be? That's going to doing stuff that I've talked about: serving, loving, giving ourselves for other people. Well, "God's not unjust," verse 10 says, "so as to overlook your work and the love you've shown for his name in serving the saints, as you still do. So we desire ... you to show the same earnestness to have the full assurance of hope to the end." Don't be lazy, do "not be sluggish," verse 12, "but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises." What promises? Promises you read about in the Bible. Promises like, hey, seek this instead of that and you'll store it for yourself as treasure in heaven. This is called encouragement, right? This is called motivation. This is called the kind of thing that gives you a sense that I'm going to get up today and I'm going to do what I ought to do and I am going to reflect what godliness I should reflect in my world, and you know what? God is going to reward me for that.

As a matter of fact, that's where the beatitudes go. By the time we get to verse 12 in Chapter 5 of Matthew, it says, "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake." Wow.



I'm all for the hunger for more righteousness and you'll be blessed. I don't think I'm blessed when I start losing jobs and friendships over this. No, blessed are you. As a matter of fact, leap for joy, be excited, be happy, rejoice in that day, for "great is your reward in heaven." Where do I learn that kind of stuff? From the Bible. I've got to read the Bible to know the promises, and that I know the promises, guess what that does, it motivates me to power through the hard stuff. The Word of God is great for convicting you. It's great for giving you wisdom, and it's great for motivating you to get going. That's why you should read your Bibles in the morning. Now, there's no Bible verse about that. But Jesus spent his quiet times in the morning. And it would be good for you to start your day by getting in the Word, approaching it the way you should, living and active. Let it convict you. Be okay with that. Let it grant you wisdom. I hope you're ready for that. Let it give you motivation for your day to hold steady, firm. Earnestness, full assurance of the hope, not sluggish, not lazy, "imitating those who through faith and patience inherit the promises."

One more, look at the next section here, talking about Abraham had a promise that ultimately would flesh itself out in the coming of Christ, but the immediate near-field fulfillment was you don't have kids, your wife is too old to have kids but I'm going to give you someone from your own body and your wife's going to give birth to a child of promise. And through that line, Isaac, you're going to have the Messiah. And according to the Abrahamic promise, that person, the ultimate seed of Abraham, so to speak, is going to bless every family of the earth. So the Messiah is going to come. So that relates to us. But his promise was, you're going to have a kid in your old age. He had to wait a decade for that. But it says here, "Surely I'll bless you multiply you," verse 14, "Abraham, thus having patiently waited, obtained the promise." Now "People swear by something greater than themselves, and in all their disputes an oath is final for confirmation. So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise." Now that's us. The heirs of the promise are us. Heirs, plural, it's not Isaac and it's not Abraham. We are "heirs to the promise" that the ultimate offspring of Abraham would save us from the law of sin and death. And Christ does that. By the power of the Spirit, he saves us from the penalty of our sins so that we are forgiven and there's no condemnation for us in him.

And to make that something that gives you great assurance and great internal encouragement, he, "by the unchangeable character of his purpose, guaranteed it with an oath." If you read the Bible, there's nothing more firm than a covenant, and the old covenant was a promise that led us to death, but the new covenant was embedded as a promise to come in the old covenant. And now we read this thing called the New Testament or the new covenant, and now the new promises, trust in Christ and by the Spirit, we're placed into Christ and there's no condemnation for us. This is an amazing thing, and God has made that clear to us so that, I love this, verse 18, "So that by two unchangeable things," God's promise and God's oath, "in which it's impossible for God to lie." And you can add that as a third thing, because what are we even asking him to make promises for? "We who have fled for refuge," that's us, the inheritors of this promise.

We fled for a refuge because I didn't want the law of sin and death. I'm coming to the refuge of Christ. We "might have," here are some great words, "strong encouragement to hold fast to



the hope set before us. We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain, where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf." We have a place before God because of Christ, and if you would just read his Word, if you would study the gospels, if you'd know the epistles. If you'd go back in the Old Testament and remember the promises that were coming in the New Testament, you can have this kind of assurance. The Bible gives you assurance to hold on to the hope. If you keep reading the Bible, you'll die an old man or an old woman holding fast to the promise because you will be assured day after day having the encouragement to keep moving forward. The Bible is effective in bringing conviction, wisdom, motivation, and assurance and encouragement. And it's really all about coming to this realization that we're opening a book that is powerful.

Speaking of the Sermon on the Mount Jesus once said don't throw your pearls of truth before the, you know, snorting pigs that don't see the value of pearls. That's a Mike Fabarez paraphrase but that's what he said. Don't cast your pearls before the swine. Don't cast your truth that is so glorious, don't put it out there before snorting pigs that don't see the value of it. I would hate to have God look at us carrying around in our phones, our tablets, our laptops, and having these leather-bound codifications of the 27 books of the New Testament, not to mention the foundational predicate of the Old Testament, and seeing us just kind of saying, I'm too tired to read it today. Or, yeah, I hear a guy talk about it, I cross my arms, let's just see if anything strikes me here. Your casual approach to the Bible, I don't want you to qualify as a pig in Christ's mind. I want you to approach it reverently. I want you to know that it will transform you if you just approach God's Word when it's carefully articulated in a book, when it's explained in a sermon, when it's read, when it is read to you. I need you to respond to it and I need you to approach first and foremost knowing what it is.

George Whitefield in the 18th century changed our culture. I mean, we think God's got such a mess on his hands in modern America. Well, you know what? God's the same God, has the same book in the hands of people that I hope can be the same as people like Edwards and Wesley and Whitefield. And George Whitefield says, everything changed at one point in my life. Listen to this. It was all about his posture toward the Scripture. Here's what he said. He wrote this, "I began to read the Holy Scripture upon my knees." Interestingly, he changed his posture in how he'd read the Bible. "Laying aside all other books and praying over every line, and if possible, praying over every word. This proved to be real food and real drink to my soul. I daily received a fresh life, real light, and power from above." Whitefield was used by God to change the world because he changed his perspective in approaching the Word of God. And of course, that's all wrought by the Spirit of God. I get that. But this was a conscious decision that Whitefield had and he pointed back to it. I just started treating my daily Bible differently. And God changed his generation. I just hope it'll be the same for you. Don't read the Bible like it's a chore. Don't listen to sermons like it really doesn't matter. Don't read a good Christian book and approach it in a casual manner. Lean into this. The supreme value of the New Testament truths cannot be overstated.

Let's pray. God, help us in a day with a cacophony of voices and the din of noise and, I mean, we had headlines and we got stuff thrown at us every day, but the words that matter are the



words that have been read by our Christian forefathers for centuries, the same book that Whitefield read. And he read it on his knees in the morning, and I can just picture that, praying and saying, God, as Psalm 119 says, show me wonderful things in your Word. We often quote that, but the next verse is just as important. We're sojourners on this earth, show us your commandments. It's this transcendent thinking that we're opening a book that's not like our newsfeed. It's not our social media pages. Here is a book with eternal truth. We're sojourners here on earth, but really our citizenship is in heaven. God, help us to look to your Word with a new, refreshed, recalibrated mindset of how important this book is. And God, I pray it would change us, it would transform us. We would be more Christ-like after this week is over because of the days we've spent soaking in your Word before we run off to our daily activities. God, please let it imprint upon our hearts. Let it change our lives. And then God, I know like with Whitefield and so many others, let us just have a transforming effect in our generation for your glory and for the sake of your Son.

In whose name we pray. Amen