

WE ARE CHURCH

VALUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

We Are Church: Why Jesus Matters

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John 14:1–14:6

Welcome to the Doxa Church podcast. What matters in the local church? In this series, We Are Church. We'll look at a few of the core values that Doxa holds from the scriptures. Join us in this six week series. As we explore the importance of an opportunity for the church in today's changing cultural landscape, more information about doxa or to join us for a Sunday gathering, go to doxa-church.com.

Good morning, everyone. Hey, for those of you that don't know me, my name is Eddie. I'm the lead teaching pastor here at Doxa. I'm relatively new. So come say hi. If you, if we haven't met, I would love to meet you afterwards. I'll be out right in the lobby. That'd be great. Hey, today we kick off a new series called We Are Church, and this series is going to look at six core values, six aspects of the church. Now, just to be sure, Doxa typically does walk through books of the Bible as we did with second Peter, our last series, but we just thought in light of the season, the Church is in light in the new reality, we all find ourselves in going into the fall. And, you know, obviously coming out of everything that's going on in the last two years, the elephant in the room, um, that it would be helpful to revisit some of these core values and really look at how they're important for this rather unique season.

So we'll look at these six core values, and we're going to go back into the scriptures to remind ourselves of the importance of all these aspects. Why do we do church in the first place? Why do we, why are we the church in our communities? How do we live these things out? But also we want to point out some of the opportunities. I think the church has a unique opportunity in each of these core values, uh, because in light of the new season, we find ourselves in people's routines, as you know, have been upset and things are different. And so there's a unique opportunity for each of these core values in people's lives. Let's face it isolation, you know, the upsetting of all of the things we've been doing. It's it's changed us. And we do know there's a few reasons why we decided to go with this series.

And I think you'll agree with some of these things over the last year and a half. You know, people are less connected than they've ever have been despite being online, which is supposed to connect people. Is that true? Do we, do we feel a little bit less connected, a little more isolated?

Absolutely. You also know that just over the research that that's been done over the last 20 months, that people are much less likely to attend a church or attend a gathering for a church on a Sunday morning, right? People used to go two to three times. Now they go one to two times. People are also less likely to engage their neighbor for, for some, some of them are good reasons, it's difficult, right? When we all have masks on and we don't see each other as easily and we can't meet strangers as easily and sometimes your context's not welcome.

And so there's a lot of different things that are taking place. One of the things, um, as a result, people are more likely to begin or even continue to rethink Christianity altogether, rethink their faith rethink church altogether, because if my life's not any different than it was before, why go to church. So in this series, we're going to really spend time looking at why the church is valuable and necessary. And I'll just be honest with you this morning. I feel a really, I feel weight around this series, because I just feel it's such an important topic. It's one of those things where you look at you're like, that seems boring. I'm going to skip, okay. But then when you get into it, you're like, man, this is so important. So valuable. This is the building blocks of what we do as for those of us that call ourselves Christians as people of God.

So I want you to keep an eye out for three important themes throughout the next six weeks. Okay. One of them is going to be ownership. What do we own as a part of being a part of God's family, his church, another one is the idea of deconstruction. And that's the idea of us sort of looking and revisiting our Christianity, our faith. And another one is opportunity in light of everything that's gone on. What do we have to do? What are the, what are the spots that we can pick for those of us that are Christians, to be able to help change our community for the better and help people meet Jesus, okay, let's pray and we'll get right in.

Lord God. I just feel the sense of weightiness and responsibility around this message around the next six weeks. And I'm praying right now that Doxa in here. I feel like they can carry some of this with me, cause this is really important for all of us Lord. And I pray that we all feel that, but we also feel that our burden is light in you. And so if, if we're feeling burdened, maybe we need to go to more to you, Lord God. And so I'm praying that you would just supernaturally allow that to happen right now that you would come in and give us rest and help us abide in you this morning. Because after all we're talking about you specifically, so Lord God, I pray that you're glorified. And Lord, I pray that you sort of remove the fear and the doubt in my mind as I preach and that what the holy spirit wants communicated, may that be communicated in his name? Amen.

First subject on the church is Jesus. Why Jesus matters that you can't begin a series on the church without first talking about Jesus.

Listen, there's a lot to say about Jesus. Okay. There is a lot to say about Jesus, but specifically pertaining to how the church functions and its necessity in the community. Why is church valuable? I remember just a couple of years ago, my kids are just a little smaller and we're driving down the road. We're on a big road trip and the moon is out beautiful, right? Beautiful, full moon. And I hear my, my son and daughter sort of arguing back and forth about what the moon is and where it comes from and all these sorts of things and how it gets its light. Right? How does it light up? And it's funny explaining that to a child because it's, it's actually pretty cool. The moon itself, as you may know, doesn't itself, have any light. It merely reflects the light of the sun, right?

And so the, the amount of light on the moon is directly dependent on how much light the sun, how the angle of the sun and the earth and how it's able to get that. I'm not a physicist. Okay. You understand what I'm saying? The sun hits the moon, it lights up, come on. Right. And so that, that was essentially my definition of my kids. And now this works. Okay. But the same is kind of true for the church. You can't really understand the moon without understanding the sun. And you can't really, you can't understand the church without understanding Jesus. Jesus is the senior pastor of the church. He is the creator. He is the Redeemer of the church. He is the restorationist of the world. He's all these things. So then before the church can run any programs or learn any doctrines or even sing any songs or even fulfill its mission of making disciples, the church must first know the ways and truths of Jesus.

It all begins with him. And in the same way, without a proper understanding of Jesus, the church could probably seem unimportant. If you don't get Jesus, then you will not get the church because the church isn't anything without Jesus, it's important. You know, a lot of people do feel that way right now, seeing the church as unimportant. In fact, there has been a trend of Christians and others, people that are on their face and he's that have sort of been deconstructing their understanding of the faith. And I understand there's a lot of controversy. And, um, let's say, um, there's just a lot around this word deconstruction. So I'm gonna give you a definition here. Deconstruction, revising and rethinking long-held beliefs in church or in Jesus, potentially leading to a deconversion from Christianity. Now I want to say right off the bat, that there are probably two important forms of deconstruction to think about before we get started.

The first is this using scripture to deconstruct the church. This often has made the church better in the past. Think of the reformation, all of us, whether you know it or not are Protestants as a result of a reformation that took place 500 years ago, had people not looked at the scripture to critique the church. There would not be a Doxa. So that's oftentimes looked at as good, but the second form of deconstruction and the one we're probably going to focus on the most throughout this series, it uses our world its values and the ideas of the world that permeates society to not deconstruct the church specifically, but to deconstruct God himself, Jesus, himself, or the Bible. So we're going to be referencing this one throughout the series. Although I think anyone could, no matter where you're at in your walk, you're going to be able to benefit from this series.

But it's really no wonder that this trend is sort of picked up steam. And I please hear me. I'm not calling it a trend because I'm making light of it. I hope to explain that in a new post COVID world, we've been again alone, isolated removed from faith and family. And I'm not saying that COVID is the reason that people deconstruct their faith, but I will ask the question, is it possible that 12 to 18 months of isolation could lead to a rethinking of our faith? Do we think that's possible? It's possible, right? Or at least played some part 5%, 10%, 1%, a hundred percent, but some part for all of us. So we have to think, why are people doing this? Why are they rethinking their faith? A lot of us are in here doing this right now. That's okay. And here's a few things that I've jotted down.

Maybe it's maybe people it's possible. People have gotten casual about their need for spiritual healing. And we've replaced that spiritual healing with maybe cultural attempts at healing, things like mindfulness, not bad sound, baths, meditation, all of these sort of secular cultural attempts to sort of meet a spiritual need. Yeah. Or maybe the last 18 months has given you or given some people time to reflect on the ways we've been wounded. Maybe the church has done some really hard stuff to us, an oppressive leader, perhaps a parent, family, somebody under a Christian

context that hurt us. And we're rethinking, "Man was that related to the church. Was that related to God? Why would God allow that to happen?" Good question.

Maybe though, some people are seeing good in the world and not in the church. And they're looking and saying, I see good people doing good things out there. And I see indifferent people in the church doing nothing. Maybe that's what they feel. Or maybe just, maybe, maybe your friends are doing it. Maybe you see it on YouTube or Instagram and you think that's pretty cool. That gets a lot of likes comments and views, not to make light of it, but by the way, this is an edgy and cool thing to do right now. It is. Or maybe, and this will be my last one. We spent 18 months outside of church. And your life is no different or no worse off than it was when you regularly attended church or maybe your life's better. What do we do with that? So if you hear, if you're hearing, you're finding yourself in this process where you feel like I'm rethinking my faith, I'm, I'm deconstructing my faith. Here's what I want to say to you this morning. You're in a safe place to do that. I don't want you to deconstruct, but if you are going to think about rethink, I would love for you to be here. You are welcome here to do that. You do not have to leave the church to be able to rethink your faith. We want you to do that under these contexts.

The next thing is that Jesus welcomes your questions. He welcomes your hurt, your trauma and your angst. Jesus is not too small for those things. He can handle them. So deconstruction is going to be a theme that again, we address all throughout six messages. So I also encourage for those of you who are feeling that way to follow along because we can't solve it all in one sermon.

Now, for those of us maybe who are not in that spot, it could be easy for us to rebuke or even chastise people for deconstructing their faith. They're swapping out Jesus for apps and classes and political worldviews and ideologies. Pathetic. It's easy to say that, but this is a church, not the comments section of a YouTube video. So we have to ask why hasn't the church helped fill the void? Or more profoundly? Where has the church aided deconstruction? What is our role to play maybe? And that's the point of this sermon? It's because the church has wandered away from its truest task. What's the truest task of the church. The church's chief task is to follow the ways and truths of Jesus. It begins and ends with Jesus. The church was never about getting people to follow a religious building or speaker or a thought leader is never about getting people to follow a type of music or specific way of doing church or theology. It was about getting people to follow Jesus, simple, not easy but simple. You see it's through the ways and truths of Jesus. When we learn our identity, as children of God, we get that from following and learning about Jesus. It's through the ways and truths of Jesus, that we learn our mission.

We get our identity, our mission out of Jesus, not the other way around. And what I mean by that is we think some of us think, and oftentimes in church history, we've thought that if I, if I learn an identity and I learn a mission and I do said mission, then God will all of a sudden show himself to me and I'll know him and I'll learn him. But that's the other way around. We learn and follow the ways of Jesus and in so doing we're granted our identity. It's important.

Now it's only after following the ways and choose the Jesus that we can understand why church and its components are necessary for us. So Jesus first, okay. He informs us as a church, John 14:6 Jesus said to him, I am the way I am the truth and the life, no one comes to the father, except through me.

A lot of us have heard this, but there's really three important words here. And I think you, you know what they are right? The way the truth and the life. In this passage, Jesus gives us these

three key words to clue us in, on how to follow his way. It's in this formula that we actually can get to the real Jesus. And it's only until we find this real Jesus that we can really understand the importance of the church. Do you see what I'm saying?

Preface. Okay. First word. The ways. Look at verse three with me in our, in our texts here in John 14, Jesus says, and if I and prepare a place for you, I will come again. And I will take you to myself that where I'm going, where I am, you may also be, and you know, the way to where I am going. And Thomas said to him, Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way now Jesus here is telling his disciples how he is essentially going to die, a death, an unjustified death, he's going to resurrect. And then he's going to ascend into heaven to go prepare a place in heaven. They're going to prepare the new heavens and new earth for people. And Thomas says, you know, I, I didn't get the sort of pin drop or the MapQuest printout, depending on how old you are or an Atlas. I mean, if you're that old, I didn't get the map to figure out the way Jesus, can you help me out here? I don't understand what you're saying.

And it's kind of funny. I mean, I've sat, I've been in church, you know, for a long time now. And I've some of my favorite pastors and preachers. It's easy to just pick on Thomas because he's always doubting and there's a picture of him like touching Jesus' wound. Like I gotta be sure. So he's easy to pick on this disciple. It's sort of funny that he doesn't really know what Jesus is talking about a little bit, but we sorta don't either. Let's I want to be honest. That's hard to figure out what is Jesus saying here? You know, today in our context, we think the ways of Jesus is actually the truth of Jesus. Meaning that the ways of Jesus is about studying and reading more. If I learn more doctrine about God then I'm following his ways. If we cognitively know who he is, then we're sort of following him, but that's not how you get the way of Jesus. That's how you get the truth of Jesus, Eugene Peterson in his book, *The Jesus, Way* he says, you cannot understand the truths of Jesus without first understanding the ways.

So it is through living the ways of Jesus that we practice and become more familiar with the truths you understand. And this has actually been a cause of people that are rethinking their faith, the church sort of crafts a message that articulates the truths of Jesus, the, the doctrine doctrinal statements of Jesus without of course the way of Jesus. But here's what happens when you just get truth, truth in isolation creates legalism. It creates dogma. It creates-demonstrates a lack of nuance. And then the church becomes black and white. We come to church and you get rule book. Those who get it are welcomed in as upstanding members. Yeah. Those who do not get it, can't find their place. They may go elsewhere or they deconstruct. And then people who do conform to this style of church, if you understand, it may not end up being saved to Jesus directly, but being saved to a church instead, or church ideology then if the church blows up or closes or has serious issues. People don't just change churches. They change worldviews because their God collapsed.

We cannot fully understand the truth of Jesus without first knowing the ways of Jesus. This is part of why we shouldn't snicker at Thomas, as he's trying to understand Jesus' way. Like I just did. He's in process and you know what? We're all in process. Some of us feel like we're in a better spot than others. Sure. But we're all in process. So you might be thinking what's the way of Jesus then. And that's not an easy question to answer. It really isn't, it's very, very difficult, but I took my crack. So I've got a definition for you. This is what I believe it is. And yes, there's probably something missing, but I want you to just grasp an idea of what you think, what the way of Jesus might feel like the way of Jesus embarking on a lifelong journey of seeking,

knowing, obeying, and resting with Jesus. The way of Jesus follows him to Gethsemane in doubt to the desert in need to the cross and suffering and to the empty tomb in life. The way links arms with other imperfect people in the church, as we journey through our sin towards a redeemed future.

So what is the way? The way is lifelong. We don't finish following Jesus. It's emotional. If we think that a good faith in God means we don't get emotional, we don't suffer. Then we're mistaken. That is not true. You will suffer like Jesus did. You will be in need like Jesus did. So it's not emotional, or it is emotional. It's also not void of hardship, doubt or need. That means doubt is included in your Christian walk. It may happen. And guess what? He welcomes that doubt and he welcomes our questions. It's important to know that the way is also followed together with other imperfect people.

Can we put the definition back? That'd be great. Thanks. So it's followed together with imperfect people and the way leads to life, despite all of this, both the fulfilled life now and an eternal life later. Okay. Thanks guys. So the spiritual and emotional wave that we're riding sometimes in life is par for the course walking, the ways of Jesus, the ways of Jesus, again, is not purely knowledge and rule keeping, which leads me to say, no one has or will perfect their faith in Jesus in this life. So this is, this is important for, two sort of typecast of people. If you're hearing you think you're perfect, you're not right, newsflash. You're not perfect. And you will never perfect your faith in Jesus. And so if we've heard enough, then we're wrong. Uh, I heard Jared Wilson, uh, an author say once the antidote to gospel fatigue is more gospel because if you're tired of learning the truth of Jesus, then you don't understand them yet. If you're tired of following the way of Jesus, you've never been on it.

That's why it's important. I just feel like I'm being affected right now by that this is a low, this is a hard road. This is a really difficult path, but there's good news for us, keep going. You know, all the difficulty. And this is actually why Jesus gives us our congregation. It's actually why the local congregation is the environment for God to practice the ways of Jesus in because none of us have all the answers and we need each other. Like I walked in here this morning, feeling like, man, I need you all because I don't have all the answers. All of us should feel that angst like, I'm feeling lacking this morning. I feel like Lord, Jesus helped me in this. And we're all together to remind us, Hey, this is why we follow Jesus because he's the way the truth and the life he provides, he gives us life.

We need each other. The church is God's chosen environment to work his people out for growth. That's why we worshiped God together through song. That's why we pray together. That's where we partake in the mission of making disciples together. That's why we take the Eucharist or take communion together. That's why we live life as an example, to one another and to those outside of our church together. And of course we leave room for the holy spirit to do his work. But the undergirding of all of this is together. We need each other. God understands that we're all journeying through life in a sinful world. And we need each other to continually remind us of the mission and continue to encourage one another. So for those of you that might be here and feel like I am deconstructing my faith, or maybe you're just not a believer Christian. And you're looking for answers. Or even if you do call yourself a Christian and figure things out, you need to hear me again. We're all in this together.

We all have off days. We all have off weeks. We all have off months. And some of us have off years. Many of us had a crisis of faith. And if you're in that moment this morning, you are welcome here amongst us because we all do too. You're not alone. That's what the way of Jesus feels like. But what about the truth? Because John 14:6 Jesus said, I am the way I am the truth. And I am the life.

Next comes the truth. Now by calling himself truth, Jesus is saying essentially there is no alternative through the corridor of life that doesn't eventually cross me. It may happen early in your life. At six years old may happen at 14, 42 or 80 or in death, but one way or another, we cross Jesus now in a day where truth is seemingly elusive, Jesus calls himself the truth, which is quite the claim because we live in a day with what we feel is true. Must be true.

You understand what I'm saying? Because our feelings govern what is truthful in our lives. Like we'll say things like living your truth, right? How do you live someone else's truth. If it's different from another good question, our feelings of course are necessary to help us perceive the world around us. But let's be honest. They change frequently. Don't they? I mean, I, I was looking back and don't ever do this. If you ever talk publicly, but I stumbled upon a very old talk. I gave to a youth group of eight homeschool kids. Um, and I was abrasive. I was unpolished. I was terrible at everything. I was trying to communicate.

I was so bad at that. Have you ever looked back at something you've done and got mad? What was I thinking? That was such a dumb decision. Have you, has anyone done that help me out here. Okay. We've all looked back and you know, what's funny. The older I get, I still look back like I am now. I look back when I was 19. That was terrible. Talk 21. Ooh, man. What was I thinking there? 24. Oh gosh. What was I thinking? Talking to my wife that way. 27, 28, 29. We're still going. And I'm looking back every few years going, man. Well, I'm a such an idiot. What was I thinking? Which means fundamentally I'm an idiot right now. I just don't know it yet. Right? Like when I'm 42, I'm going to be like, or, or 58. I'm like, man, what was I thinking in that sermon October 17? What an idiot I was.

That's the sort of a power emotions have. So we're in this spot where our emotions are like this, but we need a truth to undergird us. We do. We need a truth that will help us understand something will help us understand that there's a foundation of truth. That's not just the way I feel in a specific moment. Truth is valuable because feelings can often be sometimes unreliable. Let's be honest. You know, there's a moment in the scriptures when Pontius Pilate, he's the guy that the Roman guy, the guard that was essentially crucifies Jesus or gives the order to crucify Jesus. And so he's talking to Jesus and he's looking for answers as to who this guy is before he's ordered him to be crucified. And Jesus says, during this moment, he says, for this reason I was born and I come into the world to testify to the truth.

Everyone who belongs to the truth, listens to my voice and Pilate, being a smart man, looks at him and he says, what is truth? You see what he did there? Pilot deep down knows what the word truth means. And he knows what Jesus is trying to say, because Pilate says, I find no guilt in this man. Instead Pilate, he changes the rules and asks what is the truth? Because guess what? If you remove the foundation of truth, making truth sort of feelings, guessing game, then you can kind of free yourselves to make any decision you want because who really knows, right? Who really knows what the truth is. I mean, I can justify sort of my behavior in any way, because who

really, who understands it? Jesus though, he calls himself the cornerstone, the foundation for our faith. He is the truth. Matthew 7:24, maybe up here.

It says everyone who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell and the floods came and the winds blew and beat on that house. But it did not fall because it had been founded on rock and everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell and the floods came and the winds blew and beat against the house and it fell. And this is the line that gets me and great was the fall of it. It didn't just go down. It went down hard without a foundational truth. Our feelings, our foundation and our feelings change. So our foundation is unstable. This is another reason that Jesus calls us into community with one another,

Because the world we live in is harsh. It throws a lot at all of us. It rains, it pours it snows. It, it was typhoons, earthquakes, all sorts of stuff in this crazy walk of life. But man, I'd really hate for you or any of us to be in the middle of a deconstruction project. When a storm comes, that is a bad spot to be in. And that's why Jesus' truth is so essential, but there's good news because then Jesus, doesn't just say, he's the truth. He says, he's the life John 14:6 Jesus said to him, I am the way I am the truth and the life, no one comes to the father, except through me. Life comes last because here's why when we learn the ways of Jesus rooted in the truth of Jesus, then we learn and are provided the life a life worth living today and an eternal life in God's presence.

Let me just say, this is kind of what we're all after. We're all sort of after that, whether you're a faithful Bible, believing gospel centered Christian, or you're in the middle of deconstructing from Christianity itself, or whether you just don't call yourself a Christian at all, we're all in pursuit of a transcendent, meaningful life. When you get down to the nitty gritty of what everybody needs, they don't say I want destruction and evil and harm to come about every human being they say, I just want to be with my family and to leave a mark on the earth and leave a legacy. You know what they're longing for? You're longing for transcendent, meaningful purpose. That's what you're longing for. And this is where the opportunity of the church comes in. We said, what's the opportunity of the church from this message that we all seek transcending meaning, and Jesus offers us the way he is, the way Jesus offers us the way, what we seek behind this daunting and challenging.

And yet really rewarding life is the way to transcend it, meaningful purpose. And we know that it comes in the form of Jesus. So the church must first remember to follow the ways of Jesus that leads to life and then point people towards the way. So they might have the life as well. The church's purpose is not to hand out rule books of doctrines, the doctrines come, but it's not the first thing. The first thing is Jesus. Then Jesus gives us the way to live. Do you understand if someone were to hand me a let's go old school, a Mo uh, documents, MapQuest. Okay. So let's say they handed me a MapQuest printout. It's 2004, like what's magic. And they're handing me it MapQuest printout. And they say, follow this. And I say why? And they say, just follow it because if you do, you'll get to your destination.

And I said, well, what's the destination. Well, you got to follow it first. Well, that doesn't make any sense. I want to know where I'm going before I just start following something. Jesus is where we're headed and we must push him forward. It bums me out when people, some of you may be here this morning that go to church. You say I haven't been in church in 10 years. I haven't been

to church in 12 years. I haven't been at church or may have been a church in two years. It's been COVID and I just feel like something is burning in me. And I need to go to church. I just want to find something. I want to find this Jesus everyone's talking about maybe. And oftentimes people go to church looking for Jesus and too often, they find us instead. The church's role is to point people to Jesus, not sort of stand as a safeguard in his way, in their way to get to him.

How do we make it as easy for people to meet Jesus as possible? I'll close with this. For those of us who are deconstructing our faith or in process of doing so. Andy Stanley a pastor in Atlanta, he says that he says that there are problems to solve in life. And there are tensions to manage in life problems to solve and tensions, to manage. And oftentimes we think our lack of sort of transcendent, meaning filled life is a problem to solve. It's a problem. So church isn't getting the problem done. I don't feel fulfilled. I'm going to deconstruct my faith and find another way, fix the problem. But here's the thing your Discontentment in life is not a problem to solve it's a tension to manage. It is a tension with a sinful world. With sinful people, with sinful friends and sinful churches. It is a tension to manage which means that we have as the church. We have to link arms with people and help them understand that this life is a tension.

CS Lewis says this human history is a long, terrible story of man trying to find something other than God, which will make him happy. That's what we do when we think our wrestling with an imperfect world is a problem to solve. Let's go find something else. That'll make me happy. But this unfortunately will not go away with whatever you find, because this is a tension to manage the tension you wrestle with of a broken world of hurtful people, broken relationships, domineering, leadership, whatever it is is precisely. The problem Jesus came to solve. You see it's a tension for you, but it's not. It's not attention for Jesus. The brokenness in the world is not a tension for Jesus. That he has to live with it is a problem for him to solve. So Jesus comes into the world and solves the problem that we all experience as a tension. And when we try to solve a tension, we're frustrated and angry.

Jesus says, you want life. You want transcendent life. You want purpose filled life. I come that you may have life and have it abundantly. That's what he says. How do you find this life? Jesus speaks of though. We've got to become present to the God who is present to us. You see, we don't have to go on a search party. You see God's in our midst right now. He's with us by the power of the holy spirit, longing for an opportunity for you. Last week, we talked about patience, how patient God is waiting for us. He's waiting right now for those of us that are wrestling in our faith. Jesus is patient waiting. So for the church or any, any of these things that we experience as the church, no matter how difficult now are bad, we feel like our behaviors are good. We think our behavior is the church has to remember that its chief task is to seek the ways and truths of Jesus.

And then we can be in best position to point others towards those so that they can come to know him in an amazing way. Let's pray. Father, thank you for your son. His blood was shed on our behalf that even in the midst of, uh, a lot of hard stuff going on, Lord God that you actually get to point us towards something good. And that's the renewal and restoration of this world that begins today, that our hearts are building projects that we are not perfect. That's so that's so comforting to know for many of us who feel like I know I'm not perfect. Yeah, that's right. We're growing. We're growing together in Jesus. So Jesus, would you let us know that this morning and for my friends who feel like, yeah, I'm, I'm in the process, I'm totally in process of thinking that, would you give them some comfort this morning and let them know that you're with them. She'll never

leave them nor forsake them and the hardship they've experienced or maybe the, the, the thinking that they've gone on at Lord, you're bigger than anything that they're walking through. And would you give them a gentle nudge this morning by the power of the holy spirit as we respond in his name? Amen.