Making Jesus Known — Delivery Transcript

Romans 13:11–14 (CSB) · Wes Terry · Sunday, December 31, 2023 · *This is the Way*

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People talk a lot in church world about spirit-filled worship. And what does that look like and what does that mean? And for a lot of us, when you think spirit-filled worship, maybe you think of people raising their hands or people falling down, speaking in tongues, things of that nature. Really the role of the Holy Spirit is to point people's attention to Jesus, his glory, his person, his work, the sufficiency of his grace, and I believe this morning we engaged in spirit-filled worship because our eyes were fixed on the Lord Jesus and we're increasingly becoming more and more aware.

Of who he is and what he has done and just really bless my soul and minister to me to hear y'all sing and for us to together have our eyes opened wider and wider to the reality of our risen Christ. So thanks to Taylor for leading us in that time and thank you for worshiping with sincerity and in the power of the Holy Spirit. If you have your Bible, we're going to be in the book of Romans. You can turn there. I know that we've been going through the book of Genesis, and then we press pause, and then we were in the book of Matthew.

Looking at the Advent Kingdom Parables of Jesus. But before we jump back into Genesis, I wanted to spend the first couple of weeks of the new year reflecting on what does it really mean to be a follower of Jesus. The new year is special because people with the fresh start of 2024 or any new year, they kind of get the feeling that I'm going to get back in the game, I'm going to get back into shape. I'm going to start doing things the way that I'm supposed to be doing them and it's just inevitable.

I know that people there's two types of people. There's those people, and then there's the people who like to make fun of those people, right? And you probably are in either one of those camps, but the reality is you wouldn't be what you are if it wasn't for the reality of a new year. And I really think it's important that we have these seasons and these cycles where

we kind of get to press reset and start over and dream again and put out goals again. I personally benefit from that. I am a kind of guy who has the best of intentions but through the w weekly grind and just the challenges of life that fl that initial flame that you have at the beginning of a thing can peter out and you need something to kind of fan it back into flame.

And so since this is natural for us to do, I want us to take advantage of it. But not just think about what does it mean to be a follower of Jesus As an individual, although that's a very important question to ask and answer, but also because we're a church family, I want us to answer that question: what does it look like to follow Jesus together? What does our church family need to look like so that we're honoring our Lord and really maximizing the opportunity that we have? As a local church to advance his kingdom and further the mission and the vision that he's given us.

And to do that, I want us to look at Romans chapter 12 and Romans chapter 13. And specifically, I want us to look at those passages through the lens of our core values as a church. I would hope that the core values that I'm about to share with you would not just be core values that you would identify with the local church, but these are core values that any Christian should embrace and embody in their own life, but we also want to embody these corporately in our life together. And the whole discussion of core values can kind of go over people's heads or feel somewhat irrelevant because it sounds kind of corporate or organizational or leadership talkish.

And that's not my goal this morning. My goal this morning is to show you that these values that belong in any local church but specifically this local church are deeply biblical and i think they're pleasing to God when we live them out the way we ought to live them out. And the whole reason that you're at Broadview, if you're here and you're a member and you belong here and you've been here a while, the reason that you're at this church is because of the values of this church. You might think of it as culture.

I like the culture of this church. And culture isn't the building, right? It's not the architecture, it's not the lights in the ceilings or the style of music that we play on Sunday mornings, really the culture of a church gets shaped by the values of its people. And so it's because the people of Broadview, which is the church, the church isn't the building, it is the people. But the values that the people hold create an atmosphere that is attractive and draws you in. And maybe you came because of the kids program or the preaching or the music, but you stayed because the culture.

And that culture is shaped by the values of the people. And if our culture gets bad, it's because our values went off. They went awry. And when you go to a church or maybe you've been a part of a church where it just got weird, it got toxic, it got nasty. It's it isn't really any one person that created that problem. It maybe was a deficit of leadership that eventually led everybody in that church to lose the values, the biblical values that make a church hit on all

their cylinders. So because it's so important to our life together, I think it's valuable for us to re-examine what are our values.

Why do we do what we do the way that we do it? What kind of makes our church different from other churches in the things that we really prioritize? Every church should care about these things, but we care about them a certain kind of way. And express it through a certain kind of approach. That's what I want us to do in the life together, or in our journey in Romans 12 and 13. That question of our values is something that as a leader I've wrestled with since I first started at this church.

We're going to go through these five values in just a second, but before I show you these five values, I want to give you a little history lesson on Broadview's core values. I was doing a little research for the sermon and the first list of core values that I saw dated all the way back in 2002. For a membership class that they had created. This was when pastor David was a senior pastor and they put their core values under an acrostic Broadview, B R O A D V I E W.

And I want you to listen to these core values and see what you think. Letter B was Build the Body More Than Buildings. I like that. And I think he means by body, like not your physical body, but the church family. Build the family, build the people more than you do the buildings. R was relationship, O was outreach, A was acceptance, D was discipleship, V was vision. I was implement, which means don't just talk about it, but do it, get it done. E is encouragement and W is worship, broad view.

And I read that list and I thought that's a pretty good representation of our church and kind of the personality of our church. In 2006, that list of eight got whittled down to a list of six and or list of nine whittled down to a list of six and the final six were submission, worship, people, fellowship, mission, and discipleship. And that's a pretty good list as well. It kind of embodies the things that we care about the most. Then in 2013, Broadview got a new senior pastor. And as a young leader, he thought he had to prove himself.

So he took a list of six and turned it into thirteen. And I really regret having done that, but I was all in at the time and I had a big pamphlet printed out, spent thousands of dollars printing out this pamphlet with special icons to represent each core value and here were the thirteen. Worship, discipleship, unreached people, outreach, Bible, authenticity, friendliness, unity, excellence, the big country, and world evangelization. That's a mouthful. And I don't think I know a single person who ever really even read the list, much less cared about it to memorize it.

But it's not a wrong list. It's I think representative of our church. But around 2020, recognizing that no one's going to remember 13 separate words, we bold it down to three statements and the three statements were them before us, in other words, the spirit of humility, evangelism, outward orientation, that that it's about them and not about us.

Number two is there are no strangers. We want to be a friendly church where even if you don't believe like we believe, we welcome you and treat you like family. And then the third one was whatever it takes, the spirit of kind of industry and hard work and we may not be the biggest church in the world, but we're going to make a big impact.

For the kingdom. And I liked those three statements. I thought they simplified everything really well. But those three statements in the 20 other words that we just looked at don't really articulate everything that they represent in and of themselves. And so this last year when we put together our strategic leadership team, we went through a process of really crystallizing and clarifying what is the culture of Broadview. How do we articulate it in a way that is true, but it's also powerful and memorable. So that when we have new people come into our church, they see this is what we are about and this is what I want to be about now that I've joined this church family.

And one of the parts of that strategic planning process was partnering with this outside firm called Thereso and he led us through an exercise that really helps crystallize the core values and instead of them being represented or communicated as particular words we boiled them down into five sentences that all have different verbs and different adjectives, but these I think perfectly capture who Broadview has been before I even got here who Broadview is and Lord willing who Broadview will continue to be. And the thing I love about these five sentences is that they are biblically rooted.

As I've been doing my quiet time since we've gone through this process, I see these values throughout the New Testament and we'll specifically see them in the book of Romans. But the first one is that we make Jesus known wherever we go. Every time that we close our services, at least. As of late or not j as of late, we've kind of switched it up, but historically we would always close our services with the phrase, you are sent. Because the church gathered is the church gathered, but the church when we leave doesn't cease to be the church.

It just scatters throughout the rest of Abilene and around the world. And that's. What we mean when we say you make when we say you are sent, we mean as you go, go and make Jesus known wherever it is. That you're going to go, whether it's your workplace or your family or you know the retirement village or whatever it is that it looks like in your life, make Jesus known wherever you go. The second one is what we talked about this morning of experiencing God's presence. That we as a church, when we gather and worship, we don't want to just be a church where unchurch people like our church services.

We don't want to be a church with a good ban and great preaching. We don't want to be a church where this person or that person loves to visit. We want to be a church where God wants to visit. And so we want to foster environments or encounters where people experience the living God. So we foster tangible encounters. With the living God. The third

sentence is about our teaching ministry at our church. You know that we teach expositionally through books of the Bible because we believe when the Bible speaks, God speaks.

And so we teach biblical truth, but not just for the sake of knowing truth. But for the sake of living the truth. So we teach biblical truth that transforms people's lives. We've all been to churches where the people there know the Bible really well, but it doesn't actually change the way that they live. We want to be a church where the truth transforms us in the way that we live. And then thirdly, is about our service that we want to build communities that serve like Jesus, a humble Christ-like, others-oriented love and service.

And then fifthly, we want to create an environment where we welcome people as they are. That kind of friendly West Texas culture. It doesn't mean that we'll condone your sin and certainly that's not biblical to condone people in their sin, but it is biblical to practice hospitality, to l take people as they are. When they come in, just because they look different, sound different, lived a different kind of life doesn't give us the right to say, well you since you don't fit in, you don't get to come no all are welcome.

There's room at the table for anyone because the only entrance fee to the kingdom of God is a poverty of spirit and recognition that it's only through the righteousness of Jesus that we get in. And so we want to welcome people as they are. And this was one of the biggest things for me personally when I came to Broadview because I wasn't fully surrendered to what the Lord was wanting to do in my life and this church accepted me and worked with me to help me become who God wanted me to be.

And I am so thankful that the culture of our church was such that that we would welcome people in that way. Now as I was thinking about these five values and looking over the New Testament and Old Testament, I saw so many ways to articulate and teach on these values. But there was the other day when I was in my quiet time in the book of Romans chapter twelve and thirteen that I just saw all of them jump out. At me and so for the next four or five weeks we're going to look at Romans twelve and thirteen and articulate these values so that we can individually kind of re-fan into flame what it looks like to follow Jesus in 2024, but also corporately how we join hands together and embody these values beginning with making Jesus known wherever we go.

So let's read Romans chapter 13. It's actually the last part of an argument that Paul starts in Romans chapter 12 verse 1 we're going to finish, we're going to start where he finishes in Romans chapter 13, starting in verse 8. Paul says, do not owe anyone anything except to love one another, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. The commandments: do not commit adultery, do not murder, do not steal, do not covet. And any other commandment are summed up by this one commandment. Love your neighbor as yourself.

Love does no wrong to a neighbor. Love, therefore, is the fulfillment of the law. And then the part we're going to focus on in verse 11, besides this, since you know the time, it is already the hour for you to wake up from sleep. Because now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. The night is nearly over, and the day is near. So let us discard the deeds of darkness. And put on the armor of light. Let us walk decently, as in the daytime, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual impurity and promiscuity, and not in quarreling and jealousy.

But put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh. This is God's word discard the deeds of darkness, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, make Jesus known wherever we go. Now when you think of the phrase, make Jesus known wherever you go, a lot of us default to sharing the gospel with some a verbal gospel witness with someone, sharing the four spiritual laws or something along those lines. Maybe a Billy Graham track with the cross and the and the gulf between and how do you're separated from God and how do you get over and that is evangelism it's important evangelism it's evangelism that I believe in I still believe in going and knocking on doors and all of that stuff.

But there is a evangelism that takes place before that evangelism that is essential to making Jesus known wherever you go. It's it was kind of summed up in a phrase by a British evangelist named Rodney "Gypsy" Smith. And it's a provocative statement, but he said there are not just four gospels. There are four gospels, biblical, they're Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. But he says there are not just four gospels, there are five. There's Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and the Christian. And he says, most people will never read the first four.

And what he means by that is the same thing that William Thorne meant when he said, be careful how you live. Because you are the only Bible that some people will ever read. And by that he means your lifestyle, the way that you live your life morally, ethically, and the way you go about your day-to-day business is communicating. Something about Christianity because what you do with your life has tremendously more power than what you say with your mouth when it comes to what you believe. What you really believe isn't just determined by what you say.

It's determined by how you live. How you live communicates what you believe more powerfully. Than anything else about you. And so it's important that we focus on how we live. Now I know this is unpopular, especially in certain theological circles. That I often swim in, there is a challenge against this kind of attention and focus on behavior. The challenge goes. We are not saved by our works. We are saved by God's grace. Our righteousness, even on our best day, is a filthy rag before the Lord. And so when you preach and teach in a way that focuses on the moral behavior of Christians, you're undermining the importance of God's grace.

And I am sympathetic to that. Challenge because it is true that even if we cleaned up our lives and did better and spoke more cleanly and stopped cursing and all the things that we probably need to do better in life. That doesn't mean that we would be nearer to salvation because our righteousness, even on our best day, is a filthy rag before the Lord. We are saved by grace. Through faith, not of works, so that nobody can boast that is the true gospel, the biblical gospel. However, that gospel, when it saves you it changes you.

When you truly experience the grace of God in your life, you are overwhelmed with the love of God. And the fullness of the Holy Spirit and it will radically revolutionize your lifestyle. And if it doesn't, if you haven't seen changes to the purity of your life and the ethics of your life. It may be that you didn't truly taste and see because God's grace changes us. It doesn't? Our works don't save us, but they do portray that we have been saved. Okay. So it matters how we live. And that's exactly what Paul's talking about in this text.

He's saying, listen, if you are there, if you are a child of God, then stop living as if you're not. Stop living in the dark with the deeds of darkness. Wake up. You know what's happened. You know who's come. You know what salvation is doing in the world today and where it is headed. And so live like it. And how do you do that? Well, he gives us three, you can do more than three, but I'm going to give you three ways that he encourages us to live as we ought to live so that we can make Jesus known wherever we go.

Not because that's how we get saved, but rather that's how we enable people to see the salvation that is in the Lord Jesus Christ. And that's how we personally see and experience greater levels of God ourselves. The Beatitude, blessed are the pure in heart, they are the ones that see God. So purity matters. The three things I want us to look at from this text are waking up, girding up, and fighting. Wake up, gird up, and fight. The first thing he says is you've got to wake up. The night is over.

And the day is drawing near. When he says this phrase, the night is nearly over and the day is near, what's he talking about? It's a metaphor, right? It's not saying literally in your 24-hour day, the night is over. That's not what he's saying. Anytime you are trying to understand what the Bible means by what it says, you can take certain vocabulary words like day and ask the question: is this is this word used anywhere else in the Bible? And in this case it is. Specifically, Paul, who wrote the book of Romans, uses the word day elsewhere in his letters, and it almost always refers to a day of judgment.

He's talking about the day that Christ returns, the day when the kingdom comes in its fullness because Jesus establishes it on earth. So if that's what the day is, if the day is the completion of the kingdom of God, then what is the night? The night is the opposite, right? The night is the old order. The night is the kingdom of the world. The kingdom of the evil one. The night is the world and the things of the world. And so Paul is basically just

confirming what we've seen Jesus say the last four weeks in Matthew 13, that when Jesus came into the world, he inaugurated something new.

Jesus, when he came preaching, he didn't say the kingdom of God will get here eventually He said the kingdom of God is at hand. In other words, when Jesus came into the world, he inaugurated something new, something different, a kingdom that is here and now. Even though its completion is later. So we live in this already not yet tension, and that's exactly what Paul is saying in this verse. He's saying, the reason I want you to live differently, the reason I want you to clean your life up, the reason I want you to stop carousing and drinking and illicit sex is because the night has gone and the day is near.

In other words, it's dawn. I can't get this out of my mind. So my three kids, two of them are getting to the age where they're finally not trying to sneak into mom and dad mom and dad's bed in the middle of the night. But the last one, the youngest still he tries to sneak in there when he gets up in the middle of the night and that's fine. I don't mind it so long as I get at least four hours of sleep. I'm like, okay, you can come in. But he's one of those kids that he's just always on.

When he's awake, it's 100% awake. You know what I'm saying? And I don't think he likes to sleep. And so when he wakes up in the middle of the night, if it's still dark outside, I can get him back down. But the second. That he looks out the window and he sees even a ray of sunlight. Like even just the blue light, not like the warm yellow light, just the blue light. You know what he says to me? Dad it's morning. It's morning. With this stinky morning breath in your nose.

It's morning. And then because he only gets chocolate milk in the morning, he doesn't get chocolate milk at night because of for various reasons, but as soon as he says it's morning, he says, I want some chocolate milk. And it doesn't matter how hard I try, it doesn't matter if I ignore him, I will not be able to go back to bed. Because it's morning. And he's going to keep pounding me. It's morning, it's morning, it's morning. That's what Paul is saying. He's saying it's morning. You don't get to go back to sleep.

That world's gone. That life is over. It's morning. So wake up. And this whole mo this is all motivation for living a righteous life. It's also, by the way, motivation for love. Why do you need to forgive one another? Why do you need to let your love be sincere? Why do you need to be renewed, be transformed, not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind? Why do you need to do with these things that Paul is just one after the other saying do, do, do, do, do?

It's because the night's over, the morning has come, and there's it's just foolish. It's crazy to want to go back to what's dead, to go back to what'll never be coming back. You want to live for what's here, what's now, what's new, and that's the kingdom of God. So wake up. Wake

up. And then he says to girt up. And the way he talks about girding up is with this metaphor of the armor of light. And he really equates the armor of light in verse 13 with putting on Jesus in verse 14.

I think these two things mean the same thing, but it's again it's a metaphor, so you've got to ask the question, what does the metaphor mean? And again, when you're looking for what does the metaphor mean, you ask the question, does this biblical author use this language anywhere else in the New Testament? And the answer is yes. And if you do a little Bible study on the armor of God or the armor of light, you'll land in places like Ephesians chapter 6. A famous passage about the armor of God. You maybe learned it in Sunday school as a kid with the little felt army dudes and the breastplate of righteousness and the helmet of salvation and so on and so forth.

What Ephesians chapter 6, I believe it starts in verse 10. He talks about the armor of God. He says, to put on the armor of God. Why? So that you might be able to stand. Against the schemes of the devil. So the armor has something to do with defense against evil in the world. Stand, belt of truth, sandals of peace, so on and so forth. He uses the language of putting on, not with armor, but this idea of taking off and putting on. He talks about this in a sister letter to Ephesians, which is the letter to the church in Colossae.

So in Colossians chapter 3, a wonderful scripture for you to start the new year off with, he says, as God's chosen ones, holy and dearly loved, put on compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. In other words, there's a defensive strategy, but there's also this offensive strategy of putting on Virtue, take off the old, put on the new. The best parallel text, I think, is in first Thessalonians chapter 5, because he appeals to the language of night and day. Darkness and light. And 1 Thessalonians 5 he says, those who sleep, sleep at night, those who get drunk, get drunk at night.

But we don't belong to the night. We belong to the day. So let us be what? Self-controlled. Put on the armor, not of light, put on the armor of faith and love and the helmet of the hope of salvation. Now this little phrase, faith, hope, and love, that's the theological triad very popular in the New Testament. And I think when Paul says armor of light in Romans 13, in his mind he's thinking the armor of faith and hope and love. He's thinking of the armor of God in Ephesians 6, which is just another way of saying greater faith, greater hope, and greater love in Jesus in the gospel, because it's not faith in faith, right?

That doesn't have an empower. That doesn't have the motivating power to help you change your life, faith and faith, or love and love, or hope and hope. It's specific faith in Jesus. It's in the words of Jesus. It's in the person and the work of Jesus. Greater faith, believing his words. It's greater hope in his promises. It's greater hope that his cross was sufficient, that his death did pay the penalty, that his second coming will come into the world, that it will liberate us from this brokenness and make all things new.

It's greater love for Jesus. It's greater love as you become more increasingly aware of his beauty and who he is. And even in our worship time this morning as we were singing. It's like the more we begin to sing about Jesus, the more we begin to declare scriptural truths about Jesus, it wasn't just informing our minds, it was quickening our affections, it was fanning into flame in our heart this beauty of Christ and this treasuring Christ that does something to the soul. It puts on the armor. It makes you equipped to want to fight, to want to go to war.

And that's what Paul is saying here. Gird up. Girt up. Wake up and girt up so that you can fight. Which the last thing we'll look at fighting is a reminder that the Christian life is war. The Christian life is not easy street. It's not I make a decision and go about my merry way. The Christian life is a constant battle of resisting the enemy and advancing the kingdom. And this really takes place in two ways. If you look at verses 13 and 14 He says, let's walk with decency as in the daytime.

And then he has these negative sin lists, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual impurity and promiscuity, not in quarreling and jealousy. Than the positive, but put on the Lord Jesus Christ. Again with negative, make no provision for the flesh or gratify its desires. So when he says fight any good fight has strategy, right? You have an offensive strategy and a defensive strategy. It's not enough to just play defense. You've ought to you've also got to play offense. It's not enough just to play offense, you've also got to play defense that's what Paul is describing here spiritually.

First, the defensive strategy, he basically says, make no provision for the flesh, and then he lists a triad of two pairs, three sets of two, of I think sins that are uniquely effective at lulling us to sleep spiritually. And the six words that he uses are translated by the CSB as carousing and drunkenness, sexual impurity, promiscuity. Quarreling and jealousy. But because that's really hard to remember, I wanted to summarize them under three umbrella terms. And all of them have to do with excess. If you do a word study on each of these six words, which I did this week, every single one of them has to do with excesses as it relates to substances, sex.

And the self. And so I'm going to call this intoxicating substances, illicit sex, and irritating selfishness. So when he talks about substances, the word that he uses is the word carousing. And if you do a word study on the word carousing, it actually describes parties in the ancient world that people would go to. And the only reason you would throw the party is so that people would come and get drunk. I don't know if anybody's ever been to a party like that. You don't have to raise your hand, but I sure did.

Well I remember and maybe it's because there was nothing else to do in Roby. But it's not like somebody had to have a birthday or you know somebody has a new baby come. People would just throw a party for the express purpose of people showing up and getting drunk.

And not one good thing ever happened at those parties. But that's okay that the reason I say that is that's what Paul's talking about. And then the second word drunkenness is the state that you get in when you drink too much. And again, I don't know if anyone wants to raise their hand, but you know what I'm talking about.

It's that state of mind where you begin to say things you wouldn't normally say and do things you wouldn't normally do. And think thoughts you wouldn't normally think. You all of a sudden think you're Superman. Not because you are Superman, but because that's the alcohol talking. Alright, so what Paul is saying that, that, whatever that is, and he uses it in the plural, so he's saying all kinds of that it doesn't matter the occasion for the party, doesn't matter whether it's the birthday or New Year's Eve, which is tonight, or whatever else may be.

There's going to be a war for your soul to want to make you go to those kind of parties for the express purpose of drinking too much. Or it doesn't have to be alcohol, that can be smoking too much, it can be popping too many pills, anything that dulls your mind so that you become intoxicated, not with the sweetness of God and the beauty of Christ through the Holy Spirit, but through illicit substances. He's saying don't do that. Get rid of that in your life. Which is a relevant word for us.

And then he talks about that same idea in relation to sex. And here's what's interesting. The Bible never forbids alcohol Per se it never says thou shalt not drink, but it does constantly warn against the dangers of too much drinking. And just the dangers of alcohol itself, that it has a seductive power, and that you need to be careful. The same is said of sex. The Bible never discourages sex. Sex is a good thing. It is created by God. It is for our good. It's how babies come into the world.

It's a good thing we're not going to talk about it too much because we've got a lot of little kids in here. But what he's saying is it's reserved for a certain context, and that context is covenantal marriage. One man, one woman, one lifetime. So illicit sex is a word it was originally just used to talk about a bed. The word used for impure sex is bed. Then it came to be known as marriage bed, and then by the first century Paul's writing, it came to be identified with anything done in a marriage bed that married people don't do.

So like non-married sexuality, that's what you need to avoid. Particularly excesses. So any kind of adultery, any kind of pornography. It's interesting he doesn't use the word porneia, which is the more popular word for sexual immorality. It's an even wider term than that. It's any kind of engagement in sexuality that is outside of God's proper definition in marriage, that will dull you spiritually. And some of you guys know this, especially guys who struggle with addiction to pornography. You feel worthless in the kingdom of God because you can't seem to kick that thing in your life.

Just like those of you who struggle with an addiction, whether it's alcohol or pill popping or smoking weed or whatever the case may be, you want to be used for God, you want to do great things for the kingdom, but you can't seem to get over this hurdle because it is a snare. And Satan knows it's a snare. And these two issues particularly, substances and sexuality, are effective snares because of what it does to your chemistry and your physical body and how damaging it is to your spirituality. It makes you feel like a worthless failure.

That's why Paul's saying, stop, don't even play with it. He says, make no provision. Don't even entertain it. Don't even let the thoughts fester. And then the last one is about irritating selfishness. I'm just going to, this is the word quarreling and jealousy. It's this person who never has enough, the person who's always jealous of what other people have. This ego trip of they shouldn't have those nice things, they don't deserve those things. I'm going to diminish what they have, I'm going to tear them down and build myself up. I'm going to gossip, I'm going to do whatever it takes to make much of me and tear other people down.

Paul is saying that spirit is a s is a is a soul killer, it is a holiness killer, it will ruin you spiritually, so snuff it out. When you start gossiping, when you s feel that thing in you of, oh, they don't deserve that. And I, you know, they're if people only knew what I knew about that man. Or about that woman, that that is dangerous spiritual that is sp spiritually toxic to your soul, make no provision. Which is a wonderful word. It literally means forethought. It means don't even entertain the thought when you're at home alone and you think, well, I can have three or four more beers.

Or I can, you know, I don't have to drink with my spouse. I can kind of drink by myself and no, you know, I can control it at this amount You know, hard liquor won't be wrong for a couple more days. And you just kind of push it and push it and push it again. It's a gray area, the Bible doesn't forbid it, but make no provision. Don't even play the game. Because there is a war for your soul. And these weapons of the world are not aimed to make you they're not aimed to harm you physically.

They're not aimed to kind of ruin you socially. They're aimed to desensitize you spiritually. And that's the game plan of your enemy. So make no provision. You may need to get radical. You may need to put some kind of hardcore filter on your internet so that, or some kind of reporting on your internet so that everybody gets to know what you look at. You may need if you're entertaining thoughts of infidelity because you feel lonely and your spouse doesn't make you feel like they should make you feel. It's their job to make you feel like a million bucks and they make you feel like nothing.

Just because you got a message on Facebook doesn't mean you need a message on back. Make no provision. When you see people flourishing and getting new cars and new houses and all that stuff, when that thought of greed enters your life, cut it out. It reminds me of that phrase, you guys ever watch the Andy Griffith show? You remember Barney Five? Nippet nip

it. Nip it in the bud. That's what you need to do. So I want to show you this Barney 5 clip so that you'll never forget what I'm telling you.

And then we'll wrap it up. Let's play that it's got to stop or do you know what I'm saying? Wait a minute. It's got to stop right now. Nip it! Nip it in the butt. What in the butt? You and Jeff, that's what. Nip it! Tell them you're mine Barney Fife, I do believe you're jealous. Doggonna thelmaloo, you're my girl, ain't you? Of course I am. All right, then nip it. I say this calls for action, and now, nip it in the bud first sign a youngster's going wrong, you got to nip it in the bud.

Nip it. You go read any book you want on the subject of child discipline, and you'll find that every one of them is in favor of bud nipping. Take care of it. Only one way to take care of it. Nip it. In the bud. Set up a checkpoint. Nip this speed and right in the bud. Forget about her. Nip it. Nip it in the bud Barney's in jail! All right, all right, all right, all right. Now the minute it was. Alright, sometimes you can have too good an illustration. I hope it wasn't that, but nip it in the butt, alright?

So listen, you know what it is. I don't have to tell you the Holy Spirit's already right now telling you. This almost took you out in 2023. This will take you out in 2024 if you don't nip it. So nip it in the bud. But listen, it's not enough just to get rid of the deeds of darkness. He also says there's an offensive strategy, and that is putting on the Lord Jesus Christ. Put on the armor of light. And what is the armor of light? It's greater faith. Greater hope and greater love in the Lord Jesus Christ.

So as we close, I want you to think about three things. I got this from a John Piper article. He says in the Bible, faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. So if you want greater faith in your life, get greater Bible engagement in your schedule. If you're not having a daily quiet time, make 2023, 2024 the year where you finally Consistently have time with the Lord. Unhurried, undistracted, time alone with God. Find a time, find a place, find a plan, and do it. The more you engage with scripture, the more faith will be built in your life.

If you've never read through the Bible, maybe that's something you should entertain. But if you're just getting started, maybe that's too big of an S. So instead of reading the whole Bible, just read the Bible. Get a plan you can do and do the plan every day. If you're a guy in our church, I want to encourage you to consider our D groups. Our D groups are going to be working through. A book every week, a biblical book centered on manhood, taking about biblical design God's design for manhood. And if it's not in the ha if you're not in the habit, putting yourself in accountability with other brothers who are engaging in the habit may be helpful for you.

And you can come talk to me if you want to get started in that. But engage the word. Faith comes by hearing, hearing by the word of God. Hope comes from rehearing or rehearsing the

promises of God. So one of the ways you can do this, they're there a Bible promises book. You don't have to do that though. You can just when you read the Bible, every time you see a promise, highlight it Underline it, begin to meditate on it, memorize it. Almost everywhere in the Bible where there's a command, do this, don't do that, there's an indicative motivating the command because Christ has done this, because God will do this, because Christ will come again live in this way.

Don't just focus on what you should do. Focus on why I'm doing what God's called me to do. Focus on the promise and hope will begin to bud and build in your heart. And then finally, treasuring or love comes from beholding. Love comes from what we did in this time of worship when you seeing songs, there's something about the artistic element of that that that fans into flame affection and emotion, I hate to use that word, but it stirs your emotions for Jesus. And that's biblical. There is something about stirring your heart for Jesus that displaces sin in your life.

It says, you know, you had so much fun, enjoyed doing these things, living in a sinful lifestyle. What is going to have the power to displace that if not greater joy, greater contentment, greater love for the Lord Jesus Christ. And the way to have that is to find those things in your life where you connect to God. Emotionally. It may be worship music. It may be, it may be studying commentaries, you know. That's what it is for me. I know it sounds a little weird, but you know, give me a good German commentary where I got to translate Greek and Hebrew and it turns me on for the Lord Jesus Christ.

There's something about it that just speaks to me the way that I'm wired. Maybe for you it's going outdoors and spending time in God's creation. For a lot of people, it's serving people, but do it as a way of beholding Christ, treasuring him, seeing him in fresh ways, and allow that to displace. The sin in your life. It's not enough just to get rid of the sin. You've got to fill the house with a strong man. You got to get rid of the demons, yes, but if you get rid of the demons and you don't put Jesus in the house, the demons just come back ten times stronger.

You've got to fill your heart with the Lord Jesus Christ. So as we commit to a new year, let's commit to making Jesus known wherever we go, discarding the deeds of darkness, putting on the armor of light. If you're here this morning and you're not a Christian, you can't have Christian values if you don't have the Christ of Christianity living in your heart. And if that's something you need to do this morning you can come during our time of invitation and make that decision for the vast majority of us in this room, it's just a challenge to begin 2024 the right way.

And you already know the Holy Spirit has already brought to your mind what you need to lay before the Lord. And I'm going to invite you during this time as Taylor leads us to do business with God. And if there's a way I can pray with you or for you, I'll be happy to do that. But let's stand together and go to the Lord in prayer. Heavenly Father, we thank you for

this time in your word and for this really Encouraging challenge like a coach at the beginning of the season, it's just straight talk about what is and what isn't, what's needed and what's not needed.

Have help us to have ears to hear what the Holy Spirit's trying to say. And not just to us personally, individually, but also corporately as a church. And may we not only hear it, but would we also put it into practice Counting the cost, sacrificing what needs to be sacrificed, and knowing that what we receive in obedience is infinitely greater than what we may lose in persisting in our own way. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. We'll take just a few moments there where you're standing. If you want to sit, you can.

But just an attitude of prayer, a posture of prayer in responding to the Lord. We'll take just a few moments. And then we'll close out our service. [Song: What a Beautiful Name.]

And have a seat. Lord Jesus, your name is a wonderful name, a beautiful name, a powerful name. And so as we begin this new year, may we live lives that exalt the name of Jesus, not just with our lips.

But with the attitudes of our heart, the words that come from our mouths, the way that we live our lives, the relationships that we encourage and discourage. The activities that we pursue or don't pursue. Would you exalt the name of the Lord Jesus Christ in our church, both gathered and scattered? Advance your kingdom here on earth as it is in heaven, and we pray it in Jesus' name, amen.