

Discussion of "The Gospel in the Graveyard"

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[0 : 00] Good to see you all tonight.

I'm going to read our passage of Scripture from this morning.! John 11, verses 38-44, and then we'll go over our applications questions together.

! When Jesus, deeply moved, came to the tomb, it was a cave, and a stone lay against it. Jesus said, Take away the stone. Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, Lord, by this time there will be an odor, for he has been dead for four days.

Jesus said to her, Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God? So they took away the stone, and Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, Father, I thank you that you have heard me.

I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me. When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, Lazarus, come out.

[1 : 07] The man who had died came out, his hands and his feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, Unbind him and let him go.

Okay. Question number one. The Lord came to the tomb and called out to you, giving you new life. How should that reality affect the way you live, worship, and serve him? So if you remember, we talked about this morning, the main idea Jesus has power to bring life to the dead, and how the raising of Lazarus is also a picture of what he does for each one of us in salvation.

In Ephesians chapter 2, how we were dead in our sins and our trespasses, but God made us alive together with Christ. By grace, we've been saved through faith.

God gets the credit in salvation. And so how should that reality affect the way you live, worship, and serve him now? We've got our two microphones here for whoever wants to answer that question first.

[2 : 30] Yeah, come on up, Wes. Come on up. Get us going. Okay, this is a pretty bad one because we all know the effect it should have on us. The Lord calls me from the tomb.

I was dead, and all of a sudden I'm alive. And how that should, that reality affects the way I live, worship, and serve him now? The answer is total, absolute, 100% love and devotion.

And then what would have to change is just, it's going to be a big change because it would truly be, you drop everything. You're going to follow Christ no matter where he goes.

It's like the guy that's like the guy that was mad, the garrisons, whatever, when he drove the demons into the pigs. He wanted to follow Christ right away. It's like everything.

I'd go after him and just follow him. And that's how it should really be affecting us. So that was a tough one. Good. Thank you, Wes. Good.

[3 : 29] Anybody else? The Lord came to your tomb, called you, called out to you, giving you new life. How should that reality affect the way you live, worship, and serve him now?

Nick? I think something that's important to me when I think about this is just that I was dead in my trespasses and sins, and then Jesus saved me.

And so that reflects on him, on his mercy, on his goodness, on the Lord's patience with me. I did nothing to earn it. So I should just be eternally humble in my standing before the Lord.

And then that humility should give me just unending grace and patience with other humans.

Because I need to remember, man, I was dead, and the Lord showed me incredible kindness. And I should reflect that in how I interact with others.

Good. Yeah, there's no room for boasting. And there's no room for pride. God. So, humbly realizing, like Nick said, that we've been saved totally by God.

[4 : 35] He's the one who gets the glory in the lives that he's given to us. And being humble towards one another in that realization that we have no room to boast.

You know, God didn't save me because I look better than another person, or I was better than another person. It was truly by his grace that I've been saved. Therefore, I should be gracious with all.

I like what, you know, Paul writes a lot about this very thing. Ephesians chapter 1, verse 21 and following, or verse 22.

For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. I mean, doesn't that talk about the fact that, you know, as I live, as long as I am alive, it's for Christ.

Everything is for Christ. He's my focus. He's the goal. He's on my mind. He's on my tongue in the words that I speak, right?

[5 : 36] For me to live is Christ, but to die is gain. And verse 22, if I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose, I cannot tell.

So he's basically saying, you know, I know my goal is to go and be with the Lord. That's far better than anything here. And again, I think it's talking about the fact that he is totally devoted in all aspects of his life and everything to accomplishing the Lord's will.

It's Christ who he wants to live through him. It's Christ who he is following. It's Christ in all things and at all times for him. And so that affects, obviously, the way he lives, the way that he worships, and the way that he serves, which should be the case for us too.

Because too often we can become complacent in those things, can't we? And instead of living for Christ, instead of worshiping the Lord, instead of serving him, we can put something else in that category, whether it's, you know, money, which a lot of people in our world are after.

For I think a lot of people, they could say for me to live is money and what it can buy me. And that's the worship part. And I'll do whatever it takes to accumulate as much of it that I can.

[6 : 53] And I mean, a lot of people can put different things into that category. And if we're not careful as Christians, that's why we need to be in the Word consistently. And I think also in church consistently.

So we're continuing to hear the gospel and being taught and reminded of these truths that we have in the Lord so that we don't waste our lives and we don't give our worship to things that are not worthy of our worship and not waste our time serving things that in the long run just don't matter. However, we have a much greater purpose from God than, well, any other purpose that there is. Any other answers to this question?

Seems like it should be pretty obvious, right? I mean, the Lord has called you. He has saved you. He's given you new life. The reality should be that it affects your life in every way.

Your worship is holy and solely for him, and you should serve every day to advance his kingdom and to give him the glory.

[7 : 58] Paul? It ties in a lot with our Sunday school lesson this morning. We were in Philippians chapter 3. And when we go from spiritually dead to spiritually alive, it should change our values, and it should change our perspectives.

And in that chapter, the Apostle Paul was saying, everything that I was is now loss. I consider it all loss, all of no value for what really matters.

And instead, pressing towards the gold, pursuing Christ, suffering for Christ, gaining the righteousness of God rather than righteousness of self.

And so there should be that flip in values and perspective. Good. Yeah, great answer. Wes?

It's a little convicting for me this morning because we're teaching about Paul's talking about running the race. And I was telling the kids how when you're getting ready to run a race, you want to have this big burden on your back, and you're going to carry this stuff around.

[9 : 01] You want to try to lighten your load so you can go as fast as you can. And then I was telling them about how you need to be focused on your target. You're not looking around where everybody else is or what's behind you that you're looking straight ahead. I even put a little spot on the wall.

It's like, that's your target. That's the only thing that you look at. You should be going for it. And as I'm telling the kids this stuff, I'm thinking how much I'm not really doing that, that other things distract me. And it's not 100% focused on Christ, and I'm just going after him all the time.

And so it was kind of convicting when we did this just a few minutes later. I'm like, oh, boy. And even as I was even telling the kids that, I mean, that's the right thing to tell them, but am I really

doing it?

And it was kind of convicting for me. Good. Good. Yeah, so Paul often uses the metaphor of athletic competition in the Christian life.

And if you know our professional athletes, I mean, they are very aware of what they put into their body, aren't they? I mean, you know, they may want to eat some of the things that we eat, the desserts and stuff, but they're very well aware that, you know, I'm not going to put anything in my body that's going to affect my performance.

[10:17] And in the same way, you know, for us, you know, Paul is telling Timothy constantly, you know, to train yourself for godliness, to have a good conscience, to be in the Word and to know the Word and to not disqualify yourself right from the race.

Good. So, again, everything is thinking about how can I better live my life for Christ in a way that worships and serves Him right now. Yolanda? Yeah, it's just along the lines of everybody else, which is true.

But on me, I'll reflect it back to where I'm grateful because I did not even know I was dead. I thought the way I was was okay.

And then after He touched me, then I realized, no, I was totally wrong. But because they're just a realization that I didn't realize that I was dead, not alive in Him. Yeah, good.

Yeah, those scriptures will hit you like a freight train. First time you really look at them and pour over them. That, yeah, it doesn't describe us as being spiritually ill or in some kind of a spiritual coma.

[11:23] But dead is the Word. Dead. And dead people can't think. Dead people can't speak. Dead people can do nothing but lie there dead.

And it takes God to bring the dead person to life. Only God can perform that miracle. Any other comments on this question or answers on this question?

Let's move on to the next one. What kinds of gravestones do you observe as being stumbling blocks that unbelievers have towards the gospel? What are some effective and ineffective ways to be used by the Lord to remove them?

What examples can you draw from Scripture? So if you remember, this goes on to the next couple of points from this morning's sermon about how God wants to use us in saving sinners.

He wants us to be there at the beginning like he could have removed the gravestone himself, but he included others in that. And then afterwards, once he calls out to Lazarus and brings him back to life, he tells those around Lazarus to remove the grave clothes.

[12:30] So God wants to use us as he saves sinners in the beginning, removing those gravestones. And then at the end, once they are saved, to help continue to remove those old ways from them.

So thinking about gravestones and how the Lord wants to use us to share the gospel, what are some of those gravestones, those types of things that you observe as being stumbling blocks that unbelievers have towards the gospel?

And then with that, what are effective and ineffective ways to be used by the Lord to remove them?

And if you can think of any examples from Scripture. Caitlin? Caitlin? Yeah. The first thing that comes to mind for me is definitely from our ministry with Muslims, because there were some really clear obstacles for them to be able to hear the gospel.

So if I wasn't careful about the way that I brought Jesus into the conversation, it could just immediately set off kind of like an alarm in their head of, uh-oh, this person's not a Muslim.

I've been told that they're going to come and they're going to try and change what I believe. And so they immediately just like closed down. They're just in shutdown mode. And it wouldn't matter what I say after that.

[13:43] It's just going to be falling against just like, so I think of gravestones when I think of that. And I think it was a really good discipleship process to have to start to learn enough about Islam that I could understand what's causing them to hear it the wrong way and to get to be mentored by people who had gone before this in me.

And I feel like there's a lot of crossover for that as I want now to be able to meet and talk with and have real dialogue with some of my more, like, friends that don't have the same viewpoint that I do, whether it's about homosexuality or something else.

Like, there's ways that I can try to bring up the gospel that are not going to mean to them what I, I may be well-intentioned, but it doesn't matter.

From their worldview, the way that I say it, it's just going to close them off. So I feel like something I want to learn how to do now is know enough about their worldview that I can approach it with compassion and also try to tread lightly on some of the things that are really sensitive for them or some of the things that might cause them to stereotype what my worldview is.

But I like the effective and ineffective question in here, too, because if I'm doing it out of fearfulness or trying to be super winsome, like even with my Muslim friends, that's not very effective.

[15:07] But if I'm doing it because I really want the Lord's love to be able to come through to them, then that is effective. And I feel like that crosses over to trying to communicate well with friends who don't have the same worldview that I do, too.

If I'm just trying to, like, just compromise so that I can fit whatever they fit, I don't think that's effective. I don't think that's a right representation of my faith. But if I can do it because I know God loves them enough for me to spend the extra time and do the extra effort, then I do believe that that's effective.

Good. So when you guys were in Russia and you were, you know, talking about and sharing with Muslims, what did you find to be the more effective ways?

So I think you made a great point about how, you know, just going up to one of them and saying, hey, you're Muslim, you don't know Christ, you're damned, is not as effective as—because you want to open up the communication.

You want to develop a relationship so that you can share the gospel. But I was wondering if there were certain things that were more effective for you guys. I think the number one thing would be if the conversation could end up taking place in the context of one of our homes, whether it's their home or our home, because then we have meal and we have other conversation, and it's often better received because there's more context for the relationship than just cold turkey walking up and not really knowing someone.

[16:38] So I think that element really mattered. And then I think another thing that really mattered was holidays. Holidays were really effective, especially if Nick and I got to take the time to honor our friends' holidays first and let them tell us about a holiday that we didn't understand, like Islamic New Year is on March 21st.

So we got to have time learning about their holiday and celebrating it the way that they do, and then we got to invite them over for Easter after that. So that made it a lot more of like a tradeoff.

So those are the two things that I think of. They were more receptive when it was in our home, and they were more receptive when it was a holiday and there was a story around it.

And it wasn't just walk up and be like, Jesus died for you, so you should believe in him. Because then their next question is, you believe that Jesus is God, don't you? And it's like, yes. And then they're like, that's wrong.

And then the conversation is just over pretty fast. Yeah, it turns into an argument. Yeah. Good. Yeah, I think as you were talking, Caitlin, I mean, this is, I think it can go, we can apply this to ourselves too as Christians.

[17:52] Maybe, well, not maybe, I think we do put some obstacles in front of ourselves from sharing the Gospels, which one of those can be is we see people who have not been saved as enemies, as, you know, sometimes we can treat them as if they're beneath us or just other, beyond saving.

And so we don't even make the attempt to have the dialogue, to create those opportunities where we can have these conversations that where we can steer them to the truth of Christ.

So I think just first of all, you know, knowing someone's an atheist and not having the thought, well, that's too bad. I don't have anything to talk with them about to, you know, pray for that person and to hope to have more opportunities where as you build some kind of relationship, you can share the Gospel with them and be preparing yourself for when that conversation happens.

Good. Who else? I saw Shirley up first. Shirley, and then Wes, and then Cameron. I might have misunderstood this just slightly, but I was going to read the Bible verse about 1 Corinthians 6, 9, and I considered these gravestones to everyone, you know, but it says, Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God?

Do not be deceived. Neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.

[19 : 45] And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

And then also, but 1 Corinthians 9, 19 to 23, for Paul, Paul was saying, if I can find it, my brain didn't die, for though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them.

To the Jews, I became as a Jew in order to win Jews. To those under the law, I became as one under the law, though not being myself under the law, that I might win those under the law.

To those outside the law, I became as one outside the law, not being outside the law of God, but under the law of Christ, that I might win those outside the law.

To the weak, I became weak, that I might not win the weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means, I might save some.

[21 : 02] I do it for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings. Good. So I think those scriptures affirm what Caitlin was just saying, and Paul is talking about the fact to become all things to all people, that by all means, I might save some.

Getting to know who these people are, what they care about, what they believe, so that I can better share the gospel with them, and defend the gospel, and go on the offensive in attacking, or questioning, what it is they believe.

Attack may not be the best word, but you know what I'm saying, just starting to ask questions, so what do you believe? Why do you believe that? And starting to get into those conversations, where you are able to be used by the Lord to, again, steer them to the truth that we have in God's word, the truth that we know in Jesus Christ, that he is the way, the truth, and the life.

So doing what we can in order to create those conversations, but then also, yeah, all those things that you mentioned are stumbling blocks.

The things that people replace with God in their lives, these worldviews that are deceptive, and they're, truthfully, I think they originate with Satan, and being able to, again, counter those belief systems with the truth, and we're going to best be able to do that as we seek to graciously have those conversations with them where we can steer them to the gospel.

[22 : 47] And like Paul mentions to them, I mean, a lot of them were in that way. Those believers were following in that way. So we can't also be of the mindset that, you know, they're too far gone, they can't be saved, God can't bring them out of that lifestyle, God can't bring them out of that frame of mind because it's clear that he can.

And look at what he did for Paul, whose life, who was a gravestone for him, was the law, right? Thinking that he had, that he was earning his salvation by being a good Pharisee, and come to find out, you know, again, in his ignorance, not knowing who Christ was, the Lord had grace upon him and saved him and transformed him.

So Paul knows and speaks from experience of one who had a major gravestone in his place that the Lord removed. Anyone else? Oh, we had more others, right? Okay.

So mine can almost answer this question and the next question, but I'm going to go with it here. I just think so many times, we kind of talked about this in Sunday school too, sometimes we as Christians have this tendency to put on this facade while we're here at church that everything's okay, that we're all put together, everything's just fine.

And so unbelievers see that and they see, oh, I've got to clean myself up before I go to church. I can't go in there with this baggage that I have.

[24 : 22] And even new believers can kind of feel like that as well, trying to step into the faith. They see us at church and a lot of times we're not honest with others, the things that are struggling for us, the things that we're going through, the valleys that we might be in, that it can be kind of a stumbling block for unbelievers that they don't necessarily want to step foot inside a church because they don't think they're put together enough or they don't think they fit in with those kind of people.

And even new believers can kind of have that same fear of, hey, I'm saved now. Am I all put together enough to go to church? Or if I slip, do I find another church because I can't let them know I slipped?

You know, so I think sometimes we just kind of have to drop those barriers even within our own congregation, within our own circles that people can feel trustworthy enough to be honest about those kind of situations.

Okay, good. So a gravestone can be a fear in an unbeliever about even stepping foot in a church.

How am I going to be treated? How am I going to be received? So how can we better help someone like that feel comfortable in coming?

[25 : 42] And... Yeah. But I think those are things that we need to think about, right? Because I think... So again, we, looking around, and I'm presuming that most of us, we've been in church for a large majority of our lives, and many of us have grown up in the church, and we don't really know what it's like or how intimidating it can be for an unbeliever to walk through our doors.

And I think we can... We get it just a little bit if ever you've visited a church, and you walk in, and it's kind of things are... You don't know where things are at.

It's a whole bunch of people that you don't know. And, you know, even if you go into the sanctuary and you go to find a place to sit, you know, I hope I'm not sitting in somebody else's spot.

And it can feel really uncomfortable, can it? And we're believers, and we're going to a church. I remember when I... When we first came here, I had a... I think we got back from vacation, and on a Sunday, I went to visit First Baptist of Wausau, where Danny had some family going.

And I remember, like, walking in, and, you know, I'm a pastor. I have every right to be there, but I just felt... It just felt odd and uncomfortable, you know?

[27 : 09] And so I think, how much more so for an unbeliever walking in here. I think another thing to remember, too, is that people, unbelievers, are more receptive to your invitation for them to come to church than you think.

A lot more receptive than you think. And you might think, well, they know where I go to church, and they know I'm here if ever they have any questions that they want to ask, and if ever they wanted to come, you know, all they have to do is ask, and I'd be glad to sit by them and make them feel comfortable.

But chances are they're not going to do that. But they are going to respond to you inviting them. And, you know, again, you know, just thinking about what can we do to make people feel comfortable to be a part of our gathering.

Good questions to start thinking of, right? Okay. Wes? Okay, I'm sure I'm not the only one that noticed, but you're trying to sneak in a four-part question.

First of all, the gravestones. A lot of times, people, they want to see before they believe we're talking about this morning. A lot of people want to have you prove that there is a God scientifically, right?

[28 : 28] So can you prove that? And if you've ever read The Case for Christ, he talks about you can't even prove scientifically what you had for breakfast this morning because the scientific method is it has to be repeatable and you get the same results every time.

So you boil water at up 212 degrees, it starts boiling. You cool it down, you turn on the heat again at 212, it starts boiling again. But you can't do that. But you can prove what you had for breakfast through eyewitnesses and other methods.

So I think one of the stumbling blocks is they want to see it scientifically. Can you prove there's... Because it all starts with do you believe the word or not? And so if they don't believe the Bible, then everything else, it doesn't really matter.

What are some effective and ineffective ways used by the Lord to remove them? Well, I put down, for me, is use your testimony. So for you, Cameron, when you tell people about the life you used to live, the last men's meeting that we had, it was really interesting to hear some of these testimonies because like, oh, you were an arson too.

Okay. So I have to give my necks. I've got to really be careful what I say. It's really encouraging for someone to think, like you're saying, they think the Christians, they got it all together and they just, you know, they dress right and they just, they're all cleaned up.

[29 : 43] And it's like, that's not the way I was. It's not the way I was at all. I was a hoodlum before I moved to Wisconsin. So anyway, your testimony, I think, is one way to do it. And then I think the ineffective way is the Bible thumping.

And I mean, you got to tell people that they have sin, there's an issue, but not so much that you're going to go to hell because you're, I mean, you can't, you're not going to win anybody over that way. You just, the walls are going to go up and it's all going to be over.

And then, drawing from scripture, again, you stole my thunder. I had the Pharisees obeying the laws and the traditions. So they, they had the potential to believe, but because of the laws and traditions that they were following, they just can't surrender that Christ could have been the Christ,

that Jesus could have been the Christ, and that they should have accepted him as that and given their lives to him and they could have been saved, but instead, they're just sticking with their rigid laws and traditions and stuff, and so they just kind of missed it.

Good. Good work, Wes. Yeah, so, and again, there are, there are helpful resources out here. Some of the things like Wes mentioned with an atheist who scientifically can't see it.

man, there are great apologetics books out there. There's great Christian scientists who, who have contributed greatly in answering a lot of the questions that skeptics, skeptics ask that you can look.

[31 : 09] So again, it's just being prepared to give a defense for what we believe. And we're welcoming and we want them here, but the same, but we've got to understand too that, you know, we, we want them to feel welcome here so that we can share the gospel with them a lot in the hopes that they will be saved.

And we want to have these conversations so that we can share the gospel with them in the hopes that they will be saved by Jesus Christ. Right? Ed?

Got up as far as making people feel comfortable. I just want to speak from personal experience.

You know, I traveled on the road for several years and when I would go to a certain, a certain location, I would try to find a church that I could, that I could become involved in while I was there. And many churches, you would go sit down like you said and maybe one person would come and shake your hand and everybody else would not make contact, eye contact with you so they wouldn't have to come shake your hand when the greeting, you know, when the greeting came on. But, probably the big, the church that I became most involved in, there was two, one up in North Dakota and then one in Pampa, Texas.

[32 : 27] The one in Pampa, Texas, I still have a friend from that church that I'm a Facebook friend and we keep in contact and basically I had to approach that person but it was in Sunday school class and these guys, it was a men's Sunday school class and they're all, they all know each other and I'm the outcast by far, you know, and I finally just spoke up and I said, you guys, you know, when someone comes to your class, you need to make them feel welcome, you need to go out of your way.

I said, you know, I don't know any of you guys and, you know, it's important in the body of Christ to reach out and to be a family and that's important for us when people come through our doors and visit us, we need to make them feel welcome.

If they come to our Sunday school class, we need to be willing to sit next to them, we need to, this guy, this guy invited me over to his house, we became really close, became really close friends and it wouldn't have, if he, it would never have happened if he wouldn't have taken a chance and invited me and I would have, and I took a chance and accepted that invitation.

So it's a two-way street but we have to be willing to welcome those and to reach out to them. So that's basically all I have to say about that. Yeah, good.

Good reminder. Thank you, Ed. Brandy. I'm finding out that one of the best things, I'm speaking from personal experience with my family, they were all church hurt as well and so I'm finding out that making friendships and being completely honest and open with one another allows that wall to come down.

[34 : 14] My, you know, approach before was, you know, my faith was always questioned by themselves, like how dare you question my faith, I'm going to prove I'm right, you know, and then, you know, the Lord really had to work with me there and now it's more of, you know, it's not about me, this is about Christ, like, you know, sorry, I lost my train of thought.

You know, yeah, so I stopped making it about myself and it was about Christ, you know, so now, you know, our friendships have deepened and I just feel like that's just so important because that's what helps the walls come down, you build that trust and that's what's happening with all of my siblings, it's crazy.

Good. Yeah, so like you said, Brandy, it's not, because I think we all can get in that mode where it's, we make it about an argument and wanting to win an argument and, you know, there's a time and a place to have those kinds of discussions and we can argue without it becoming divisive and heated and relationship ending, we can have those kinds of more of debates, but our purpose in sharing the gospel shouldn't be to try to boast in the knowledge that we have, but in desiring that this person would be transformed, would be saved.

And so, I think we can all agree that the ineffective way is kind of, you know, the guy with the bullhorn standing on a soapbox and just yelling at people, you know, that to me isn't really sharing

the gospel and certainly when we read the gospels and we look at how Jesus lived his life, he was accessible, he went to where the people were, he was available to them, he didn't back down at all in what he had to say, I mean, he spoke the truth boldly, clearly, lovingly, graciously. When the Pharisees opposed him, he didn't back down, he continued to speak that truth clearly, boldly, without wavering one inch, he wasn't afraid or he wasn't trying to win a popularity contest, he didn't fear men, he came to do the will of God is what he did, and we need to be the same way. [36 : 27] We need to follow that example where we're going, we're accessible, people know our faith because we've made it public, and when there's opportunities, we pray for those opportunities, and when we have those opportunities, we seize them creating relationships with people in the hopes that will continue to be used of the Lord to pour into their lives and to continue to share the good news of Jesus Christ.

Let's move on to the next question, set of questions. How can you and our church better help remove the grave clothes from those who have been born again? What are, so now we were talking about unbelievers, now we're talking about those who are saved. What are some effective and ineffective ways to be used by the Lord to remove them? What examples can you draw from Scripture? How can you and our church better help remove grave clothes?

It just made me think of Acts 19, Ephesus, many people are born again, but many of them had a past in the occult, in the practice of magic, so part of their process of discipleship was to come and to burn their past, and with many things, we don't need people to do that, but with new believers who come, some of them are going to have things from their past, that the only answer is to make a clean break with it and to destroy whatever it is they have that connects them to that life. Again, that's not everything, but there will be some things that are that way, and that's something that we do see in Scripture. Yeah, good. Good answer, brother. Doylene? if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and heal their land. [38 : 29] Hmm. good. Humility is important.

I mean, just being humble with one another is huge, right? If we're going to be reaching the lost, then the way that we approach one another in God is critical to our ability to do that. Not boasting in the salvation that we've had as we've talked about going back up to the first question, but truly loving one another as a family, realizing the salvation, the grace we've received from God, keeping us humble, and I think that keeps us motivated towards worshiping God, serving God, reaching out.

I think like Nick said, you know, and being humble and being patient with a new believer, because I think I know what I've experienced growing up or what I've seen is that, you know, a person is saved and all of a sudden it's like they've been saved by the gospel of grace, but then we want to give them a list of rules and say, now obey all of these things.

Now should they, if they have the Holy Spirit living inside of them, yes, they are undergoing the process of sanctification where they are becoming more like Christ. Those old ways will be stripped off by the Spirit who uses us to do that.

[39 : 58] And I think the more effective ways is to say, hey, you know, brother, should you be, say they're listening to some, say they're reading some things or listening to some things that, you know, are highly questionable, not edifying the person or the body in any way and just to ask some questions like how does that help you, how's that helping you with your relationship with God or, you know, just starting to just ask some questions of them instead of beating them up for whatever, whatever grave clothes are still clinging to them, right?

but being merciful, showing mercy and humility and grace, go ahead, Kendra. No, no, no, no, you come up so I can end.

But you know, I think you guys, but you guys know what I'm saying, right? All right, Kendra, Kendra, go ahead. For the first question, I think one thing that we can do to help each other remove, I'm not talking about new believers, I'm talking about believers that are old and mature and that we stop pretending that we don't want to put our grave clothes back on every single day.

Yeah. That is the old self and we will, until we die and are with the Lord, want to put on that old self and we fight against the new and the old self every single day of our lives and with the concept of sharpening one another, iron sharpens iron, when we pretend to have it all together and don't show that, I'm struggling every day to put this grave cloth back on that shows my pride and total

disregard, I'm talking about myself here, my pride and total disregard for somebody else's, you know, time, it's all about me, then I am projecting this image to those in my family, my church family that I've got it all together and it does two things.

Number one, it prevents me from being sharpened. When nobody else knows that I'm struggling, how do they know that they need to speak into my life? Number two, whenever I have this, there's always going to be someone, I hope, that we are mentoring or discipling and then someone that's discipling us.

[42 : 25] So if there's someone younger looking up to you and you have this appearance of having it all together that you have totally no struggle with those old grave clothes, they look at you and think, man, I just got to be like that and the truth is, they can't because you're not like that, you know?

We're all going to struggle with that until the day that we die and to pretend that we don't deal with those things, it's like keeping cancer in the body and pretending it's not there.

Good. Thank you. Which, the Rue wants to go first. All right, Wes. I'll make it quick. As far as the grave clothes, I thought it was pretty good because here Lazarus is alive, but he still stinks of his, where he was just moments ago.

So I think what needs to be done is the discipleship and fellowship and setting the example. When I got saved, I was 15 and there was absolutely no discipleship.

They just checked the box. Hey, you got to save the church camp and that was the last thing I heard about it. I can continue to live my life through the military and on. I was stinky. And so it wasn't until I went to a promise keepers and found out I'm supposed to be trying to become more like Christ every day and I need to be in a prayer closet and I need to attend church.

[43 : 42] You know, I didn't need all that stuff. I prayed at all my meals and when I needed things, but I didn't know how I was supposed to be looking like or the way I was supposed to be acting. So I think the discipleship and fellowship.

Then the examples out of the scripture, I think, of Paul, how so much of his writing, he's talking about the way you used to live and the way you got to be now and the way I used to be and talking about the old grave clothes.

He had the same struggle too. So he talked about it a lot as far as this is the way you were. Now we're over here now, so you need to be coming this way. Good. Okay.

Shirley? I just love the word and I just, I want to read this real quick. This is Galatians 5, 16 to 26. I'll try to say it quick.

It says, But I say, walk by the Spirit and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh.

[44 : 43] For these are opposed to each other to keep you from doing the things you want to do. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are evident.

Sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these.

I warn you as I warned you before that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

Against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Good.

So again, Paul's instruction to Christians in Galatia to walk by the Spirit. So here you have an apostle, a pastor, encouraging his people to remove the grave clothes, which is what we should do, right?

[45 : 53] Just continue to say, hey, you know, these lifestyles are incompatible with the Christian life. And sometimes asking those questions, you know, how are you walking with the Spirit?

You know, you'll know them by their fruit. What fruit are we seeing in your life? We're not seeing that. Why is that? To ask those questions sincerely, and again, graciously speaking the truth in love because we care about that person and their Christian development and growth.

Go ahead, Cameron. So my answer was basically Kendra's. I wanted to at least cheat and use the verses from Sunday school this morning.

It's funny how it kind of wrapped it in us, whereas Philippians 3, 17, Paul's talking, says, brethren, join in following my example. And I used to read that and think, boy, is Paul really prideful right

there, you know, but it kind of hit me this morning that there's this balance, right?

There's this humility to be honest with ourselves and with each other and our own struggles, but also the confidence enough to know that the things we have gone through, when we are humble with them, we can use those experiences to help somebody behind us so that we may still be pulling ourselves up, we can still help pull somebody else up with us.

[47 : 14] Good. So, going to, you know, when Kendra was talking, it reminded me of, or convicted me of a time when I was convicted.

So, a lot of you know my testimony and, you know, when I was in high school and college, I was very rebellious, very much a prodigal son, and then, you know, the way the Lord convicted me of all of that and, you know, again, washed me with His Word and helped me to put a lot of those things to death and just to live the Christian life that I should have been living all those years where I was rebelling and the many things He did to help me in His grace.

And, and so I knew I was called to ministry, I knew I had, I had not pursued that call in any way and then, you know, I started going back to church, the church I went to growing up, youth pastor there started to talk to me and wanted me to come help with the teens and so, you know, he had me, he had a couple other guys who were either in college or recently graduated who expressed a call to ministry and he wanted to use us to teach young, young kids in the youth group in our small groups and so me and another guy were small group leaders for this group of boys who were, they were freshmen and sophomores in high school and the other guy, a brother who I love, he grew up in the church, his dad is a pastor, you know, I grew up in the church as well but he hadn't had any of those setbacks like I had experienced.

Nobody is perfect but he had it and so I remember one small group session where we're with our kids and they confessed to us that, you know, mom and dad and again, these kids were not growing up in a Christian environment, not growing up in a Christian home.

They were coming to youth group and they were there every Wednesday and they were dedicated, they wanted to know the Lord but they were kids and they had setbacks as well and so they confessed to us that, you know, we spent the night, parents were gone, we got into the liquor cabinet and we drank, we got drunk and, you know, they were telling us and you could tell it was really hard for them to tell us that because they, we did have a good relationship.

[49 : 48] I mean, they didn't, this wasn't like night number one of small group, we're going to let it all out. I mean, this was after a while of them getting to know us, us being a part of their lives where this trust had developed to the point where they were able to confess this to us and, and again, we're, we're remorseful, we're repentant and it was clear on their faces they were repentant and one of them said, you know, he almost, he felt as if he had sinned so, so badly that God wouldn't love him or forgive him for what he had done and so he put the question to us, have you guys ever done this before?

Have you ever been in this spot? And I had but I was back in church, you know, there was still a part of me that, you know, not everybody in the church that I grew up in knew about some of the things that had happened in my life.

This new youth pastor didn't know much about that past, I hadn't shared that with him yet and so I was looking to my buddy to answer the question first. I was thinking, well maybe he has and he, you know, he just told him, no, I haven't, I haven't and, you know, I'm sad, I'm sorry to hear that you guys have done that and he tried to, you know, be encouraging to them and then I, I didn't, I, I didn't say, I didn't say, yeah I have, I've been exactly in your guys' shoes and I've experienced the grace of God and you can too.

I mean, I knew that and I tried to communicate that to them but I wasn't willing to put myself back in their shoes because I think Kendra is right, every day that's a temptation for us to, I mean, the grave clothes stink and it's dumb for us to put them on but man, there's a temptation and every day we want to wrap ourselves back up in the dead flesh and pretend as if we are people that we are not and I remember afterwards just feeling terrible.

It's like I really could have helped those kids and I had something to say, I had a testimony to share but instead of sharing it with them I tried to protect myself and I don't need to do that, you know.

[52 : 14] Again, God has been gracious to me and it's ridiculous for me to act as if somehow I am someone who I am not. I was dead and God was gracious to save me and even as a Christian and as a believer I continue to be a rebellious one.

God continued to be gracious to me and continue to help me in those times of need, continue to speak truth in my life, continue to surround me with people who are willing to disciple me and to encourage me and to ask me those questions that other people I think they were ready to be like who knew, let him go, let him go but these other ones were willing to say hey, you know, what's going on in your life and to say I'm concerned about you.

You know, those kind of conversations I knew was hard for them to have but man, I'm thankful for the ones who were willing and had the courage and were loving enough to come to me at times in my life when I needed to hear it, you know, hey, is everything okay?

You know, I've seen some things, I'm hearing some things, I'm concerned about you and that meant the world to me and I'm thankful for God to those ones who were willing to do that. So again, I think we've hit on something that's really important for us to keep in mind is that we are tempted to put these clothes back on and that's why I think it's so important that you, that we be in the word daily, getting washed by the word of God, being reminded of the gospel, preaching the gospel to ourselves every day, being in church, discipling and being disciplined, coming together and gathering for worship.

We need the church, God uses the church to help us to grow, to help us to be sharpened, to convict our hearts of sin, to speak the truth to us that we need to hear so that we continue to be the types of followers that he's called us to be and so that's why it's so important.

[54 : 17] Even tonight, I think it's so good that we have these conversations where we're able to talk about these things. So all again, just to encourage each of us to know that we shouldn't come into this place and pretend as if everything is okay and we're perfect in our lives.

If something is going on, if you're struggling with something, you need to make that known. You need to go, you need to share that with a deacon, with an elder, with a Sunday school teacher, with a brother or sister in Christ that you trust, with one of us, someone, because that's part of our job as a church is to be there to help remove those grave clothes from you and to do so in a loving and gracious way.

So let's be that kind of church. Thank you.