

Hear, O sons, a father's instruction, and be attentive that you may gain insight.

For I give you good precepts, do not forsake my teaching.

When I was a son with my father, tender, the only one in the sight of my mother, he taught me and said to me, Let your heart hold fast my words, keep my commandments, and live.

Get wisdom, get insight, do not forget, and do not turn away from the words of my mouth.

Do not forsake her and she will keep you.

Love her and she will guard you.

The beginning of wisdom is this.

Get wisdom and whatever you get, get insight.

Prize her highly and she will exalt you.

She will honor you if you embrace her.

She will place on your head a graceful garland.

She will bestow on you a beautiful crown.

Hear, my son, and accept my words that the years of your life may be many.

I have taught you the way of wisdom.

I have led you in the path.

of uprightness.

When you walk, your step will not be hampered, and if you run, you will not stumble.

Keep hold of instruction.

Do not let go.

Guard her, for she is your life.

Do not enter the path of the wicked, and do not walk in the way of the evil.

Avoid it.

Do not go on it.

Turn away from it and pass on.

For they cannot sleep unless they have done wrong.

They are robbed of sleep unless they have made some stumble.

For they eat the bread of wickedness and drink the wine of violence.

But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, which shines brighter and brighter until full day.

The way of the wicked is like deep darkness.

They do not know over what they stumble.

My son, be attentive to my words.

Incline your ear to my sayings.

Let them not escape from your sight.

Keep them within your heart.

for they are life to those who find them and healing to all their flesh.

Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.

Put away from you crooked speech and put devious talk far from you.

Let your eyes look directly forward and your gaze be straight before you.

Ponder the path of your feet and let your ways will be sure.

Do not swerve to the right or to the left.

Turn your foot away from evil.

Thank you, Andrew.

You may be seated.

When I was in college, I attended a Reformed Baptist church for a little while.

Small church, about 30 people.

Met in the storefront in downtown Scranton.

And the pastor there looked and dressed as if he was from like the 1800s, like he was Charles Spurgeon.

And I remember one Sunday in particular,

small congregation, like I said, kind of a narrow store building.

So there was only like room for six chairs or so in the front.

And then it kind of went really deep back.

And there was this kid who was not sitting with his parents.

And he was like in the second row with some of his friends.

And they were goofing off for like, I don't know, a third of the service.

You know, as the pastor's preaching, they're messing around up front.

And I know their pain.

You know, I was a pastor's kid.

I grew up

in church all the time.

So I kind of knew how they felt.

And then the pastor stopped his sermon and looked right at

the kid that was messing around the most.

And he said to him, he was like, Johnny, do you care so little for your own soul that you mess around during church and neglect the word of God?

I was like, whoa, I came out of nowhere.

And it's kind of stuck with me because I'm Johnny, right?

I come to passages like this or I come to the book of Proverbs and

And I think sometimes it's easy to come to church with a thousand things on our mind and a million directions that we're going in, and we come to such a profound portion of God's Word, and it's difficult to slow down and really reflect and really hear what God's saying through this passage.

So it's my prayer this morning that all of us, myself included, will be able to slow down, not neglect our own soul, not neglect...

the Lord and what he has for us this morning and to really hear from him.

So I'm going to pray one more time for us that the Lord would help you and that he would help me as I communicate and as you listen.

I also want to pray, lift up in prayer.

Many of you have been praying already for Seth Riley, Chris Mercurio's son, who has been struggling with pneumonia for a while and is in the ICU still, Chris.

I believe he's still in the ICU down in Olean.

And the outlook is not good.

So we need to keep him in prayer, keep Chris in prayer, and the family in prayer as well.

Let's go before the Lord.

Heavenly Father, we do want to lift up our sister Chris to you this morning.

Lord, we pray that as she's here with us, Lord, that your presence will be felt to her in a way that only comes when your people indwelt by the Holy Spirit gather together to worship you.

So Lord, I just pray for a peace that passes understanding.

Lord, we pray for

a rest and an assurance that you are her portion and that her son Seth is in your hands today.

Lord, we do pray for more time for Seth.

Lord, we pray that you would be merciful to him physically, Lord, that you would heal him and bring him out of the coma with minimal or no damage done to his body, Lord.

Lord, we do pray again for more time for Seth here with Chris and the family.

Lord, we do pray for Chris, Chris's soul.

Lord, again, as Chris and I spoke, Lord, we know that he has heard of you.

He has heard the gospel.

Lord, we don't know

what's been going through his mind as he's battled this illness, and even as he was on his way to the ICU, but you do.

And Lord, we trust that you are a merciful and gracious God, and we entrust him to you.

But Lord, because of the uncertainty, we pray earnestly for more time.

We pray for healing.

We pray for, again, healing.

Mercy as only you know how to show it to Seth and the family.

Lord, as we come to this passage, we do so in light of many situations that are heavy, that almost crush us beneath the eternal implications and just the weight

and the difficulty in the present.

And Lord, we know there's a number of our brothers and sisters that are in similar situations and have been.

So Lord, we come to your word and we come before you knowing that we need you, that we need the hope that only you have to offer.

And we also come

reflecting on our lives and considering our own souls in light of the realities that we see around us.

Lord, we know one day we will all stand before you and one day we will all give an account for our life.

And Lord, we come to this passage to hear your word in light of that reality.

So would you help us hear and see?

Would you help us to find what you have put here for us?

We pray all this in Jesus' name, amen.

So we've been in Proverbs for a little while now, since the beginning of the summer.

And I wonder, I don't get, you know, some of you give me feedback.

We have conversations and I'll ask questions and I trust that you're giving me honest responses.

But I wonder what you have been hearing as we've been working through Proverbs.

Maybe you've been hearing a lot of rules, a lot of stuff that you should and shouldn't be doing.

What I hope you are hearing and what I've been praying that you've been hearing

is that there's something better available to us.

That if you're an unbeliever here this morning, I hope you've been hearing that there's hope for you in this life and hope for you when you stand before God.

And if you're a believer here this morning, I pray that you've been hearing that there's a better way, right?

There's a better way.

You don't have to live the same way that you always have.

There's real, full life available to us right now.

Jesus says in John 10, 10,

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy, as Mike read for us at the beginning of the service.

I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

God gives that life freely right now.

That abundant life is offered to you freely right now.

So how do we take a hold of it?

That's kind of what we've been discussing as we work throughout the book of Proverbs.

How do we take a hold of it?

Believers, we already have this abundant life in Christ abundantly.

How do we grow into it?

How do we grow into abundant living?

There are patterns, and this is what our passage is showing us today, that there are patterns of seeing, admiring, hearing, and our growing process that help bring us into the good life.

So here's what we're gonna do.

We're gonna hear some of those patterns and we're gonna take those instructions to heart.

But I also wanna take a half step back and just consider how Solomon is instructing his son

And how we're shown the sun is to grow, right?

So the sun grows in a certain way and Solomon lays that out in this passage in particular.

So one, we just wanna do it, right?

We wanna grow and we wanna hear the instruction and keep it.

But also we're gonna take a half step back and just consider,

How is Solomon teaching?

And how does he expect us to grow?

How does he expect his son to grow?

All right, so we're gonna look at how the father teaches.

We're gonna look at how the son grows.

And then we're gonna look at how both of them live, right?

And by live, I mean how they experience abundant life.

All right, first, the father teaches.

And this section here, so we have in the first nine books of Proverbs, it's a big, long introduction.

So we have nine addresses, not necessarily broken up by chapter.

But chapter 4 is an address in and of itself.

Within this address in chapter 4 are three sections that are broken up by the term son.

So you'll notice in the beginning of the first section, Solomon or the father refers to sons, my sons, right?

And then in the second section, he refers to son.

And then in the last section, he says my son.

And we'll talk about that progression in a second.

But the three sections very clearly broken up by the term son.

First section is the emphasis here is really on the father's verbal instruction or like the words that he gives to his son.

Look at verses one to five.

Hear, O sons, a father's instruction and be attentive that you may gain insight.

For I give you good precepts.

Do not forsake my teaching.

When I was a son with my father, tender, the only one in the sight of my mother, he taught me and said to me,

Let your heart hold fast my words.

Keep my commandments and live.

Get wisdom, get insight.

Do not forget and do not turn away from the words of my mouth.

So twice in verses four to five, Solomon's father refers to words.

And then the part of the body that's emphasized here in this first section is the mouth.

So principles of Bible study, folks, from Sunday school here, right?

Repeated word, we got a little bit of imagery.

We come to the conclusion that the focus here is on verbal instruction, words and the mouth.

So it's important

when we're helping someone, when we're discipling someone, when we're trying to bring somebody along in the faith, that we communicate truth to them verbally, right?

That we communicate God's commands, God's precepts to them verbally and explicitly.

True and complete teaching isn't happening unless propositional spoken truths and instructions are being communicated and received.

That's like the whole point of the book of Proverbs here, right?

That he's giving him instruction, verbal instruction to follow.

Parents, right?

Talking to myself here, had to consider this this week.

Your kids, my kids, need regular and clear verbal instruction in the things of God in all areas of life.

We should not assume that they will have discernment in their relationships or with their phones or at work.

right?

Every area of life, we need to be saying true and clear things to them to help guide them in those areas of life.

We need to find ways to be both intentional, so that means like creating ways, creating opportunities, taking your kids out for

Coffee, my kids go out for coffee sometimes.

They don't necessarily always get coffee and it's decaf if they do, right?

Take them out for coffee or dinner individually, go to the batting cages, whatever, create opportunities to spend time with them and have an agenda, all right?

So one, the agenda first and foremost should be to hear what's going on, right?

You wanna take in information.

But you should also have a goal for that meeting, right?

Like where's an area that they seem to be struggling in and ask them about it and come in ready to give clear communication there.

And spontaneously, take those advantages as well, right?

When they come up, be ready.

It's not awkward to talk about God in the day-to-day life.

right?

It's only awkward because maybe your parents didn't do it for you and you're not used to it.

Just start it.

Kids don't know the difference, right?

They're young.

They haven't experienced a ton of life yet.

And even if they're a little bit older, they, I think, sometimes enjoy something out of the blue, even if it's a little awkward at first.

Talk about God, right?

In the regular day-to-day, as you sit down, when you rise up, that whole spiel that Moses gives the Israelites, right?

All the time.

Talk about him all the time.

We also see that this verbal instruction here is traditional.

And what I mean by that is not that it's old and crusty, but that it's handed down, right?

Solomon steps back here in these verses as he's instructing his son to bring his father, which who is Solomon's father?

Class, everybody?

David, yes.

To bring his father, David, into view, right?

Their grandfather.

He's bringing their grandfather into the picture.

Do you notice that?

He says, when I was a son with my father, tender, the only one in the sight of my mother,

He taught me and he said to me.

So he starts telling them what his grandfather said to him.

It's a mistake to ignore those who have gone before us.

It's a mistake to pretend that we are the only church that ever existed or the only believers that ever existed.

We need to...

draw on the wisdom and the insight of those who have come before us.

This doesn't mean that we're going to quote Jonathan Edwards or Martin Luther to our unbelieving neighbor necessarily to try to win them over.

You don't have to do that.

But part of growing in faith is drawing on biblical wisdom and insight and verbal teaching from previous generations.

There's a number of reasons for it, but this sermon's too long to go into all those reasons.

I'd be happy to have a discussion with you about that some other time.

The point here, though, is Solomon gives explicit commands, but he also provides a lived example in verses 11 to 12.

Through that whole section, really 11 to 19, but let's look at verses 11 to 12.

I've taught you the way of wisdom.

I've led you in the paths of uprightness.

When you walk, your step will not be hampered, and if you run...

You will not stumble.

You can kind of see the image here of a father leading his son down the path of wisdom while also telling him and warning him of not veering off of that path that he's leading him down.

At the end of the chapter, verses 26 to 27.

associates walking and the path with foot and feet, right?

So like the part of the body that's emphasized here is foot, feet.

So we're teaching with our mouth, but we're also teaching with our feet, how we walk and how we live.

Parents, again, you are teaching and instructing your kids by how you act and live in front of them, maybe even more profoundly than by what you say.

It's not about, are you going to do this?

You are doing it, right?

As you live in front of them, you're instructing your kids, you're teaching your kids.

How we live in front of them will instruct them.

How are we instructing them as we live?

And not only in parenting, but we challenge and instruct one another by our actions as we live together.

I've learned a lot, learned a whole lot, just by being around other believers as they've had tough conversations with their loved ones.

They allowed me to be a part of that, right?

We were kind of in a similar situation, and so it wasn't weird to have me around as they had some of those conversations.

I've also observed others as they've loved and served others who were in need

just watching them, how they cared for other people who were in need.

I never would have thought of that.

What you did for them never would have even crossed my mind.

I've grown a lot in those areas just watching and observing.

Some things also are just best taught.

They're just best taught and learned by observation, like swinging a hammer.

You can tell somebody how to do it a bunch of times, but it's just easier to show them.

Or making ravioli.

I remember making ravioli with my grandmother.

It's too much work and she's getting a little too old to do it right now.

But getting the ravioli to stick together and so that it would stick together when you threw it in the pot, not an easy thing.

It sounds easy.

It's a little trick.

And she could just pump them out like crazy.

I mean, she was super fast at it.

Had to watch it.

Or maybe turning away anger with a soft answer.

Yeah, we have explicit instruction in the book of Proverbs.

to turn away anger with a soft answer, but I probably learned that best by observing it in others, right?

Seeing other people do it, what exactly they said, how they handled it, taught me and instructed me in how to do that more so than just the command.

So Solomon here teaches us with words, teaches us by example,

which is kind of one side of the coin, right?

So you have the father instructing.

That's one side of the coin in this chapter.

But we also have the son growing.

And he grows at kind of three levels or three levels.

Levels of maturity or, you know, like, yeah, levels.

I can't think of another word, so we're just going to go with levels.

Three sections, three levels of maturity.

And you'll notice, too, like I said, he starts off with sons, goes to son, and then he says, my son.

The tone gets a little bit more intimate each section, and the level of maturity goes a little bit deeper with each section.

The first kind of level or the first step here in growth and in maturity is to obey instruction.

like the son is called to and encouraged to obey instruction.

I'm not gonna read verses one to nine, but that's the section there.

The father gives verbal instruction and the son keeps and obeys them.

The first and most foundational step of growth once we become believers and sons of God is to obey, right?

Step one, obey.

Okay.

I think that's one reason that God gives us a very tangible command to be baptized, right?

So you get saved.

And then here's a really clear, like you're either baptized or not.

There's not like any middle ground there, a command for us to obey and follow it, right?

Be baptized.

So the obedience, step one, we're to hear God's instructions and commands and keep them.

We won't get very far in the Christian life

without the trust and respect for God that's demonstrated in obeying his commands.

Obeying somebody and what they say, especially when we don't understand why it's good or how it's good or that it's good for us, requires trust and it requires faith, right?

In that person to obey what they have for us.

So that faith that we say we have in accepting the good things from Jesus, eternal life, justification, all that stuff,

that faith and acceptance is demonstrated also by accepting the commands and the rules in obedience.

So parents, applying this to us teaching and training others and considering how our kids grow.

Priority number one for our kids at an early age ought to be obedience, right?

It's the foundation for further growth and maturity.

Now we can communicate and we need to communicate that everybody needs to obey, right?

Mom and dad obey God.

And when mom and dad obey the other authorities that God has put in our life, the kids aren't the only ones that obey, right?

We're all called to obey.

But the main authority that God has established for children are their parents,

And kids need for their good and their growth to know, trust, and respect that and to demonstrate that through obedience.

And we all need that.

We all need to grow in that trust and respect for God and the authorities that he's put in our life to obey them.

All right, so obedience, and by the way, how you go about encouraging and bringing about that obedience varies.

So if you hear obedience and you think only rod, that's not what I'm saying.

That's not what Solomon's saying either.

He does talk about the rod in Proverbs, but there are other means, right, of encouraging and promoting obedience.

obedience in our children other than just the rod.

You got to know your kid and how to apply those in a way that will help move them towards obedience.

All right, so he's called to obey instruction, and then he's called to follow an example, all right, follow an example in particular of the fathers.

Again, this is verses 19 to 10.

I'm not going to read that whole section again, but we see that the father leads or how the father leads by example and that the son

walks behind him.

And we don't just have to follow those who are currently living for us to interact with, but we can also follow as examples those who have gone before us.

Again, Solomon pulls in his father, David, who has died because if he was alive, Solomon wouldn't be king, right?

And talking about himself in that sense.

And also Solomon talks about David, his dad, in the past tense, right?

He's no longer there with him,

and yet he's still presenting him to his son as an instructor and an example to follow.

Hebrews 13, seven says, "Remember your leaders, "those who spoke to you the word of God, "consider the outcome of their way of life "and imitate their faith."

Outcome implies that the life is over or almost over, right?

That you've been around long enough that you can see the fruit and the result of their life.

One of the benefits of looking to those who have gone to be with the Lord is that we know the outcome of their life, right?

With so many scandals and people walking away from the faith, deconstructing or just falling into sin,

Following someone who we know made it to the end, that the Lord kept to the end, that walked faithfully with him to the end.

There's a lot of value in that.

There's a lot of value there.

So part of growth is following godly examples, both present and from the past.

but part of growth is also avoiding ungodly examples, right?

So he gives us that in verses 14 to 19.

Not only are we to consider the outcome of our Christian leader's way of life, but we're also to consider the outcome of the life of the wicked, especially the eternal outcome, right, of the life of the wicked.

We need to see what kind of character they've adopted.

I'm not going to read it, but again, if you look at verses 14 all the way down to 19, he lays out very clearly the type of character that they've adopted.

We also need to see in verses 18 and 19 the ever-growing blindness of those who don't follow the Lord.

Look at verse 18 and 19.

But the path of the righteous is like the light of the dawn, which shines brighter and brighter until full day.

And the way of the wicked is like deep darkness.

They do not know over what they stumble.

See the wise and the righteous see the world with ever increasing clarity and enjoyment while the wicked and the foolish become more and more blind to God's glory in the world around them and how the world works, right?

They're stumbling all over the place and they don't even know why, right?

They don't even know over what they're stumbling, which is tragic because the final and most profound stage of growth is when the son admires the beautiful.

So we see the son obeying instruction, following an example, and then kind of the final stage of growth is when the son admires the beautiful.

Look at verses 20 and 21.

My son, be attentive to my words, incline your ear to my sayings, let them not escape from your sight, keep them within your heart.

The Son is to keep these wise words and instruction in his sight and within his heart.

Again, the highlighted eyes are part of the body.

Here are the eyes and the heart.

And there's a parallel between sight and heart, right?

Or eyes and heart.

Paul picks up on this in Ephesians chapter 1.

He says that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the spirit of wisdom and of revelation and the knowledge of him.

So Paul's praying for wisdom for these people, kind of like Proverbs.

Having the eyes of your heart enlightened that you may know.

And then he gives like three things that are just massive.

What is the hope to which he has called you?

What are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints?

And what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe according to the working of his great might?

There's like 10 to 12 sermons in those verses, right?

Paul just packs a ton of stuff in and he's like, I want the eyes of your heart to be enlightened so that you can see all that you have, right?

All that you have in God.

Your heart has metaphorical eyes.

Your heart has eyes.

You should draw this, make it into a t-shirt or something to see

the beauty and the glory of God in the gospel in Ephesians 3, but also what we're told here in Proverbs is that we're to see the beauty of God in his rules and in his commands, that the law actually reveals the beauty and perfection of God as well.

So the progression of maturity here, or the layers of maturity, are obedience,
and admiration.

We start off doing what we're told out of trust and faith, and then we begin to imitate it, right?

Starts to look a little attractive, we begin to imitate it, and we admire it.

It's not that clean cut, right?

Our experience and how we grow is not that clean cut.

It's kind of cyclical.

We go through those three things in cycles, and they kind of feed on one another.

But those are the three main elements.

And if you're starting somewhere, you start with obedience, right?

You start with obedience and with faith and hope,

that even though I can't see why this is good or I can't see beauty in this, that it's there and that God will open your eyes to that as you obey.

All right, now, as the son and the father are experiencing this, right?

So as the father teaches this, he's experiencing the beauty of wisdom and of watching his son grow, but also growing himself as he's teaching, and the son's experiencing this as he grows, and both are finding life, right?

Both are finding life and wisdom.

I'm gonna run through this, but there's a theme throughout all three sections that I couldn't ignore.

And it's this theme of life, right?

Life appears in all three sections very prominently.

In verse four, we see that wisdom brings us into life.

He says, he taught me and said to me, let your heart hold fast my words, keep my commandments and live.

Now we're not talking about new birth here.

When he says, and live, he's not saying be born again.

He's a son, right?

He's talking to somebody who's a son already.

But the way into life, the way into real life, the good life, abundant life.

What I mean by abundant life, I'm not talking about health, wealth, and a pile of loot for you.

Abundant life is living in God, right?

For the believer is holding fast to the father's instruction and keeping his commands.

Abundant life for the believer is,

is found in holding fast to the Father's instructions and keeping his commands.

I guarantee you, you and I don't believe that.

At least not fully.

And I don't think we believe it nearly enough.

Are you living?

Are you really living?

Would you describe your day-to-day as being marked by abundant life?

If not, let me just tell you this morning, let Solomon tell you this morning, the guy who had pretty much everything, you don't need more money and stuff.

If you're bored, if you're depressed, if you're anxious,

if you're weighed down with your sin, you don't need more money and stuff.

You don't need more approval and recognition.

You don't need more power and control.

You don't need another woman or a passionate relationship.

You don't need more adventurous experiences.

What you and I need is more of God and his wisdom, right?

We need God himself and we need more of his wisdom experienced, lived out in our life.

Often we don't see how that kind of joy, that kind of joy that we long for and that we look to God

grasp at with all the stuff of this world.

We don't see how that joy can come to us through God's rules.

I'm saying that kind of to jar you a little bit, but like his commands, his rules are meant to bring us joy, right?

And life, like abundant life.

And a lot of times we don't see, we can't quite understand how that kind of joy comes out of God's rules.

And that's because it's an experience and a reality unlike we've ever had before.

or been a part of, right?

It's an experience of joy and life unlike anything else that we've tasted.

It's unlike food, it's unlike sex, it's unlike money, it's unlike power.

It's an experience that is unique in and of itself.

So of course, we can't imagine it, right?

We can't imagine how that kind of joy in life is gonna come out of following God and keeping his commands and his rules.

We step into it in faith, trusting that God is good and able to come through.

So wisdom brings us into life, but it also sustains our life.

Verses 12 to 13, he says, when you walk, your step will not be hampered.

And if you run, you will not stumble.

Keep hold of my instructions.

Do not let go.

Guard her for she is your life, right?

It keeps us going in the right direction and not just walking in the right direction, but running, right?

Running in the right direction.

So how are you doing right now?

Are you beat up?

Are you beat down?

Maybe by some really difficult things that God has allowed into your life.

Or maybe you're beat up and beat down by the consequences of your own dumb, sinful choices.

There's hope, right?

There's hope.

Turn back to and embrace more fully God and his wise words.

He will keep

and sustain you here in the present.

And lastly, he restores our life.

Scott talked about verb tenses in our Principles of Bible Study class.

You'll notice past, present, future here in this kind of life.

Make you live in the past, right?

Starts off your life in the past, sustains you in the present, and you will live more fully, restores our life, brings us into full and abundant life completely in the future.

These last couple of verses, Solomon rehearses

all of the body parts that he highlighted as essential to our growth.

He says in verse 23, keep your heart with all vigilance for from it flow the springs of life.

Put away from you crooked speech and put devious talk far from you.

Let your eyes look directly forward and your gaze be straight before you.

Ponder the path of your feet, then all your ways will be sure.

Do not swerve to the right or the left.

Turn your foot away from evil.

I think he does this to, one, communicate that God renews all of us, right?

That God is going to restore and renew every part that we are.

But I think he also does this to encourage us to commit every part of himself, all that he is, to God.

One commentator I read encouraged us, encouraged me, you, to just consider the parts of your body and commit them to the Lord, to use them wisely.

to use them to bring him glory and you joy, like your hand, right?

Your eyes, your feet, your mouth, your ears.

And just pray through your body, committing it to the Lord, considering how God would have you use that, again, for his glory and your joy.

God in his wisdom, most profoundly known on the cross, gives, sustains, and restores our life.

So real quick, so what?

The main encouragement here from Solomon, and it's the drum he's been beating throughout these four chapters, is to find real abundant life in God and his profound wisdom on the cross.

Paul says in 1 Corinthians 1, 22 to 24, for Jews demand signs, Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles.

But to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God, for the foolishness of God is wiser than men and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

Jesus died in our place.

He was condemned in our place because of our foolishness and our sin.

He died so that we may live, right?

So that we may have his abundant life.

He took our punishment so that we could have his innocence and life.

That's the wisdom of God in its most concentrated form.

God the Son laying down his life for his brothers and his sisters.

It's at that cross that we live, right?

It's at that cross that we're ultimately sustained and it's that cross that restores us.

So if you haven't already, I encourage you and I plead with you this morning to hope in Christ and to follow him.

There's no one, there's nothing like him.

There's nothing more joyful,

and exciting and satisfying than leading others and knowing God and growing in God's wisdom.

You'll never be more alive, right?

You'll never be more alive than walking with others and knowing God and growing in his wisdom.

So go after God hard this week, right?

Go after God hard in his word, in prayer, and in the community of his people,

You won't, that's how we live, right?

That's how we experience this abundant life by experiencing God through the means that he's given us, his word, prayer, his people, all those that have come before us as well as those that we worship with today.

Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, we ask again that you would work this down into our hearts.

Lord, we don't wanna go through life like,

the walking dead, or just barely make it.

Lord, we want to experience the life that you have for us.

So would you loosen our grips on...