

Sermon Group Discussion Questions

Center Point Church

Sermon Summary

The sermon titled "Walking Properly Before Outsiders" by Pastor Tyler Wittmer emphasizes on the teachings from 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12, stating the importance of living a life congruous to God's teachings and reflecting the transformative power of the gospel. Pastor Tyler elaborates on the term "walking," explaining that it connotes to one's way of life in accordance to God's words rather than physically moving. This notion is reinforced by Psalm 1, highlighting the blessings for those who heed the ways of the Lord. The sermon further discusses the issues brought up in Thessalonica, where some believers gave up work in anticipation of Jesus' imminent return, causing tensions amongst the congregation. Discouraged by the idleness, Paul stresses the importance of work and purposeful life. The sermon accentuates the need to integrate faith into all life sectors rather than limiting it to particular activities or times. The sermon warns against the pitfalls of hyper-focusing on end times, using historical example of William Miller, whose inaccurate predictions about the world's end led to disappointment among his followers. In conclusion, the sermon urges believers to live as per God's teachings, working diligently and continuously. It advocates for preaching the gospel through actions, living a life that mirrors the transformation from God's grace. The idea is to inspire those outside the church and uphold the gospel's power. The sermon concludes with a communion invitation, reminding believers of Jesus' sacrifice and his impending return.

Discussion Questions

1. How can we ensure that we are walking properly before outsiders?

Context: The sermon discusses the importance of living a life that pleases God and reflects the transformative power of the gospel to those outside of the church.

Application Question: What are some specific actions or habits you can develop to make sure your life is a witness to the gospel?

2. What is the significance of 'walking' in faith?

Context: In the sermon, Pastor Tyler explains that the concept of 'walking' in faith refers to how one lives their life according to the teachings and laws of God.

Application Question: Can you think of an instance when your 'walk' aligned or didn't align with your faith? How did it affect you and those around you?

3. What role does work play in our Christian lives?

Context: The sermon highlights the importance of work and the need to live purposefully in all aspects of life, not compartmentalizing one's faith to certain activities or times.

Application Question: How can you integrate your faith into your work or daily responsibilities?

4. Why is it dangerous to overemphasize eschatology?

Context: The sermon addresses the dangers of trying to determine the exact time of Jesus' return and the disappointment and disillusionment it can cause when predictions do not come to pass.

Application Question: How can focusing too much on the end times distract you from living out your faith in the present?

5. How can we preach the gospel through both our words and actions?

Context: The sermon concludes by calling believers to live purposefully for God in all areas of life and to let their transformed lives be a witness to the grace and mercy of Jesus.

Application Question: What are some practical ways you can share the gospel through both your words and actions in your daily life?

Sermon Transcript

1 Thessalonians 4

1 Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus,

Those who are in the Church in Thessalonica (Who are IN the Lord Jesus)

Paul is reminding them of what they have already received, how they ought to walk and to please God.

that as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more.

They are doing this, but to do so more and more...

2 For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus.

That more and more is the will of God for their life, their sanctification, Paul says...

3 For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; 4 that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, 5 not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; 6 that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. 7 For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. 8 Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.

9 Now concerning brotherly love

This Now, is in connection back to how you ought to walk and to please God

So within the church, with those who are believers, the instruction from the Lord Jesus and from Paul is that they would more and more: abstain from sexual immorality, and love one another more and more... That is the instruction, not just individually, but collectively, that this is a life that is pleasing to God, brings God glory, and is good for them...

Abstaining from sexual immorality, individually, addressing it collectively.

Growing in love for one another as a congregation.

Paul tells them that...

you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another, 10 for that indeed is what you are doing to all the brothers throughout Macedonia. But we urge you, brothers, to do this more and more,

Indeed is what you are doing

More and More

That we grow more and more in the likeness of Christ, growing in love for one another in the church. We talked about that last week. So far in chapter four, all of the verses one through nine, rather ten, have been to those inside of the church, the congregation itself. He has not addressed anything outside of the congregation yet, but that changes today. This, and here in verse eleven is in connection to the now, in connection to how we ought to walk in order to please God, and how we ought to live in order to please God.

It's connected all the way back to verse one, that this is a part of our sanctification, he says, and to aspire to live quietly and to mind your own affairs and to work with your hands as we instructed you, so that you may walk properly before outsiders and be dependent on no one. So the way that we walk out our Christian faith matters. This idea of what it looks like to walk in faith, it's actually an older idea that Paul is pulling from. It's a Jewish idea. So in Hebrew, in the Old Testament, the word for walk is Halakh.

And it was more than just like me walking. Currently on stage, it had a connotation of how one lives their life. So the Jewish law and the compiling of the teaching of the Torah and some of their other writings they called the halacha, which is it meant the way, the way in which you live your life. It's the idea that we see in psalm, chapter one. Right.

Blessed is the man who walks not in the council of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers, but his delight, the one who walks accordingly, his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither in all that he does, he prospers. Paul is addressing in the context of this whole section, verses one through twelve, how you ought to walk and to please God. Paul is encouraging the church, live your lives. Walk in a manner that is pleasing to God and to aspire to live quietly and to mind your own affairs and to work with your hands as we instructed you, so that you may walk properly before outsiders, those outside the congregation, and be dependent on no one.

That phrase there, in the Greek protow exo, there's one other instance that it's used in the New Testament. Colossians chapter four, starting in verse five, it says, walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer each person.

The way that we walk, the way that we live our lives, is of crucial importance, and Paul wants to communicate that to us. It takes wisdom. Paul says, to the church in Colossi.

Paul writes his letters to churches that they might be encouraged, and he writes to correct their thinking, their teaching, and in many cases, to correct behavior. Those in the church who were not living in congruence with the gospel they had received. Scholars believe, I believe that at the core of Paul's writing to address the church in Thessalonica was idleness. Idleness. This comes up in a few places in both the letters to the church of Thessalonica, and it seems to stem from there were false teachers, those teaching things incorrectly, that had snuck into the congregation there in Thessalonica and were teaching incorrect things about the return of Jesus.

They were teaching incorrect things about the end times, the return of Christ, the end of days.

And so Paul's writing to address some who, in their incorrect thinking in the church in Thessalonica, they had quit their jobs, they had stopped working, they had stopped doing the things that the Lord had commanded them to do, because their thought process was, if Jesus is coming back tomorrow anyway, then why does work matter? Where am I getting that? He says in one Thessalonians 5:12. We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves, and we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the faint hearted, help the weak.

Be patient with all them first. Thessalonians is likely the first letter that Paul wrote. But in the few months from his departure from Thessalonica, false teaching over the end times had snuck into the church, and those wrong ideas were causing wrong action. There were some in the congregation who I said had quit their jobs, and their thought was, if Christ's return is imminent, then work here is pointless.

Jesus reminded his disciples of what we were to do right before he ascended into heaven. Acts, chapter one, verse six. So when they had come together, they asked him, those are the disciples. They asked him, lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom of Israel? He said to them, it is not for you to know times or seasons, that the father is fixed by his own authority.

Well, Jesus saying there, you're not going to know what's coming next. You're not going to know the exact time you're not going to know the exact season, he says, but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you. And you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth. And when he had said these things as they were looking on, he was lifted up and the cloud took him out of their sight. As believers in the Lord Jesus filled with the Holy Spirit, we have received instruction from the Lord Jesus that we will be his witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria until the ends of the earth.

Jesus's command to his people before his ascension to heaven is this. That his people would be witnesses to those around them of what he has done, what he has taught, that we would testify, be living testimonies of the work of Jesus by the evidence of the Holy Spirit in our lives, that we would be transformed new creations and witnesses to the world around us. And then Jesus ascended into heaven. And what happens? Acts, chapter one, verse ten.

And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes and said, men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus who was taken up from you into heaven will come in the same way that you saw him go into heaven.

That's the tendency, right? We want to. Like the disciples, they saw the ascension of Jesus and they just stared at heaven. And two angels, I assume two men in white robes came and said, why are you just staring? This Jesus, he will return in the same way you saw him go, but he's commanded you to do things.

Now, the eschatology of some in Thessalonica had placed such an emphasis on Jesus' return that they were like the disciples after Jesus' ascension staring at the sky but not being faithful witnesses of Christ. And this was causing tension in the congregation and causing division. Those who were idle were giving themselves to being a burden to the congregation. They were busy bodies and their idleness and were sowing division. They were spending their time unwisely.

Paul had to remind them in verse eleven of chapter four to mind their own affairs. Paul had even stronger words when he wrote back to the church in Thessalonica in his second letter to the church, meaning he still had to address this problem of idleness. He says in two Thessalonians three, starting in verse six. Now we command you, brothers, in the name of the Lord Jesus, that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness. Keep away from any brother walking in idleness.

Not in accord with tradition that you receive from us. For you know yourselves how you ought to imitate us, because we were not idle when we were with you, nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it. But with toil and labor we worked night and day, that we may not be a burden to any of you. It was not because we do not have the right but to give you in ourselves an example to imitate. For even when we were with you, we would give you this command.

If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat such strong words to the church in Thessalonica, verse eleven. For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busy bodies. Paul says now such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus to do their work quietly and to earn their own living. Paul says, keep away from brothers who are engaging in idleness. He admonishes and encourages them that they might take seriously their witness before those outside the church.

Paul teaches the church in Thessalonica who are deeply concerned with the return of Christ, that they are to keep doing what Jesus had instructed them, that they might walk how they ought and please God, and should consider how their witness to those outside the church. Paul says it matters. He connects it in a way that is pleasing to God, living a life that is pleasing to God. This type of wrong thinking about eschatology, an overemphasis. Eschatology.

By the way, I've said that word several times, I should eschatology, the study of end times, an overemphasis on this type of eschatology, trying to determine the day and hour of the return of Christ. It can have destructive consequences in the life of a congregation.

Between 1831 and 1844, there was a preacher, an American preacher named William Miller, and he began amassing a following of people because of his particular flair for interpreting Bible prophecy. He had thousands of followers by this time, and all of his teaching was centered around Bible prophecy, mostly out of Daniel, but he kind of melded it together from multiple places in scripture, and he had come up with a formula, an exact date on which the world would end and Christ would return. It was in March of 1844, March 21. And when that day came and went, one commentator on the event wrote this. When, according to Miller's calculations, the Jewish year ended on March 20, 144 Millerites, those who had come to follow Miller, experienced another setback.

They said in quotes, our disappointment was great, wrote Miller. Certainly an error had been made. But which one? The Bible must have the answer. In the meantime, encouragement came from the prophet Habakkuk for the vision is yet for an appointed time, though at tarry wait for it.

So using scripture to say, I got the date wrong, but scripture affirms that I just have to pick another date. And so he did. He says, there are writing from Stan, said J. Mary describes this period. There are a few here who are looking for God to come soon and set up this everlasting kingdom.

We are determined to wait for the coming of the Lord until he shall appear. We have no thoughts of giving up our faith or turning back. In July, a new interpretation was proposed as Millerites revised the anticipated end of the 2300 years of Daniel's prophecy. They concluded that at the end of the prophecy should coincide with the Jewish day of atonement celebration on the 10th day of the 7th month of the Jewish calendar. This day of atonement was understood to be a type of the purification of the earth on the day of judgment occurring at the second advent of Christ.

Thus, the coming of the Lord could be expected on October 22, 1844, this new calculation gave fervor to the movement. Millerism was now headed for its crescendo. As the expected day grew closer, Millerites deeply searched their hearts. Many closed their businesses, forsook their animals, just let them go, and gave up their jobs. Many gave up their belongings.

Thousands of millerite journals and pamphlets were freely distributed. And October 22, 1844 came to be known in church history circles as the great disappointment to the Millerites, as his followers were disappointed that his teaching did not come to pass. This might have happened in 1844. Honestly, I am positive I could have cited this type of thing in every generation of church history, from Thessalonica until right now. There are those who desire so much to know the day and the hour.

So to address the idleness in the church in Thessalonica, Paul first instructs the believers in the church, he says in verse eleven, and to aspire to live quietly, to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands as we instructed you, so that you may walk properly before outsiders and be dependent on no one. Jesus, by the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, has not called us to stare at the sky, but to be witnesses to those around us. Not that we shouldn't take very seriously and desire very earnestly the return of Christ. Of course we desire his return. I long for his return.

In the day in which revelation 21 tells us that Jesus will return and all things will be made new, and he will wipe away every tear from our eyes and mourning and sin and death and sickness, that all of that will be no more. We long for that day, and as we long for that day, we are busy doing the things that Jesus had told us to do.

Aspire to live quietly. Paul's telling the church to have a quiet confidence in serving the Lord. One commentator put it this way. While Paul's admonition may have been clear, some of the Thessalonians had clearly not taken it to heart. Quitting jobs and taking advantage of others was not how God expected them to live.

An eager anticipation for the return of Christ was admirable, but failing to live faithfully until he returned was not. Such a lifestyle did not take seriously their calling. To walk properly in the presence of outsiders, the Thessalonians needed a firm reminder that the gospel is only as believable as the changed lives of those who proclaim it.

Paul also encourages the believers to mind their own affairs. Those that were idle in the congregation were tending themselves. We find out in second Thessalonians to be busy bodies. They were interjecting themselves in disunity into the lives of other believers in the congregation. When I worked downtown for a season, I was an administrative assistant initially, and I got the opportunity to kind of like float around through different departments, and I found that, and I'm sure that this is not the case in every workplace. I say in sarcastic jest that there were so often people in the workplace that it seemed the majority of their role was talking about how others are not doing a majority of their role.

Thankfully, because I was in administrative system, I could just keep moving those types of conversations. They can hurt a witness, gossip, slander, to engage in them, to encourage or to continue to sow division. If that happens in a workplace and that is hurtful and damaging to a culture, imagine what it does in a church or to the witness of a church if the church's people are found to be engaging in this behavior regularly. If Paul was writing a letter to churches in America today, I believe verses eleven and twelve would be a great part of his admonition and encouragement.

How often are Christians more known in their community for what they post on Facebook rather than the gospel that they proclaim so often marked by what they stand against, rather than being known as servants and as those who love their neighbors and community? Paul is not saying that we should not stand up in our culture for what we believe. Plenty of verses point to that. I would never make that case. But so often today, Christians are more known for what they are against than what they are for brother and sister, to be clear and to avoid any confusion.

I am not saying that we don't stand on our convictions. Of course we do, and regularly. But in this world that is increasingly polarized. What an opportunity that each of us have to tell others about the peace and the joy that transcends this world that we have in Christ.

Paul tells the believers, mind your own affairs. Live quietly. You don't have to engage in gossip. Seek to live a life that looks different. Paul had already instructed them, and to work with your hands, as we instructed you to do work in your hands.

In the Greek culture was looked down upon in some ways. It was looked as lesser work than some other things. And Paul says, no. In the Jewish tradition and the Christian tradition, we don't look at it that way. Brother and sister, your work matters.

Before the fall of creation in Genesis chapter three, God told Adam in Genesis two to work and to keep the garden. Before sin entered into creation, Adam was instructed to work and to keep, to flourish. In this way, work is not something that came about after sin entered into creation. Work was a part of God's good design before sin entered. And now, because of sin, we know that work includes toil and striving in vain.

But I would remind you that in the beginning, this was not so and that work was good. My fear is that sometimes we can compartmentalize our spiritual lives, that we think to ourselves, Christianity is what I do when I'm in church on Sunday or community group during the week, or I do want to address something lovingly. I know many young people in our congregation who can fall into this trap thinking the only thing that is worthy of my time is the activity that I do in the ministry. I'm involved in everything else is not important. I've had this conversation with students here, with students at WKU.

But the reality is this. It matters how we show up in class. It matters how we show up in our work. It matters how we show up at our jobs. Those areas of our life are not unrelated to our witness.

Paul says, whether you eat or drink, do all things for the glory of God, live your life for God's glory. Pursue doing these things to the best of your ability. Brother and sister, Jesus wants all of your life. He wants every square inch of your life. The ministry that you do is the life that you live in him.

For him, the gospel goes where you go because you are there and are filled with the holy spirit of God. That others might see your walk, see your life, and know by how you live, something is different, and not just by how you live, but by what you say, what you believe. And that is true of every season of our lives. Every season. Paul's asking the believers in Thessalonica to have congruent harmony.

That their lives that have been transformed by the gospel of Jesus might be evident not just to the church, but to those outside the church as well. That's the point of this entire message. This let others see how Jesus has changed your life. Let others see how Jesus has changed your life, he says in verse twelve, so that you may walk properly before outsiders and be dependent on no one. One of my great privileges as a shepherd of this congregation is to know firsthand of so many of you how the gospel of Jesus intersected your life, to hear your story, to hear your testimony.

And for some of you, that was when you were four or five years old and your faithful, gospel believing parents shared with you the good news of the gospel of Jesus, and you were convicted of your sins, and you turned to him. And your whole life has just been learning more and more through sanctification what it means to walk with Jesus. And that does not mean you

have been without struggle or disappointment. But for some of you, you were like me. You got saved at 16 years old or in high school, in your teen years.

And the gospel radically transformed the path that you were on. And your life looked completely different than the life that you were pursuing just moments before. The Lord opened your eyes to see his grace and truth and mercy.

And I know that some of you, in this room, you had neighbors, that you saw the way that they intentionally lived their lives. Maybe you saw once a week they had cars up and down the road because they had small group meet in their house, and you noticed something different about the way they lived their lives. For some, it might have been when you were at work and you noticed that there was someone that was quietly confident in what they did. They didn't speak of others the same way. They had an inexplicable joy or a love for others.

For some of us, for so many of us, we came into contact with those who desired to not only give us the gospel, but to give us their own lives because we had become very dear to them. I can't tell you how often I sit down in conversation about membership at our church and I ask about their testimony, and I hear a story about I was in high school or I was in college, or I was at work, and I met these people and they had something I didn't have. They had a peace that I wanted. They had a joy that I needed. They had something, and I didn't know what it was.

But through conversation, through hearing what they told me, I understood that it was Jesus that I was missing, that we might walk properly before outsiders, how we ought to walk and to please God. Peter says, but you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness and into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people. Once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. Brother and sister, in every aspect of your life, you have the opportunity, not just on Sunday mornings or in groups, but to proclaim the excellencies of the one who has called you to be his people, the one who has shown you mercy.

Mark Howe wrote in his commentary over these verses tells the story of meeting a woman from his church. Upon greeting her, he asked, what do you do for a living? And with a huge grin, she replied, pastor, I'm a disciple of Jesus Christ. Cleverly disguised as a machine operator.

That woman clearly understood that her faith meant something. She got it. Paul did not want the Thessalonians to forget that their faith really mattered. He taught them that their Christianity should show up in the most basic aspects of their lives, including their relationships and their jobs. The profound truth of salvation was imminently practical.

Heaven could veritably touch the earth through their faith. God did not save them to sit around and wait for heaven. Yes, heaven was their home, but their city was their mission. Your city, our city, is our mission field.

Our faith should touch every aspect of our lives where we live and work and learn and our hobbies. And this is true of every season of our lives, conducting ourselves in a manner that shows our lives more and more and more reflect the goodness and grace and mercy that Jesus has shown us. This doesn't stop. I got to go pray. Last a week and a half, two weeks ago with a man in the hospital, believe he's 93, and he was in the hospital for some pretty serious pneumonia.

There was kind of touch and go for a little bit. They didn't know if he was going to make it. And I went to pray with them, and the nurses were in the room doing physical therapy and breathing treatments, something that they said would be very painful for him. And so I wasn't allowed in the room for a good while they were doing these things. And then they opened the door and they let me come in.

And as I'm listening to the nurses talk about this man. They just keep going on and on about, he is so kind. This man is so kind. What a blessing that he was our patient.

And I thought to myself, I have a long way to go. That brother. What a testimony of God's progressive sanctification that others could tell immediately from the way that this brother interacted with others and lived his life, that he had been Jesus's for some time, that his life and kindness reflected the grace and mercy he'd been shown. What a testimony, more and more, that we might walk properly before outsiders. I want to apply this to our life at Center Point church.

Center Point. God has saved us, that we might display the goodness and grace that we have received to those where he has placed us.

Jesus said, you are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid, nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand. And it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others so that they may see your good works and give glory to your father who is in heaven, that they might see the way you live and give glory to God who is in heaven. I don't think any of us would disagree that we are called to walk properly before outsiders and to be witnesses for Christ.

But I want to give two incredibly practical ways that I think that this happens in application. The first one's this. Preach the gospel. Preach the gospel. There's a quote often misattributed to St.

Francis of Assisi which says, preach the gospel at all times. If necessary, use words. I'm going to go ahead and spoil it for you. Those words are necessary. It is important that we preach and proclaim the excellencies of the one who has called us to himself.

We must be able to articulate our faith. How humbling is it that the sovereign God of the universe would use us, his children, as imperfect communicators of his perfect message? What an honor to be able to share the good news of the gospel with those he has placed around us. And for some of you that might be students, that you are intentionally trying to reach others, it might be your neighbors, it might be your coworkers. It might be your children.

It might be your family. May we be faithful to share the good news of Jesus with others, that they might know of the grace and mercy of the one who's called us. And second is this. Live purposefully. Jesus wants all of our lives compartmentalizing our faith as merely a Sunday exercise is not what he has called us to do.

He wants all of us. Live purposefully for God in your schooling, live purposefully for God in your marriage, live purposefully for God. To your neighbors, live purposefully for God in your work. Brother and sister, may the lives we live be consistent to the gospel we preach as we grow more and more in our walks, with Jesus walking in a way that is pleasing to him.

This morning we're going to come to the table remembering that Christ has transformed our lives by the grace he has extended to us through his death and resurrection. That is our chief end, that we would glorify God and enjoy him forever.

So we come to the table this morning. We are proclaiming to the world around us that it is by his grace and for his glory that we live. We also come to the table this morning remembering and with expectation that Christ our savior will return.

There will be a day in which Jesus comes and makes all things new, and sin and death, mourning, all of it will be wiped away. And we long for that day, and we look for that day. Please don't hear me say that we do not look in anticipation for that day. Of course we do. We long for it. We long for that day. And in the meantime, we look to be faithful to what God has called us to be faithful to do.

In the meantime, we wait faithfully, longing for him and to make use of the time he has given to us. We know that there is a day that is coming in which each and every single person on earth will stand before God in judgment. And the one thing that we cannot do when we are with Jesus in the new creation is share the good news of the gospel with those who don't yet know it. The one thing that you will not be able to do in heaven is tell others about the good news of Jesus.

So when we come to the table this morning, we're remembering what he has done, and we're remembering what he will do. Looking forward with anticipation, Paul writes, for I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus, on the night when he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, this is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me. In the same way, he also took the cup after supper, saying, this cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me.

For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. Brother and sister, I would remind you of the price of our salvation. It's nothing short of the body and blood of Christ. It is not by any works of our own that we are saved. It is not by these elements that we are saved.

It is by what these elements represent, the body and blood of Jesus. That's how we're saved. And this morning, as we come to the table, I want you to recognize we are proclaiming to those not only in this room, but to our community at large, I am his. I am a child of God. Once I was not a people, but now I am a people.

Once I did not know mercy, but now I know mercy. When we come to the table, we are showing to the world around us. We're his. If you are not a believer in Jesus this morning, I would ask that you do not come to the table. There is nothing salvific or saving about these elements, but they point towards our great need for a savior and our longing as believers in Jesus for his return.

Brother and sister, I pray that we would take great comfort in coming to the table this morning, and that we would pray and reflect and consider what are those areas of our lives that are not yet in congruence with the way that Jesus would have me to live? What are those areas of my life that I've so compartmentalized away from my faith that I do not consider that the Lord would use those, whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all things for the glory of God. May we live our lives to give glory to him. As John Piper would say, he is most glorified in us when

we are most satisfied in him. May we be deeply satisfied in Christ that we might live properly among those outside the church, that they might see our transformed lives.