

It's been a hard couple of weeks.

The school shooting in Minnesota, the murder of Irna Zarutskya on the subway, the shooting in Denver, and probably most discussed, especially this past week, the public assassination of Charlie Kirk.

And as I've been observing and talking with some friends, family, and just observing through social media and the news, the reaction to Charlie's murder, I've just been personally reflecting on why this shooting hits so close to home to me and to many of us.

I thought it would please the Lord this morning if we would just take a minute and reflect on that together.

First, to be clear, Charlie,

was primarily a political figure.

I think it's important to clarify that.

I think that there are some political leaders and there are some leaders within Christianity that find it necessary, or for their own ends, tend to blur the lines between politics and theology and the role of the church

So I think it's just important to be clear that Charlie's work and who he was as a public figure was primarily a political figure.

He spoke just as often on public policy issues such as capitalism, fiscal policy, the border, how to handle illegal immigrants, Second Amendment rights and gun restrictions.

He worked actively for the Republican presidential campaign

as he did theology and his relationship with the Lord.

And all of those things, all of those public policy issues that I just listed, you can be a believer and disagree on those public policy issues.

As a believer, those issues and how we approach them and how we handle them requires biblical discernment, humility,

It takes a lot of both of those things to sort through those things, but you can be a born-again, Bible-believing Christian and disagree with Charlie on his positions on a lot of those issues, which is why we typically don't platform political figures from the pulpit.

And maybe you wish I wasn't talking about him right now because of some of those issues.

So why am I bringing him up?

And why has his political assassination felt so heavy

to I think many of us, even those of us who might disagree with him on some of those issues.

So again, I felt the need to reflect on this together this morning because Charlie wasn't gunned down because he resisted arrest or because of potential police corruption.

He wasn't a state legislator murdered because he voted a certain way on state legislation.

He wasn't cut down as an opportune victim alone on a subway.

All of those things are horrible, we hate them, but unfortunately, we understand them.

Charlie was killed because of what he said, because he defended Christian conservatism as a self-identified Christian conservative.

You can be a Bible-believing born-again Christian and disagree with him on fiscal policy, the border, guns, many of those other issues that I listed, but if you claim to hold to the scriptures,

and you claim the God of the Bible as your God, you had to recognize that Charlie was speaking on your behalf when he defended that human life is bestowed by God and begins at conception, that the institution of marriage is by God's design between a man and a woman, and that gender and sexuality is something we receive from our creator and not something we create for ourselves.

Charlie's murder for saying these things out loud as a self-identified Christian hits home because that's us.

We hold to those core beliefs that got Charlie killed.

And it's just sad.

It's been a sad, sad week.

It's sad to be witness to such hatred and violence.

It's sad to see the beautiful truth of the gospel and God's design for the world despised and rejected

but it's not the first time, right?

And by God's grace, it won't be the last.

The last reason I want to reflect on this together is to encourage us that now is not the time to disengage and to keep these things to ourself.

We talked a few weeks ago that we're not called to necessarily advance the kingdom or to go on the offensive, but to stand firm, right?

That's the language we see Paul use over and over again

and the New Testament use.

God advances the kingdom.

He grows it like leaven in dough.

It spreads out like the canopy of a tree.

We don't know how those things happen.

God does it.

He's the one that works in hearts and in minds and advances the kingdom.

It's our job to stand firm.

But standing firm doesn't mean disengagement.

Standing firm doesn't mean pulling back and cloistering ourselves in a monastery somewhere.

Charlie demonstrated this well.

Invitation.

His slogan on his tent was, come prove me wrong.

He didn't go into the university and say, you're wrong, and go on the offensive and push.

He said, come prove me wrong.

Here's a microphone.

Let's talk together.

Let's reason together.

Extending the invitation to engage in discussion and dialogue is love of neighbor.

Not leaving people in the dark, not abandoning them to their sin as love of neighbor.

Somebody did it for us.

Being willing to discuss secondary things with humility and primary things with conviction and clarity is largely what we saw modeled in Charlie.

And we would do well to follow even though it may be costly.

Let's pray and we'll open God's word together.

Heavenly Father, we ask that your word would go forth by the power of your gospel on the lips of your people.

Lord, we grieve the loss of a fellow believer, of a husband, of a father, of someone who was shining a spotlight on your grace and your mercy and looking to apply that in all areas of life.

And he was willing to do it at great cost to himself.

And he was willing to shine a light in the darkness.

Lord, we just ask that you would help us.

Give us the courage.

Give us the wisdom.

Give us the love to continue to follow in those footsteps.

to engage with our neighbors in a loving and a winsome way, to not allow falsehood and lies to stand, but to challenge them.

And Lord, we pray for grace and we pray for mercy.

We pray for the ability to live peaceful and quiet lives as a witness to that grace and mercy.

But Lord, we also, we just ask that you would give us boldness

and strength to stand firm on the convictions that you have given us and that you have instilled in us.

Lord, we're thankful for the gifts that you give us to help us along the way.

For men like Charlie and women who stand boldly and speak the truth when it's tough,

for the good gifts of your church and fellow believers to stand with us and encourage us and stir us up to good works, for the gift of your Bible and the Holy Spirit that lives within us.

Lord, we're thankful for all of these things.

You didn't leave us alone, but you've equipped us with all of these things to stand even in difficult times and dark days.

And Lord, would you continue to advance your kingdom today

Would you continue to win hearts and bring about the miracle of new birth in people as we stand and as we testify to your grace and mercy?

We pray all this in Jesus' name, amen.

Let's look at John chapter three, verses 22 to 36.

After this, Jesus and his disciples went into the Judean countryside and remained there with them

and was baptized, baptizing.

John also was baptizing at Anon near Salem because water was plentiful there and people were coming and being baptized for John had not yet been put in prison.

Now a discussion arose between some of John's disciples and a Jew over purification.

And they came to John and said to him, Rabbi, he who was with you across the Jordan to whom you bore witness, look, he's baptizing and all are going to him.

John answered, a person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given him from heaven.

You yourselves bear me witness that I said, I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before him.

The one who has the bride is the bridegroom.

The friend of the bridegroom who stands and hears him rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice.

Therefore, this joy of mine is now complete.

He must increase, but I must decrease.

He who comes from above is above all.

He who is of the earth belongs to the earth and speaks in an earthly way.

He who comes from heaven is above all.

He bears witness to what he has seen and heard, yet no one receives his testimony.

Whoever receives his testimony sets a seal to this, that God is true.

For he whom God has sent utters the words of God, for he gives the spirit without measure.

The father loves the son and has given all things into his hand.

Whoever believes in the son has eternal life.

Whoever does not obey the son shall not see life,

but the wrath of God remains on it.

You know, we love engaging energetic leaders, a leader that can win over a crowd and move people to action.

But charisma and energy can be problematic if they're used to win over people to the wrong thing or to move people to do the wrong thing.

The most common way I think this problem shows up is with, or that it shows up amongst confident, charismatic leaders

is that they tend to desire to win people over to themselves and draw people's attention to how much greater they are than everybody else, how much greater their abilities and their philosophies are than everybody else.

It's an obvious problem when you're looking at someone, but it's very subtle when you're trying to see it within yourself.

John the Baptist followers can't see it in themselves here, but John can see clearly that he's not the greatest.

but that he can be great with the one who is the greatest.

In other words, John sees, sorry, don't look.

There we go.

John sees that we're given abilities and a calling to draw attention to Jesus from whom we receive God's word and his life.

We're given abilities and a calling to draw attention to Jesus from whom we get

those abilities, but more importantly, words and life.

Kind of the main thing going on in this passage is there's some confusion, then there's a comparison, and then there's contrast.

And they're kind of in that order.

Let me show you as we walk through the passage.

Passage starts with some confusion.

The attention of the area around Israel and Galilee and Judea, that whole area, is starting to shift

to Jesus from John the Baptist.

John the Baptist had been drawing a crowd out in the wilderness, and now the attention is shifting to Jesus.

Look again at verses 22 to 26.

After this, Jesus and his disciples went into the Judean countryside, and he remained there with them and was baptizing.

John also was baptizing

at Aton near Salem, because water was plentiful there.

By the way, that's why I'm Baptist.

Water was plentiful there.

You don't need a lot of water to sprinkle.

And people were coming and being baptized.

For John, that's one of the reasons I'm Baptist.

I just had to point it out.

For John had not yet been put in prison.

Now a discussion arose between some of John's disciples and a Jew over purification.

And they came to John and said to him, Rabbi, he who is with you across the Jordan to whom you bore witness, look, he is baptizing and all are going to him.

John and Jesus are baptizing in different areas, right?

They're across the river from each other.

And a Jew begins questioning John's disciples over purification rites, right?

So you got all these people that are shifting to Jesus.

And now you got this guy questioning John and what he's doing.

Purification rites would have been kind of where this baptism came from in the first place.

It had its origins in like washing and cleansing rites.

Jewish purification rites.

So this Jew comes up and he's questioning John and like what he's doing, which again, just leads to this confusion.

Like what's going on?

Like we're doing, his disciples are like, what gives?

You know, everyone's coming to Jesus.

Now we got this guy questioning us and more and more people are going to him.

Like, aren't we supposed to be, like we're doing what God called us to do.

Aren't we supposed to be getting some attention here?

Like God called us to

This ministry, this public ministry, how come nobody's coming, right?

Everybody's going to Jesus.

This guy's questioning us.

Things are just, things are not looking good.

And aren't we being faithful and doing what God asked us to do?

You know, we were the greatest here.

We were the biggest show in the area.

And we had all the likes.

We had all the followers.

We had the big audience.

Now they're going to Jesus.

But we're preaching the good news.

We're preaching the right stuff.

We're doing it in an engaging way.

Shouldn't we be getting more attention?

Shouldn't more of the focus be on us?

And that's when John the Baptist sees things clearly while his followers don't.

And he gives this guiding principle.

No one can receive, this is verse 27.

John answered, a person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given him from heaven.

No one can receive anything

And good is the implication, right?

Nobody can receive anything good unless it's given to him from heaven.

There's depth to this principle.

This principle has layers, right?

It's kind of like an ogre from Shrek or an onion or a parfait, whatever.

It's got layers, right?

It's got layers.

The most obvious, and I'm going to walk through three layers as we walk through the points.

So you'll see points on the screen, confusion, comparison, and contrast.

but we're also walking through the layers of this saying, this principle that John lays out.

Again, the principle is no one can receive anything unless it's given to them from heaven, or no one can receive anything good unless it's given to them from heaven.

He's got a couple things in mind, I believe, when he says that.

First and most obvious is that God has given both John and Jesus to the world as messengers, right?

So God has given both John

and Jesus to the world as messengers.

And the world could not have received them as messengers, right?



They wouldn't have them unless God had sent them in the first place, which brings us to the comparison.

Both John and Jesus are commissioned from heaven.

Look at verse 27 to 28.

Again, a person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given them from heaven.

You yourselves bear witness that I said, I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before him.

And then look at verse 31.

He who comes from above is above all.

He who is of the earth belongs to the earth and speaks in an earthly way.

He who comes from heaven is above all.

John was sent from the womb to deliver a message to prepare the way for the Lord.

Remember, he leapt for joy in the womb.

When Mary approached and Jesus, still in Mary's womb, came near, he leapt for joy in Elizabeth's womb.

He was commissioned from the womb.

We're told just a few verses earlier in this chapter that Jesus didn't just come down from heaven.

But the father gave him from heaven, John 3, 16, right?

For God so loved the world that he gave, he sent, he gave his only son that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

So those who claim to be God's people are to receive John the Baptist as they did the other prophets as sent by God to speak God's words.

And in a similar way, we're talking about similarities right now.

We'll talk about contrast in a minute.

But in a similar way, they're to receive Jesus and his words as sent from God, right?

As sent from God.

So both Jesus and John are sent from heaven or from God to speak God's words and to do God's works.

And again, both speak the things that they say are from God.

Look at verses 31 to 35.

This is kind of layer two.

So the world, God sends John and Jesus into the world, and we are to receive him.

But not just him, we're to receive their words as well.

Or they, like,

The world receives John and Jesus, but John and Jesus are receiving their message, the thing that they're giving the world, from God.

Does that make sense?

World receiving John and Jesus, John and Jesus receiving their message and their commission from God.

Look at verses 31 to 35.

He who comes from above is above all.

He who is of the earth belongs to the earth and speaks in an earthly way.

He who comes from heaven is above all.

He bears witness to what he has seen and heard, yet no one receives him.

So again, the next layer of depth here

next layer of depth to the principle, no one can receive anything unless it is given to them by heaven, is this, not only did Jesus and John receive their commissions from God, but they both receive their messages.

Another way to put it, we're not only to receive John the Baptist as God's prophet, but we're to receive his message from God.

Similarly, again, similarities between John the Baptist and Jesus here, we don't just receive Jesus the person in a squishy way,

I like his vibes kind of way.

We must receive his words and his message.

We can't just say, I feel good when I'm around Jesus.

I kind of like the person and the idea of Jesus.

We have to receive his words, his message in its totality.

John 12, 48 to 50 puts it this way.

This is Jesus talking.

The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge.

The word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day.

For I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment, what to say and what to speak.

And I know that this commandment is eternal life.

What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has told me.

This is the role that Jesus, the second person of the Godhead, has accepted.

He makes it clear that he's not operating independently, that he has received this message and is acting out the father's initiative, that the father takes the initiative in sending the son, giving him his commission and his message.

And in this way, he is similar to other prophets and teachers, but he's also very different.

So I'm talking about how he's similar.

He's receiving his commission and his words from the father,

The Father is the one taking the initiative and sending him.

He's been given those things by God, just like John.

But he's also very different.

And this brings us to John the Baptist's main argument, the thing that he wants his followers to see clearly, or the thing that he sees clearly that his followers do not.

And it's that Jesus was greater than any other prophet who walked the earth.

He was greater than any other prophet who walked the earth.

The contrast.

Three main contrasts in the passage.

Three ways Jesus is different than John.

And three reasons why Jesus must increase and John and all other messengers from God must decrease before Jesus.

First, John says that he is the bridegroom's friend and that Jesus is the bridegroom.

Look at verses 28 to 29.

You yourselves bear me witness that I said, I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before him.

The one who has the bride is the bridegroom.

The friend of the bridegroom who stands and hears him rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice.

Therefore, his joy of mine is now complete.

So in Hebrew weddings,

the bridegroom played a very important role.

He planned the wedding.

So ladies, if you were in Hebrew culture, you didn't plan your wedding.

The best man did.

Can you imagine?

Like today, that'd be, yeah, be horrible.

I think it changed for good reasons, right?

They sent out the invitations.

They prepped the honeymoon suite.

And he would wait by the chamber door to the honeymoon suite in the dark, following the ceremony, following the reception.

He would wait by the chamber door and he would wait to hear the bridegroom's voice.

And then he would let the bridegroom into the bridal suite and the bridegroom alone, right?

Like it was his job to stand guard until the bridegroom got there to be with his new bride, his wife.

So throughout the Old Testament, God referred to himself as the bridegroom and to Israel as his bride, usually the unfaithful bride.

And this would not have been lost on John the Baptist, right?

So when he's saying,

that the bridegroom is the one who has the bride.

He's talking about God.

He's saying Jesus is God having his people.

And this is God in the flesh coming down for his bride, his people, Israel at the time, his people soon to be the church, right?

So wouldn't have been lost on John the Baptist.

And it would not have been lost on John that God's people, the emphasis was shifting from Israel to the church

And that in the New Testament, especially Paul, Ephesians 5, that his people, the church, would be referred to as the bride.

So we're justified in reading that into this passage.

John, the evangelist, knows that Jesus refers to the church as his bride.

And John the Baptist, who said it at the time, also knew that God referred to himself as the bridegroom.

with Israel.

All this to say, John the Baptist is making a very clear statement that Jesus is far greater than any other prophet, including himself, that had come before him.

He's the Messiah.

He's the one who came to rescue and redeem his bride, his people.

But not only is he the Messiah, he's God in the flesh.

John is on earth in verse 31.

Jesus comes from heaven.

Look at verse 31.

"He who comes from above is above all."

He who is of the earth belongs to the earth and speaks in an earthly way.

He who comes from heaven is above all.

So again, the one who is from earth, just to be clear, is John the Baptist.

He speaks in an earthly way.

That just means that he speaks as a human being with all of the limitations and the finitude of human beings.

He's not saying that he's saying bad things.

He's saying that I'm just speaking as a limited human being here.

From heaven is a euphemism for from God.

So when he's saying from heaven or he's come from heaven, he's not just talking about like the place heaven.

He's talking about from God, from God's presence, from him.

And notice, while John is of the earth describing his, you know, John is of the earth describing his nature as a created being on this planet, Jesus is said to come from heaven.

He's not of heaven, right?

He comes from heaven.

but he's not of heaven.

Why?

Because heaven, angels, streets of gold, they're all created things too, right?

Heaven is a created place.

Angels are created things.

Streets of gold are created things.

Jesus does not share a nature with angels or streets of gold or any created being.

We've already been told about Jesus's nature in John one, right?

In the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God.

He was in the beginning with God.

All things were made through him and without him was not anything made that was made.

The word was God.

Jesus is of divine nature.

He's a part of the Godhead, the Trinity three in one.

So Jesus is from heaven, but not of heaven.

Because he's of God.

He is God.

Which puts him in a whole other stratosphere from the other prophets.

It's not even close.

He made the other prophets.

And he existed infinity before the other prophets existed.

And he'll exist infinity forever, but will exist with them, which is pretty cool.

All right, but Jesus is...

The Messiah, he's God, but he's also fully man, fully God, fully man.

And we already said that he received his commission and his message from the Father, but he receives that commission and that message not in an equal way that the other prophets received the message and the commission.

He received more commission and more message and more ability to do it.

So John is given the Spirit, and other prophets were given the Spirit in a measured way so that they could complete the task that they've been given to do, and they spoke in earthly ways.

But Jesus is given all things, and he bears witness, not secondhand, but he bears witness to things that he's directly seen and heard.

Look at verses, I'm not going to read them all over again, but let's look at, let's try to pare this down a little bit.

34, for he whom God has sent utters the words of God, for he gives the spirit without measure.

And then verse 32, he bears witness to what he has seen and heard, yet no one receives his testimony.

So as we saw before, God gave John and Jesus their commission as well as their message.

And these things came with the power of the Holy Spirit to deliver the message and to complete the job that he had given them.

but they did not receive these things in the same way.

John and the other prophets were given the Spirit measuredly enough for them to accomplish their task.

Think like, you know, the particular judges in the book of Judges.

Strength came on Samson when he had a job to do, right?

The Holy Spirit would come on kings so that they could rule wisely, but it was taken from Saul when he behaved poorly, right?

The Judges are a dramatic example of this, but we have examples of it throughout the Old Testament.

And this is due, not only was it there and not there, not only was the Holy Spirit there and not there, but even us as believers who are indwelt by the Holy Spirit and have the Holy Spirit continually by God's grace, we have a measure of the Holy Spirit due to our finite nature, as well as our sin nature.

We cooperate with the Holy Spirit or don't cooperate with the Holy Spirit when we sin.

So we have a measured version of the Holy Spirit.

John the Baptist and the other prophets also spoke God's words secondhand.

God told them what to say, how to say it, when to say it.

He gave them visions, right?

And then they relayed that vision to other people.

They were given all of these things secondhand.

In other words, the message didn't originate

in the prophet, right?

The message didn't originate with them.

They were given them to God and they experienced those things secondhand from the mouth of God.

Jesus, however,

sees and hears all of this truth, all of these things directly because he is God and he has that ability, right?

He's one with the Father, experiencing their mind together.

We're starting to get into things that are, I'm nervous to even say them because we're talking about

The Trinity is very mysterious, and it's hard to explain it without kind of getting it wrong, right?

You can talk about Jesus being fully man or playing one certain role in the Trinity, and then you start to get a little hazy on some of the other things that are true at the same time.

But the Father, Son, and Spirit all exist together co-equally as God.

And yet they are separate persons.

So Jesus is separate from God, but he also has the same mind, same heart.

He's omnipresent, just like God, right?

So he experiences all the things that God knows and relays firsthand as a member of the Godhead.

And yet we're also told that he received by God's initiative, that message and that commission from God to come and do it.

How those two things go together and where they mesh.

And like, if you're drawing a diagram, how it all breaks down, I have no idea.

It's part of the mystery of the Trinity.

But we're told that both are happening at the same time, that Jesus isn't getting a message secondhand.

He sees it, he hears it directly because he's united with God as a member of the Godhead and he relays it directly.



All right, we're like up in the stratosphere of the Godhead right now, thinking through who Jesus was and what he's done, but it's good for us to be there.

We also see too that God gave Jesus his spirit without measure.

Partly because they experienced the Spirit together for all of eternity perfectly.

But we see that demonstrated to us at Jesus' baptism.

When Jesus is baptized, the Holy Spirit comes down and dwells on Jesus, remains on Jesus.

Part of what was being communicated there was that Jesus has the full power of the Holy Spirit indefinitely, right?

It's not going away.

And he is given that spirit and that power by God.

And John the Baptist makes it really clear, he interprets that and makes it really clear here that Jesus has the full power, is exercising the full power of the Spirit

without any limitations.

Which brings us to John's conclusion.

Jesus is God, wields the power of God as God for the purpose of redeeming his people.

And John concludes, he concludes his sermon in verse 36.

This is the final layer of that principle that he established.

No one can receive

anything, anything good, unless it is given to him from heaven.

This is the final, like, depth of that principle.

Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life.

Whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.

A person cannot receive one thing unless it is given him from heaven.

John and Jesus, as we said, received their commission and their message from heaven.

And John is testifying of things.

Both of them are testifying of things.

I'm sorry, Jesus is testifying of things.

He has seen and heard as God himself.

And we are to receive his testimony.

Did you notice in verse 33?

He says, he bears witness to what he has seen and heard, yet no one receives his testimony.

Whoever receives his testimony sets a seal to this, that God is true.

What does it look like to receive Jesus' testimony?

What does it look like to receive God himself?

It means receiving eternal life here.

A life with God.

Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life.

It also means obeying the words of the Son.

Whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life.

So receiving looks like believing and obeying.

And if you don't find it in your heart to believe and obey, I would encourage you to ask God for that too.

If you can't find it in your heart to believe Jesus, if he's not looking attractive to you, and you can't find it in your heart to obey, ask him for that too.

Jesus' talk with Nicodemus, which we haven't looked at since last fall.

We're coming back to John in the fall here, just like we did last fall.

Go back to Jesus' talk with Nicodemus at the beginning of the chapter.

It's all about how God gives the miracle of new birth that bears the fruit of life and obedience.

That means you received your belief and obedience.

That came to you through the miracle of new birth.

A person cannot receive one thing unless it is given to them from heaven.

So how does Jesus increase while you decrease in your life?

How does Jesus increase while I decrease in my life, in my ministry, in my marriage, in my friendships?

Well, I think the point of this passage is that we hammer, we have to hammer this core principle home to the depths of our heart.

A person cannot receive one thing unless it is given to them from heaven.

That's got to be

like bedrock, foundational, at the core of who we are.

You did nothing to merit the blessings, the influence, the abilities, the good things in your life and ministry.

And you especially did nothing to merit your salvation.

And neither did I.

So enjoy the good things, right?

Enjoy the good things.

Use the abilities God's given you.

Use the influence God has given you.

Lean into that, cultivate it, refine it.

use them, but enjoy the giver more and use them to draw attention to the giver and the originator of the good things and the abilities that you have.

And rejoice when he gets attention through somebody else's good things.

That's the whole point here.

John's like, this is who I was drawing attention to in the first place.

Now he's getting that attention.

Praise God, right?

Let me rejoice in that as well.

The best thing we can do as we listen to public leaders, and a lot of us are not in a leadership position, right?

Many of us are not leading a church or a public figure in the community or anything like that.

But we do listen to leaders and influencers and public figures.

And I think the best thing we can do is listen closely to those

Um, and follow those who increase Jesus and decrease themselves.

And to be intentionally, and this takes work and intentionality, right?

Intentionally more enamored with our God and the God that gave them those abilities and that influence and, uh,

their message even, be more enamored with the God that gave them to us for our edification and the building up of his church than with them themselves.

I know it's really subtle sometimes and it's hard and you can kind of go back and forth between, but thank God, right?

Thank God for them, but thank God for them, not them for them or focus on them.

Listen, if you're spending several hours a day

listening to podcasts, or reading blogs, and 15 minutes reading your Bible, you might be more enamored with public figures than you are with God himself.

It's a suggestion.

Check your heart.

I need to check mine.

The bridegroom is here.

He's here.

He came.

That's John's message.

And he's coming again.

Praise the Lord.

Let's thank God for teachers and leaders that he's given us, but let's also help one another, keep our eyes open,

Fixed on him.

I honestly believe, especially towards the end of his career and his life, that Charlie Kirk was one who did that for us.

Helped us to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus.

Had a couple professors I was talking with, one of my professors who shared a stage with Charlie early on in his life and early on in his career.

And he just shared...

what he saw God do in him as he was living out, you know, the influence, the ministry, and the calling that God had given him.

And he marveled at the work of God in his life, especially over that 10-year period from when he got really popular until this past week.

And not everybody's perfect.

I think it's a reminder that, you know, we all have our flaws sometimes.

and we all have our imperfections.

But by God's grace, he's changing us, molding us, shaping us, not only for our good, but he's put you where you're at, having gone through the things you've gone through, experiencing the grace that you've experienced through the gospel, so that you can engage with other people, those that God's put around you, for God's glory to draw attention to him and not yourself.

Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, we just humbly ask this morning that you would increase and that we would decrease.

And would you burn in our hearts that we have not received anything good apart from what you have given us from heaven.

Pray all this in Jesus' name, amen.