

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

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SPEAKER

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SERIES

People Of The Kingdom

PART

2

TITLE

Demonstrating New Life

SCRIPTURE

1 Thessalonians 1:4-10



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Providence family, it's good to see you hope you had a great week and hope you had a great weekend. If you're a guest with us, we're really glad you've joined us. And those who are at home or perhaps from the mountains or the beach, and we're also glad that you have joined us. If in your hand, you have a Bible, if you want to turn with me First Thessalonians chapter one. We're in a series this summer just walking verse by verse through the Book. We started last week and we're up to verse four of chapter one. Before we get there, though, it's important for us to recognize where we're at in the world today. And for us to spend just a few moments at the beginning in prayer. Certainly we know the significance of this weekend, that the freedoms that we enjoy, because people have sacrificed their own freedom, their own lives, that we can worship, that we have the freedoms that we enjoy.

Of course, we're grateful for those things, but you look around the world today in spite of amazing sacrifice, and in spite of amazing blessing, we see two conflicting realities. And that is to be alive is to see beauty and to see brokenness. And we see it all around us. We see beautiful things. It's amazing how God has literally planted such beauty in nature. Things that we get to see with our eyes and hear with our ears, things that we get to smell and touch and feel. It's amazing how beautiful it really is to live in the world. Life is beautiful. Love is beautiful to see. Self-sacrifice that we celebrate, that we pause, that we give thanks this weekend to say people chose to use their strengths and to sacrifice their own freedoms and their own comforts that we might be able to be blessed. That's a beautiful thing.

You see courage and creativity. You see all kinds of things such as endurance and mercy and compassion. When we see these kinds of things in the life, God is literally, he is woven so many beauties into the human experience. And yet you look around the world today and you also see some pretty stunning brokenness. Of course, we see it in our own lives when we look into the mirror. We see it in our own families. We see it in church. We see it in our city and the world. We see it everywhere. Even today, there's still a war going on in Ukraine. It's remarkable that something so tragic gets put on the back burner because there's other stories of brokenness that seem to sort of push it out. But there is going to be people who lose their life, lose their home, their business, their livelihood today because of war, because of that kind of tension and crisis.

And you look over the last few weeks and we've seen these absolutely abhorrent realities of people being shot and killed. You think two weeks ago, a man driven by racial hatred, walks into a grocery store and kills 10 people. This week, those funerals were taking place. And then this week, a young man walks into a school into a room of second, third and fourth graders shoots 19 children and two adults. Kills each one of them. You look at this kind of brokenness in the world and it's ugly. It's terrible to look at. And we think, yeah, the world is terrible, but here in this sanctuary. And then you look in the world and what we find is even in America and around the world, there's brokenness, deep brokenness within the church as well.

Lots of reports this week about sexual abuse, about different kinds of abuse within the church, where people who are entrusted with authority and responsibility to protect people, using that authority to exploit people who are weaker, who are younger, who are more vulnerable. And then the response to those things

sometimes can be not only inadequate, sometimes it can be corrupt. And so we see all this brokenness in the world, even though we see all this beauty in the world, and it's important from time to time for us just to recognize what's happening. And instead of simply pushing into the text this morning, I want to lead us in a moment of prayer for these things. And so I'm going to start praying, and then I'm going to pause, and I'm going to ask you to pray for specific things. So would you bow and let's pray together.

Father, we come to you, the maker of all things and we do see the beauty and all the brokenness and things that we look around and we see. We do see the beauty and we thank you for it. We thank you that you created us and the world with remarkable goodness. And for that, we give you thanks. And yet we come before you today because we see brokenness and we look first at ourself. We know that we've contributed to the chaos in the world. So Providence, let's take just a moment right now and let's confess our personal sin and the brokenness that that creates.

Father, we also look and see, as you do, the brokenness around the world, wars and racial hatred, racial indifference, senseless violence. God, we ask for your mercy and your help. Providence, let's take a moment and let's pray specifically for whether it's people in Ukraine or the 10 families in Buffalo or the 21 families in Uvalde, Texas. Let's pray for them now.

Father, we also confess that your people, your church is not immune to the brokenness and the corruption of the world. We know so many people have been hurt in a church by people who are entrusted to care for them. And so Providence, let's pray for revival in the church, but let's also pray for the hundreds and thousands of people who have been deeply wounded.

Father, for all that we see that is broken, we thank you that you are returning. You are going to send Jesus back to the earth and we look forward to the day when you make all things new. We desire to be people that give a real and tangible picture, a reflection of that kingdom that will be marked with truth and righteousness and love. And so we pray, God, as we open up your word, that you would speak to us in power, that you would peak our curiosity, that you would cause us to lean into your word. And we pray, Father, that you would do a miracle in all of these people who are hurting. God, please, would you draw them to Christ and to hope and healing. And we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.

Well, I do believe that Christ is the only hope for the world. And in addition to that, I believe that when professing Christians fail to imitate the character of Christ and the virtues of that kingdom, it makes it very difficult for people who were considering trusting Christ, who were considering following Christ to make that decision. And the Apostle Paul was very familiar with this crisis, which is why he was so defensive of the church, but he was also constantly appealing for the church to live in a certain way because they lived in communities where people were looking at their lives and making determinations about whether or not to follow and trust Christ on the basis of it.

And one of those cities is the city of Thessalonica. Paul, we're told in Acts chapter 17, if you ever read that passage, he goes into the city and he is not there very long, only three Sabbaths. And so as small as 15 days or three weeks, three different Saturdays he was there. And he preaches the gospel and there's all these people who believe, they become by default people of the kingdom, meaning they become citizens of Christ kingdom. They become his people marked by his kingdom and called to live in a manner worthy of the virtues of that kingdom. And then the Bible tells us that there was this group of Jewish men who were very defensive of their religion and they became threatened by the gospel that they go to the city and they stir up this little mob, this little riot, and Paul is forced to leave the city.

A few months, pass he's in another city. And he becomes concerned about the wellbeing and the health of the faith of this church, because the roots of their faith was they were just so young, they were so new and he was concerned. Ultimately not only in how they were doing in their faith, but he was also concerned that if for whatever reason that they would back away, if for whatever reason they would get confused at all the suffering and all that persecution that the city would observe their lack of endurance perhaps as evidence that Christianity and the gospel is not that credible. And so he sends one of his friends to go check on this church. He comes back with an amazing report about their faith, hope, and love. And Paul writes a letter that we have in our Bible today commending them for being people who are adequately and accurately and frequently in their life, consistently modeling virtues of the kingdom. First Thessalonians is the only letter that Paul wrote without a rebuke. It's just a commendation to say, I see God's grace in your life.

And as such what we find within the Book and what the series will be is week by week, passage by passage, what we're going to find is different characteristics that are seen in this church and can be seen in our church if indeed, we will be people who are marked by the virtues of the kingdom. And in our text today in chapter one versus four through 10, he commends them for what is possible. And that is that he sees that they are demonstrating this new life that is made possible by the gospel. And this is what he says starting in verse four. He says, "For we know, brothers love by God that he has chosen you because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit, but full conviction. You know what kind of man we proved to be among you for your sake and you became imitators of us and of the Lord. And you received the word in much affliction with the joy of the Holy Spirit so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. But your faith in God has gone forth everywhere so that we need not say anything. For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you and how you turn to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus, who will deliver us and who will deliver us from the wrath to come."

And so what we find here is an answer to a really important question. And that is, how does the gospel work in our life? How does the gospel work when all of its components, when all of its power really makes an effect in somebody's life and somebody is converted and changed and they experience new life. How does it work? He says to them, I see how it's working in you. And by default, we get the answer for ourself. So I want to show you three different parts of this. The first is this, is the gospel comes to us in power. We don't have it

when we're born. It's not in us. It's not always even around us. It comes to somebody and it comes in power. And so in verse three, he affirms their faith, hope, and their love.

And then in verse four, what he does is he tries to explain where this faith, hope, and love come from. And so this is really important. There's an order. There's this sequence of events that he's going to trace that he attributes, that yields this amazing fruit that, it's so attractive to people who observe our life. This faith, hope, and love, how does it come? He says for, or because, this is how. Because we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you.

If it's Christian, it begins with the love of God. If it's of the gospel, it begins with the love of God. It doesn't begin with our effort, our merit, it begins with the love of God. If you know Christ is your savior and you have a relationship with him today, it didn't begin with you. It began with the love of God. And he quickly tells us here that this love of God began not when he looked upon us and he saw our unusual merit, but rather it began by his choice. We know, brothers loved by God that he has chosen you.

Now, if you grew up or in any way are involved in theological circles, you know that we just stepped on a landmine. And if you felt any tinge of that landmine, I want you to know that I believe that tinge has come from being indoctrinated by something that is misused. You see, when you open up the scriptures and you find this idea of God's choice, we call it man's freewill, you notice that he didn't prepare people for ... He doesn't say I'm about to say something that people are going to argue about for thousands of years, but I'm going to tread lightly.

You see, the idea of God's loving us and saying, I choose you to be with me. I choose a relationship with you is not a theological bomb to drop. And it's not a banner to wave in order to separate kinds of theological camps. It was never the intention. The intention in the scripture, which is why it's always written to people who are persecuted is to give comfort and security to people who are suffering for the name of Christ.

That when you're suffering for the name of Christ, and these Bible writers, these people like Paul, who are writing, say, what could I say to encourage these people right now, not with this theologically divisive issue, but with comfort food for the soul. What could I say that is absolutely true that I could say first to them, that would immediately give them comfort because of the persecution that they're enduring because of Jesus. And it's this, he first loved you. He chose you. He wanted a relationship with you. This is why Peter, he does the same thing. We studied First Peter last year. And First Peter, he begins the entire letter this way. Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ to those who are elect, chosen, exiles. What are exiles? Exiles were people that he coins with the word exile as somebody who was a believer in Jerusalem who eventually, what happened was because of severe persecution, they were spread across the whole country. They were disrupted.

They had families, they had their language, they had a home, they had their schools, they had their supermarkets, they had their culture and everything. And because of their relentless commitment to Jesus Christ,

suffering came their way and they had to flee. Now, what would you say first to somebody to comfort them when they're about to read the letter that you've written to them, when they're in places around the world that is far from their family, far from their language, far from their comfort, far from their supermarket and their schools and their homes, what would you say to comfort them? Peter doesn't drop a bomb. He gives comfort. He says, you're elect. And not only that, this is according to the foreknowledge of God, the Father. Peter and Paul didn't think that they were being divisive. They were simply telling the truth, that they were loved by God. This word, foreknowledge means to know before. And so we know that part of what foreknowledge means is that God knew before who would believe in Jesus Christ. And that is true, but the Bible goes further than that. Bound up in the idea of foreknowledge is also everything that God must do before we were even born, or before we ever trusted him, that led us to trusting him. The Bible says that he's actually written down people's names in the Lamb's Book of Life before the foundation of the world. The Bible says that before we were all here, of course, he died for us. He came to this earth. This was 2000 years before you were even a blip. And he did something for us.

He caused us to be born. And then he drew us to himself. This is what Jesus said in John chapter six. You remember what he says? No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. In other words, if you think about these matches here, okay, Jesus Christ and his love and his desire for you to have a relationship is the first cause. If you can imagine that these last three matches are faith, hope, and love. And we think, how can that happen? What needs to happen in order for these matches, for our faith, our hope, and our love to be ignited for people to be able to see. And what I want you to see that he starts with is this, it begins not with us. It begins with his love for us. You are loved. And so he says, we know, brothers loved by God that he has chosen you.

How do we know that? Well, verse five, he tells us why. He says, because this is why. Because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power, in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. So let's start with this phrase, not only in word, that means it included words. It just wasn't only words. Words were necessary. We must hear the gospel. And so Paul spoke words. When Paul came into the city the first time in Acts 17, this what his ministry looked like. He reasoned with them from the scriptures. That's words, explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead. Those are all words. He was not trying to use words to confuse them, knowing that God loves and therefore. He was working as hard as he could to try to string together words to make it compelling and lucid and understandable and reasonable to the people.

People must hear the gospel to believe it. That's why Paul says, how are they to believe in him of whom they've never heard. They have to hear words. And Paul went a step further. Not only did he give him words, verse five tells us that he also gave him a living example of how those words, how the gospel has an effect in our life. He says, look, you know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake. In other words, during that three weeks that we were together, I'm not appealing on what I think I was like among you. I'm appealing to your memory of what I was like among you. You know that I did not flatter you. You know that

I did not lie to you. You know that I did not steal from you or exploit you or take advantage of you. You know that I was kind to you and compassionate to you. You know. And so Paul, who recognizes that everything begins with the love of God, goes into a city and instead of being handcuffed by saying, well, it's all up to God. No, he went and he used words, compelling words, reasonable words. And he tried to live before them with authority and power that's available in the gospel. And yet he recognized that these things were not sufficient. The words of our mouth, the example of our lives are insufficient to bring about conversion, a new life. The transformation from somebody whose soul is captured by death and it's brought to life. And the reason is because the God of this world is blind to the minds of unbelievers to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel. When somebody's eyes are blind, they cannot see necessarily the credibility of what they hear in the gospel. And they cannot see the validity of our example before them. Oh, they're powerful, but they're insufficient. They're a part of the equation, but they're not enough. What is needed? Oh, what's needed, he goes back. It's not only in word, but also in power. There must be power. And that power comes from one and one only. And that is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit has to move in somebody's heart. And when they do, it brings about this full conviction.

Without the spirit of God moving in our heart, or when you're thinking about raising your kids or sharing the gospel with a family member or a neighbor. When you're telling them the words and you're trying to live before them, as an example, these two things are absolutely important, but what is absolutely important as well is the power of the Holy Spirit. For without the power of the Holy Spirit, people can listen to the gospel and observe your life, and they can still conclude what bearing does a man who lived 2000 years ago have on my life today. What's so special about Jesus? But when the Holy Spirit moves and blows upon somebody's heart, and they hear the words of the gospel, and they see a living example of the power of the gospel and how it transforms somebody's life, what it does is the Holy Spirit produces a full conviction, that arrests people's attention. It arrests people's love for Jesus. It arrests people's trust so that they put that trust in Jesus.

Words are powerful. Example is powerful. And yet both of these without the power of the Holy Spirit is insufficient. And this is why, for those of us who are seeking to reach people, which if you are a Christian, that is a calling for you and for me. It requires that we speak words of kindness, truth and love. It requires that we live before them in sincerity. And it also requires that we pray for power we do not have, that the Holy Spirit would open their eyes and help them to see and believe and trust what they see and hear from us. This is true. It was true of the people in Thessalonica. It's true for many here. My question is it true for you? Has the gospel come to you in power? You say, "Well, how would I know?" The second thing we learn is when the gospel works in our life, the gospel disrupts our lives.

If your life looks identical to what it looked like before trusting Christ, either the growth process is delayed, or you've never been born again. There is a disruptive power that begins in our heart by the Holy Spirit and begins to course through our entire life. When the Holy Spirit moves in our heart, it literally creates a disturbance, a disturbance to a previously settled condition.

In other words, before Christ, I was settled. I had friends that were settled. I had a house that was settled. I

had hobbies that were settled. I had attitudes that were settled. I had direction OF life that was settled. I had things that were settled. Not necessarily they couldn't change, but they were just, this is my life. This is what I do. This is how I think. This is how I think about people. The gospel came in and created a disruption in my life. And this disruption is not like if you live in the flight zone of the planes that land at the airport. It's disruptive. There's times that I'll be outside and I'll be on the phone with somebody and a big plane comes over head. I just say, "Hold on a second. It'll be about eight seconds." But it's eight seconds. It's disruptive for eight seconds, but then we go back to our settled condition.

When the gospel comes, it creates a disruption that's more like a house being renovated, not painted, not spruced up, but to where there is a blueprint and our house previously was built according to that blueprint. And now all of a sudden there's a new blueprint. It has new places for walls. It has new places for rooms. It has additions. Where Christ, when he comes into our life, he comes to the earth. He dies on a cross for our sin. He rises from the dead. We trust him. He brings his Holy Spirit, sends his Holy Spirit to live within us and now there's a new blueprint. That's why he says you were imitators of Christ. You were imitators of us and of Christ.

What that means is this, is that your life, the Holy Spirit comes into your life. And he says, "Okay, I see the old blueprints, but this is the plan I have for your life. These are old attitudes. These are the new attitudes. This is how you used to forgive people. This is how now you will forgive people. This is how you used to live. This is how now I'm going to encourage you to live and call you to live and empower you to live. This is who you used to live for, but this is who you will begin to live for. Over and over, all of these changes, they're so disruptive. And so that there's patterns and relationships in our life that literally like the walls, they get knocked over. And this is what he says was true of them. He says, when the gospel came to you people in the city of Thessalonica, he goes, you began to become imitators of us and of the Lord. You received a new blueprint that was based on the character of Jesus Christ, how he treated people, how he loved people, his wisdom.

And suddenly your life, you're beginning not to conform to the world around you. You're beginning to conform to Christ. But not only that, he goes, for you receive the word in much affliction with the joy of the Holy Spirit. Most of us, we attribute joy to the absence of affliction. Meaning, we all assume that if we can simply get rid of whatever that affliction is that we're going to experience more joy. And what he says here is this, is one of the powers of the Holy Spirit that comes into our life is that we not only do we begin to change according to a new blueprint, but we begin to bear fruit. Fruit that surprises people given the difficulty of our circumstances. They were still in persecution. They were still hurting in Thessalonica. And yet people are looking at them and saying, you know what, two days ago, you didn't seem all this joyful. What gives?

You got more bruises on your face and yet more joy in your mouth. This is the power that comes to us. And then he tells us why in verses nine through 10. He says, you turn to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his son from heaven. What you see here, these words, turning to God from idols, from idols, turned from something. Anytime why the gospel is so disruptive is it calls us to turn away from

things. And those things are idols. Now in this city, there was a big temple, zoos, and lots of shrines and lots of different idols. And many of these people who have trusted Christ, maybe they came out of that environment. But the Bible also describes idols not simply as little statues you bow down and worship, but anything that we give our heart to, anything that we put our hope in, anything that we worship, that we esteem and say, “Man, if I could simply have that, if I could have more of that, then I would be happy. Then I would be content.”

It can be pleasure. It could be pornography. It could be money. It could be your favorite team finally winning. It could be anything. Our heart is an idol factory. It just keeps looking for something to worship and rarely does a heart look, “Hey, I should worship God. I should worship Christ.” We’re constantly looking. And some of us, maybe were or still are, just like Paul. We had the problem, and it’s really a big problem. That’s a religious idol. It’s really difficult to turn from any idol, but it’s really difficult to turn from a religious idol. Many of us, like Paul, perhaps had a zeal this morning for religious establishment that outpaces a relationship with Christ. It’s an idol. It’s also very, very dangerous. And the reason is because when religious people have no relationship with God, they have to fake it. And the effort to fake it creates more idols. One of them is ritualism. Ritual, I’m just going to do something that feels empty, that is empty, but I’m going to keep doing it over and over and over and over again. Because if I do it, maybe eventually it’s going to work. You have to repent of ritualism to be born again.

The second is legalism. Legalism says, if I make enough rules for myself and then apply those rules to my evaluation of everyone else’s spiritual life, then I’ll be happy and then I’ll be born again. I’ll get to go to heaven. You and I, in particular, for those who go to church, it’s really important. You should legitimately ask yourself this question. Is your spiritual life characterized more by a zeal for religious activity and establishment or a living, feeling, talking, communicative relationship with Jesus Christ? It is critical that you ask that question of yourself. You see, we simply will not be able to turn from any idol without the power of the Holy Spirit, but not only is there a turning away from something, there’s a turning to something. And that is first to God, to serve him, to wait for his son from heaven who’s going to come, who’s going to rescue us.

Waiting implies readiness. And you know if today you are waiting for the imminent return of Christ, because it causes you to not do certain things in the course of the day and it causes you to do certain things. And I’m not going to create a list. Let me just give you a category. When you wake up today and you say, it could be today. I hope it’s today. I’m going to be in heaven by the end of today. Jesus could come today. There are certain things you choose not to do that day.

One of the most horrifying things that I can imagine is to be in the middle of sinning when he comes. And so it causes us to be quickly repentant. Stay away from places, to pursue personal whole in impurity, but it does something else. I want him to come catch me doing something that’s honorable. I want him to catch me, I want him to come when I’m being generous and sacrificial, when I’m sharing the gospel with somebody, when I’m serving somebody, when I’m helping someone. Are you waiting? Do you hope he comes today? Do

you think he will?

And the last thing is not only do we turn to God, verse four says that we turn to a family. In verse four, if you notice what it says, for we know, brothers loved by God. Brothers, notice brothers. He could have said, you people. Sure, no. He uses language, the word brothers can be brothers and sisters. He's talking family. He calls them family. And this is really disruptive. You see, when we come to faith in Christ, we inherit a new family and it becomes very disruptive because what it means is we can't live unto ourself, we have to live for one another. We have to care for one another. We gather together. We serve one another. We help one another. We support one another. All this turning away, all this turning to, all this turning to a family, it's very disruptive. My question is, has it disrupted you?

The third thing we see is the gospel sounds forth from us. We see when the Holy Spirit dwells in us, his power always spills out of us. The Holy Spirit is literally, if you're fanning the flame of the Holy Spirit, people know. They know. Verse seven says you became an example to all the believers, not only in the region, but in these larger regions. He says, you became an example. In other words, you began as an imitator of Christ and me and you have grown so much that now you are giving an example to others that's worthy of their imitation of you.

And then verse eight says, "For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere so that we need not say anything." This word, sounded forth. It's really a beautiful word. It's root is the word echo, can also be the word trumpet, to trumpet out to where there's a sound here and it echoes and it echoes and it echoes and it goes further and further and further. And this is what he says. You see the city, Thessalonica was on the Egnatian Highway. And what that means is that it's sort of like a hub of a bicycle tire. Where there's a hub and then there's spokes that go out in all directions. Here's Thessalonica, there's this vibrant place. A lot of people are coming into.

There's this church there it's this light and what it says is this, is that your faith in Jesus Christ has literally begun to echo through the roads all the way to these other cities. So much so that when I get to these cities and I want to give them example about a church that trusted Christ, they've already heard about you. And I don't have to say anything. This is the beauty of the power of the gospel, is it propels from us. This is the characteristics of people of the kingdom. Before I give a few applications as we close, I want to just pause to thank you. I think every pastor who's ever pastored here at Providence would say the same thing. No matter what the role is, we look around and over the course of the years, I've been here for almost 25 years. And over all of these years, I just feel such a genuine appreciation for you. You see, the fact is we have an underbelly. Every single one of us, we're all human. And so we all bring all of our humanness and fallenness into this place. And therefore it's clear, we're not perfect. There's things in our life, there's idols in our life. There's things that we need to turn from. There can be inhospitality. There can be insensitivity. There can be a lack of forgiveness. There can be political idolatry. There can be racism, racial hatred, racial indifference.

There's things that are here that are not beautiful. Thankfully, because we keep looking to God in his word, I just trust that he's going to continue to work out some of those things in our life leading us to repentance through his kindness so that we grow. We look more like him next year than we do this year. Now, the fact is that even in spite of all these things, I see real faith, hope, and love in you. I see it and I hear it from people who come and they visit. They come in here and they experience what they experience. Sometimes I'll be out in the lobby, they'll come up and I don't know what it is, but this place seems authentic and genuine.

When we do city serving, we go into schools and hospitals and different places. It's amazing what they come back and they see faith and hope and love. They attribute it. There's over 50 missionaries around the world and over 50 international church planners that we support financially and otherwise. And they esteem you so much. They love you so much for your collective faith and hope and love. And the fact is, though I'm not sick as far as I know, if I were to die today, I would be one of the rare pastors, the few in the world who would have the privilege to be able to say I admired the people that I got to pastor, that I get to see and I got to see over and over and over again, fruit that can only be seen if the Holy Spirit is at work in their lives. And so for that, I praise him and I thank you.

And I leave you with a simple challenge today, and that is, excel still more. Let me give you a few ways to do that. First, let's examine our relationship with Christ. Do you have one? Let's start there. Do you have one? Is your spiritual life more a zeal of religious establishment, rules or ritualism? Or does it look like a relationship with a friend? Has your life been upended, disturbed? Have you turned from sin to Christ? You can do that today by putting your trust in him. Will it be disruptive? It will. It's also really good. You admit that you need a savior. You believe in him, you confess him as Lord. He's ready. He wants a relationship with you.

Second thing, let me encourage you to repent of anything and everything that would soil the name of Christ. Sometimes when we hear these scandals in the church or outside of the church, we hear them later say, I never thought it would happen to me. I never thought that little sin would grow and grow and grow and take more ground eventually to where I would shame my name, my family, and more importantly, Christ himself. I want you to know that whatever sin you allow in your life today has no intention of staying that size. It's looking for new ground to break. It wants to grow, and as it grows, it will eventually get to the place to where it will potentially shame you, your family, and your king. Repent today. Cut it off today. Leave it today. Repent today of anything that was soil the name of Christ. And third, but share the gospel in word and deed with our words and with our lives, praying for the power of the Holy Spirit to open up people's eyes that they too would be able to see Christ is the king of all.

So let me pray for us. Father in heaven, we bow before you and I pray, God, that you would forgive us of our idols. I pray that you would cause a continued disruption in our life, that we would continue to turn away from lesser things, and we would turn to you to serve you and wait for Christ. Would you help us, Father, would you help us? Jesus, we want to glorify you for the ways that we confuse people who are observing our

life, as they're trying to figure out who Jesus is. Would you forgive us for making it so confusing?

And we ask you would use us, the words that come from our mouth and the examples of our life to confirm in their hearts that your spirit is working in their lives, that you would cause people to see that Jesus Christ is the only hope of the world. And so we sing to you now, a song we know we're going to sing forever and ever. So would you help us to enjoy it and to lean into it as we sing to you. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Would you stand? Let's sing.



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