

Unless You Believe

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[0 : 00] Turn in your Bibles to John chapter 8, verse 21 through 30 will be the text for this morning's sermon.

If you don't have a Bible with you, there are Bibles in the pews for you to use. If you don't own a Bible, please take that Bible home with you today. It's a gift from our congregation to you in hopes that you'll continue to be reading the Word of God in the days, weeks, months, and years to come. John chapter 8, beginning in verse 21 and going to verse 30. Would you please stand with me as we honor the reading of God's Word together?

So he said to them again, I am going away, and you will seek me, and you will die in your sin. Where I am going, you cannot come.

So the Jews said, Will he kill himself, since he says, Where I am going, you cannot come? He said to them, You are from below. I am from above.

[1 : 13] You are of this world. I am not of this world. I told you that you would die in your sins, for unless you believe that I am he, you will die in your sins.

So they asked him, Who are you? Jesus said to them, Just what I have been telling you from the beginning. I have much to say about you and much to judge, but he who sent me is true, and I declare to the world what I have heard from him.

They did not understand that he had been speaking to them about the Father. So Jesus said to them, When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own authority, but speak just as the Father taught me.

And he who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to him. As he was saying these things, many believed in him.

May God add a blessing to his word. Would you please be seated? This past Wednesday, I had the opportunity to once again be down with our youth, and to be a part of Cameron's devotion with them.

[2 : 41] And it was a good devotion where he talked about the but God statements that are contained in Scripture. Talking about how we are sinners, but God sent us Jesus, who came to die for sinners, for sins that he did not commit.

Cameron did a good job of listing all of the names of people, politicians, professional athletes, celebrities that we give our allegiance to, and asking the question, Do you think that that person would die for you?

And so it got me thinking about my hero growing up, who was Cal Ripken Jr. Anybody know who Cal Ripken Jr. is? Certainly you baseball fans know.

He is a shortstop in the prime of his career for the Baltimore Orioles while I was growing up. The Iron Man. And I loved Cal Ripken. I collected every card I could get my hands on of Cal Ripken, and I would treat them very carefully, enshrine them in a special book, right, that only special people would get to look at.

I wore shirts that depicted his image on them. I had jerseys and uniforms and hats and you name it. I loved Cal Ripken.

[4 : 01] There would be conversations in the schoolyard about who's the best shortstop in baseball. Amen. And I would vehemently oppose anyone who would say otherwise and get angry if people didn't agree with me that there is no greater player of his generation than the great Cal Ripken Jr.

And living in Kansas City, the Orioles would come once, sometimes twice a year, to play the Royals. And I loved the Royals, but they couldn't compare to Cal Ripken in the Orioles.

And so my dad would always make sure to take us. Every year we would go. And every year I had one goal, which was to get Cal Ripken's autograph. And now he was great to sign autographs, but there were so many people who wanted his autograph that I never came close.

Never came close. But that didn't deter me because this was a man who I loved. But, but I doubt that Cal Ripken Jr.

would ever be willing to substitute himself for me. I don't think that he would die for me. Why would he? He doesn't even know who I am. He doesn't even know that I exist.

[5 : 19] If I was sentenced to death, Cal Ripken Jr. would not come to my rescue and say, hey, that kid loved me when he was growing up and I'm going to take his place.

He wouldn't do that for me. But Scripture says that Jesus did do that for me.

That he does know me. That he did die for me. And how silly it is to give our allegiance to people and things who don't know who we are and who would not die for us.

Jesus expressly and repeatedly spoke of his mission and purpose for his coming during his earthly ministry. Telling us where he came from and why it was essential that he did come and what his coming would achieve.

And so one of those verses that encapsulates a lot of that is John 3.16. This is the verse that we have all of our Awana students learn. The very first verse because there is so much truth packed within it.

[6 : 31] For God so loved the world that he gave his only son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

But what does it mean that God gave his only son? What did God give his only son to do? 1 Timothy 1.15 sheds light in answer for that question.

This saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.

He's come. He's come to save sinners. But how has he saved sinners? How has this been accomplished? Romans 3.21-26 But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law.

Although the law and the prophets bear witness to it, the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction.

[7 : 37] For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. and are justified by his grace as a gift through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood to be received by faith.

This was to show God's righteousness because in his divine forbearance he passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness at the present time so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Now the key term in that passage is propitiation. That is a big word with an even bigger meaning. One way to understand it, I think a helpful way is to see it as meaning a wrath removing sacrifice. Propitiation is a wrath removing sacrifice. And so when Jesus gave his life as a sacrifice for our sins on the cross, he satisfied the righteous wrath of God against our sin.

Thus providing us through his life, through his death, through the blood that he shed, reconciliation and peace with God. Forever. God's wrath and righteous anger is against sin.

[9 : 13] And rightly so. But you know God's wrath isn't preached about much these days. It isn't talked about much these days.

And that's unfortunate. You know why? Because the Bible, his word has a lot to say about it.

Romans 1.18 Listen to the word of God.

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.

God's wrath is against those who make excuses also for their sins and for the sins of other people. Romans 1.32 Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them, but give approval to those who practice them.

The Bible says that God's wrath is also against the unrepentant. Romans 2.5 But because of your heart and impenitent heart, you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed.

[10 : 35] The word of God says that God's wrath is against all manner of sin. Colossians 3.5-6 Put to death, therefore, what is earthly in you, sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and

covetousness, which is idolatry.

On account of these things, the wrath of God not might be coming, is coming. Consequently, God's wrath is against all humanity because all have sinned.

Again, Romans 3.23 For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Now, we can't be confused when we read that and think that we just fall short.

Remember, as a kid, you know, I wanted to be tall, right? Dad was six foot two. I wanted to be at least as tall as my dad. And so you go to the doctor and what do they do?

First thing, they weigh you and then they measure your height. And I remember, you know, wanting to get on my tippy toes but couldn't because, you know, the nurse was mean and she wouldn't allow anything like that.

[11 : 54] But just wanting to stretch my body as much as I could to try to get there. I never quite got there. My dad is taller than me, but as he gets older, I think he's moving more this way.

So the time will come when maybe I will be taller than him. I never got there. I was always just a little bit short. Now, when Scripture says we fall short, it's not talking about the fact that, well, you're almost there.

If you just had a boost, if you just would have stood up on your tippy toes, you'd get there. No, this is saying not only are you short, you're way short. It would be as if we went out into the parking lot and we had a contest.

And the contest was reach up into the sky and touch Pluto, the dwarf planet at the edge of our solar system, right? Some of us would get closer than others.

James and Cameron and some of our six foot four plus tall people, they would be closer than some of us who are, you know, much shorter.

[13 : 00] But still, they would be way short, wouldn't they? As would any of us of doing such a thing. It's an impossibility for us.

We fall way short. Not just a little short, way short. And so, the Bible tells us we need Christ.

We need the cross. Christ, by His life, His death, by the blood that He shed has taken God's wrath and punishment for us in our place.

We have been spared because He was not spared. His blood was propitiated, has propitiated, God's wrath for those who believe. And so, as we read Scripture, as we read the Gospels, we continually hear this plea throughout them from Christ to believe in Him.

to repent and to turn from our sins to Him. To look to the cross. To behold Him. To cherish Him there. Believing in Him as our only hope for salvation from our sins and the righteous, eternal consequence for them.

[14 : 19] Here in our text this morning, we hear that plea from Jesus again. reiterating His mission to those who are listening. His purpose, expressing His desire that those who heard and those who hear today believe in Him.

That you would not die in your sins. That you wouldn't give your allegiance to another person, another group of people, or anything else because they can't save you.

Only He can. And so the main idea for this morning's sermon is this. Jesus Christ is the sinner's only hope of salvation.

Jesus Christ is the sinner's of which, that is all of us, only hope of salvation. And so, as we've been going through the Gospel of John, as we've been in John chapter 8 and going verse by verse, you know that we are here today in a continuation of Jesus' teaching about His being the light of the world.

Same teaching. Just a different part. Here Jesus again, though, extends an invitation to believe in Him for salvation.

[15 : 50] But He also, with that, issues a warning for those who reject Him as their only saving hope. In this text, then, Jesus provides us with three marks that characterize the attitudes of those who will die in their sins and three marks that characterize those who will not.

Those who will die in their sins and those who will not. In a sermon, and as you're looking at the text, every text has a main idea.

And every main idea, then, reveals in that text the significance. What's the point? What is God wanting us to understand from this passage?

And I would say that the significance of this text is very, very significant. Very significant. You will spend your eternity somewhere.

Either basking in the light and the life of Christ eternally, or being banished to outer darkness where there will only be weeping and gnashing of teeth eternally.

[17 : 08] God is not to be that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name.

And so, we hear Jesus today issuing this plea. Believe in me, there is life in my name. And so, if you're an unbeliever hearing this message this morning, whether you're here or watching online, I want you to know that we are glad that you're here.

We're glad that you're watching because this message is more significant to you than anything else in your life, past or present.

Jesus wants you to believe. I believe. And I pray that you will today, and I've been praying for you this week. as a believer, rejoice in your Savior as you hear this message.

This Savior who has redeemed you, who has set you free. But as you go through this, as we go through this, I hope that you also will be reminded of the traps that can ensnare us.

[18 : 55] These traps that ensnare unbelievers. And remember that you have a mission. And your mission is His mission.

To go and make disciples. So again, first we'll look at the three marks of those who die in their sins. Those who will die in their sins. Three times in this text, three times Jesus states that those who reject Him will die in their sins.

Once in verse 21 and twice in verse 24. Verse 21, again, it says there, so He said to them, I am going away and you will seek Me and you will die in your sin.

Where I am going, you cannot come. Well, where was He going? We know. We have the full revelation of Scripture. He was going to the cross. He was going then to the grave and then ultimately to the Father after His resurrection.

[20 : 04] Why couldn't they come? Well, as we'll see, they couldn't come because they exhibited the marks of those who will die in their sins.

The first mark is self-righteousness. Those who are self-righteous will die in their sins. Verse 22, look at verse 22 again. So the Jews said to Him, or so the Jews said, will He kill Himself since He says where I am going you cannot come?

So the Jews here that John writes about, this is referring to the religious leaders of Israel who were once again taking Jesus' warning lightly.

they understood when He said in verse 21, I am going away, that He was referring to His death. And so, this question was asked by them sarcastically and spitefully.

According to the Jewish tradition of this time, the thought was that if a person committed suicide, that they would go to the deepest, darkest corner in hell.

[21 : 20] And so, what they're expressing with this question is their assumption that Jesus is hellbound while they are heavenbound. And here, we see the depths of their depravity.

They are looking at the Son of God, they are in dialogue with the Son of God, and they have the audacity to assume and to suggest that God's only Son is hellbound while they themselves are going to heaven.

They were so confident in their own righteousness that they believed that they had acquired salvation that was purchased by their own achievement, by their own good works.

But you know, they should have known better. They were biblically illiterate. And here they were, the teachers of Israel. You think of Jesus with Nicodemus.

You're the teacher of Israel and you don't know these things? And so here, what we see is that in Israel, their teachers didn't know Scripture.

[22 : 30] And I'm sad to see today that the same is very much the case in our own nation. People are getting up reading Scripture, claiming to preach from God's Word, but they are biblically illiterate and so are the people who hear them as a result.

They should have known better. They had the Scriptures, they had Isaiah 64, 6, which says, we have all become like one who is unclean and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment. We all fade like a leaf and our iniquities like the wind take us away. So Isaiah here points out that not only are we born sinful, but even our good deeds are tainted by our sinfulness.

God isn't impressed with our ability to go through the motions of religious observances. You know, and I've had this conversation with people many times.

Talking about their salvation or talking about their concern for a family member who they don't think is saved or they're worried isn't saved and usually, you know, the conversation goes something like this and we're talking about salvation and they want to believe that they're saved and they say things like, well, I know that they were baptized when they were 12 or, you know, we always were going to church or, you know, this, that, or the other thing about their religious observance or it'll go along the lines of, well, I'm basically a good person and that may be true when you compare yourself to someone like Adolf Hitler or Ted Bundy but listen, God does not compare your goodness next to a murderous tyrant or a serial killer.

[24 : 36] you know whose goodness he compares your goodness to? His. And he's holy. Holy, holy.

Perfectly unblemished and without sin. And you and I don't measure up. Not even close. Again, they should have known Psalm 14, 2-3. The Lord looks down from heaven on the children of man to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God.

They have all turned aside. Together they have become corrupt. There is none who does good. Not even one.

There are no magic rituals. There are no mystic words, no mission to embark upon that will bring you salvation. You can't save yourself.

[25 : 43] And if you try and if you trust in those things, hey, I walked down an aisle one Sunday. Hey, I repeated a prayer that somebody told me to repeat.

Now, I'm not saying that people haven't responded in those ways because of the work that Christ did in their heart, in the pew they were in, but if you trust in these external actions for your salvation, and that's all that you are trusting in, our warning to you from our Lord today is that you will die in your sins.

Jesus reiterated this point about the folly of trusting your own self-righteousness when he told the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector recorded in Luke 8, 9-14.

Let's look at that. He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, directed at those self-righteous ones, and treated others with contempt because this is what self-righteousness ultimately results with.

Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee, so in the minds of the people this is the guy, this man is a man of God they think in their minds.

[27 : 11] The other was a tax collector, now in the minds of the people this is the worst of the worst, this is the guy who comes and takes our hard-earned money and who cheats us often to get and to profit off of us.

This is a great guy, they think this is a bad guy. Jesus goes on, the Pharisee standing by himself prayed thus, God I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector.

Why? Because of what I do. I fast twice a week, I give tithes of all that I get, but the tax collector standing far off would not even lift his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast saying, God be merciful to me, a sinner.

I tell you, Jesus says, this man, this tax collector, is the one who went down to his house justified rather than the other.

For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted. good works won't save you.

[28 : 41] The Bible isn't merely a book of moral instruction advising you on how to be a better person. It's God's word.

And as you read it, you will read that it declares to you that you are a sinner in need of salvation. A salvation that you cannot muster on your own, that you can't measure up to God's perfect standard, but God hasn't left you in a hopeless situation.

What is impossible for you and I is not impossible for God. So don't sarcastically scoff at this offer that is being extended to you today by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Don't reject it like the Pharisees did. Don't be ensnared by self-righteousness. The second mark of those who die in their sins is worldliness. Worldliness.

Verse 23, And He was saying to them, You are from below. I am from above. You are of this world.

[29 : 53] I am not of this world. So the sarcastic tone of the Pharisees does not, we see, deter Jesus from His message or His warning to those who are listening about the marks that define

those who die in their sins.

Jesus made it clear, You cannot remain in this world, be of this world, and still follow Me.

Remember the story where Jesus comes across a man who is very worldly and unwilling to give up the world?

In Mark chapter 10, verse 17 through 27, Jesus' encounter with the rich young ruler. And as He was setting out for His journey, speaking of Jesus, a man ran up and knelt down before Him and asked, Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?

And Jesus said to him, Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone. You know the commandments. Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not bear false witness, do not defraud, honor your father and mother.

And this man said to Him, Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth. At which point we want to interject, Yeah, right. Yeah, right.

[31 : 17] Jesus looking at Him though, don't miss this part, loved Him, loved Him, and had enough love for Him to reveal His true God and idol.

He said, You lack one thing. Go sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. And come follow Me. Disheartened by this saying, He went away sorrowful, for He had great possessions.

And Jesus looked around and said to His disciples, how difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God. And the disciples were amazed at His words.

But Jesus said to them again, Children, how difficult it is to enter the kingdom of God. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.

And they were exceedingly astonished and said to Him, Then who can be saved?

[32 : 29] Jesus looked at them and said, With man, with man, it is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God.

The rich young ruler could not take his eyes off of his worldly treasures to perceive and receive the good news of Jesus Christ.

And as we've seen, the disciples were astonished. They were amazed. Why? Because in their understanding, prosperity meant blessing.

And blessing comes from God. And so they were thinking, Here is a rich, young person whom God has greatly blessed. And you're telling us that he's not saved?

This guy who we think would obviously he's saved. He's not saved, then who can be saved? Jesus says, With man it is impossible. With God, all things are possible.

[33 : 34] All things Jesus revealed that this man whom the disciples thought, and whom many in that society thought was saved, was in fact far from it.

They looked at his prosperity and thought, here's a saved guy, but Jesus reveals in fact he is far from it. And so I think in this too, we need to beware of prosperity.

prosperity. The Jewish Pharisees who were questioning Jesus, they loved the prosperity that their position brought to them, sitting in the places of honor, having the respect of the people, and you know, everything else that came with that.

Beware of prosperity. And beware of those who preach a prosperity gospel. They will ensnare you. Beware of prosperity teachers. Joel Osteen, Benny Hinn, Kenneth Copeland, Joyce Meyer, Creflo Dollar, Paula White, T.D.

[34 : 47] Jakes, Kenneth Hagen, Jesse Duplantis, and listen, tragically, we could go on and on and on, couldn't we? Beware prosperity teachers.

They will ensnare you in worldliness. Because listen, if a rich young ruler type came to one of those prosperity churches today, you know what their reaction would be?

Woohoo! Alright! Somebody to get some money from, correct? But in their mind, they would look at this person and be like, this is a saved man.

This is a person who has figured out how to use their faith to back God into a corner to become prosperous as a result. Their eyes would bug out by seeing such a person.

You know why? Because they themselves are rich young ruler types. But the warning that we have repeatedly in Scripture, 1 John 2, 15-17, do not love the world or the things in the world.

[35 : 51] If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and the pride of life, it is not from the Father, but is from the world.

And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever. The third mark of those who will die in their sin is unbelief.

Unbelief. Verse 24. Jesus says, I told you that you will die in your sins, for unless you believe that I am he, you will die in your sins.

And so now here Jesus moves to the ultimate issue. Behind self-righteousness, behind worldliness, the real issue here is the issue of unbelief.

Again, look at the verses. There are two clauses present at the beginning and at the ending. You will die in your sins. You will die in your sins. However, sandwiched between them is a conditional conjunction.

[37 : 13] Unless, unless you believe that I am he. Now, in our English translations of the Hebrew Old Testament and the Greek New Testament, which are great, and thank God that we have them, sometimes, though, there are things that the English translations don't pick up that the Greek and Hebrew translations point out.

And so here, Jesus is saying in the Greek, for unless you believe that I am, you will die in your sins. You see, the he, the pronoun he is not in the original Greek. For unless you believe that I am, you will die in your sins. And so here, Jesus is making it very clear what it is that people must believe about him.

Back in the Old Testament, as God was preparing to deliver his people from their bondage to the Egyptians, Moses was chosen by him to serve as his intercessor, his mediator.

And Moses asked him a question. Remember Exodus 3, 13-14. Then Moses said to him, If I come to the people Israel and say to them, the God of your fathers has sent me to you, and they ask me what his name, what shall I say to them?

[38 : 40] God said to Moses, I am who I am. And he said, say this to the people of Israel, I am has sent me to you.

And so Jesus here is applying that name to himself, that name of God that the Jews held so sacred that they refused to speak, even right.

And so the Jews understood here what Jesus was claiming. Not to be a prophet like Moses, not to be just a good moral teacher, not just a wise man or some kind of self-help therapist, or personal advancement and enrichment guru, or motivational speaker.

he was saying, I am God in the flesh with you to be saved. To not die in your sins, you must believe the full biblical revelation about Jesus.

That he is the eternal second person of the Trinity. That he entered space in time as God incarnate. That he was born of a virgin. That he lived a sinless life.

[40 : 00] That his death on the cross is the only sufficient substitutionary sacrifice for your sins.

That he rose from the dead on the third day and has ascended to the Father where right now as we meet and as I speak, he intercedes on behalf of his redeemed people.

And he will one day, soon we hope, return in glory. To reject these truths means to one day hear from our Lord.

I never knew you. Depart from me, you who practice lawlessness. Man, I love that word in this text, unless.

In some of your translations, it's if. Whatever the case may be unless or if unlocks the door of life in the wall of sin. And it's Christ who unlocks it.

He is the way. He is the door. He said, John 10, 9, I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved. And he will go in and out and find pasture.

[41 : 21] Charles Spurgeon said, Hell has many gates, though heaven has but one. Verse 25, So they said to him, Who are you?

And Jesus said to them, Just what I have been telling you from the beginning. Though he had demonstrated to them time and again who he was through his miracles, through his teachings, they still rejected him.

And so here I think they ask once again in a sarcastic tone, basically, Who are you to tell us that we are going to die in our sins?

Who do you think that you are? They were still held captive by their unbelief, locked in the prison cell of doubt, trusting in their own righteousness and desire for the temporary things of this world. Do you hear the Lord calling out to you today? You are dead in your sins, but Jesus Christ is the light of life.

[42 : 32] unless you believe. You will die in your sins. Next, we move on to three marks of those who do not die in their sins.

Three marks of those who do not die in their sins. And I'll move more quickly through these because much of what I would have to say here has already been said. the first mark of those who do not die in their sins is that they believe in Jesus Christ.

They believe in Jesus Christ. But understand that what you believe about Jesus is crucial. Jesus is the Christ. He is the Messiah.

He is the Son of God. He is the Lord of Lords. He is the King of Kings. Satan and the demons knew who Jesus was, but did not believe in Him as their Lord and Savior.

And so it's essential that you not just believe that Jesus was a man, but that you believe and understand that Jesus was the God man. Second mark of those who did not die in their sins, know that Jesus has been sent by the Father.

[43 : 47] Verses 26 and 27. I have much to say about you and much to judge, but he who sent me is the Lord. And I declare to the world what I have heard from him.

You did not understand, or they did not understand that he had been speaking to them about the Father. They didn't understand. But you must know again that Jesus isn't merely a man.

He reveals to us who God is, what God is like, and what God commands, because he is God, who has been sent to us, revealing the Father and revealing himself primarily to us through the cross.

So, third, how do you not die in your sins? Trust in Jesus Christ, crucified. Crucified.

Look again at verses 28 through 30. So, Jesus said to them, when you have lifted up the Son of Man, you will know that I am he, and I do nothing on my own authority, but speak just as the Father taught me.

[45 : 03] And he who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to him. As he was saying these things, many believed in him.

Jesus said that everything that he ever did was fully pleasing to the Father. Can you say the same? Can you say the same? No.

You can't. Unless you're lying to yourself. But look, Jesus Christ came to be crucified for our sins.

700 years before Jesus uttered these words at this time, Isaiah prophesied in Isaiah 53, 10 through 11, 11, of him.

Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him. He has put him to grief when his soul makes an offering for guilt.

He shall see his offspring. He shall prolong his days. The will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. Now the anguish of his soul, he shall see it and be satisfied.

[46 : 19] By his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous. And he shall bear their iniquities.

You don't measure up. And I don't mean that to be mean because I don't measure up. we don't measure up. We don't always do the things that please God.

But Jesus always did. Always did. And his mission led him straight to the cross. He lived a sinless life that you and I are incapable of living.

And he willingly died there on the cross enduring the wrath of God and the hell that we who believe should have endured. You know, we sing a song often when I survey the wondrous cross.

Sometimes we sing a song so often that we can forget the great theology packed within it and the great messages packed within it. Sometimes I like to just stop and read them.

[47 : 35] listen to this wonderful psalm. It's not scripture, but it's great. When I survey the wondrous cross on which the prince of glory died, my richest gain I count but loss, and this is what I want us to see, in poor contempt on all my pride.

You see, behind those three marks, I think, is pride. self-righteousness, pride. Worldliness, pride. Unbelief, pride.

And so, we must come humbly to our Lord, and continually as believers pour contempt on all our pride.

I didn't save myself. I'm not made for this world. I have a mission to go to the unbeliever and share the good news of Jesus Christ. Unless you believe, you will die in your sins.

So, here Jesus is saying to you today, if you do not believe, believe in him. know that he has been sent from the Father.

[49 : 00] Trust not in yourself, but in him, in his finished work on the cross, where he purchased your salvation, with his own life and his own blood.

And if you've believed it, if you know it, if you've received it, then go and preach the good news of Jesus Christ. Preach Christ crucified.

As we come to our application questions, we'll talk about these tonight. I encourage you to stick them again in your Bible, tuck them away, come back to them.

We'll come back to them tonight. If you won't be here, come back to them later this afternoon, later this week. Question number one, why are people easily ensnared by the marks of those who die in their sins?

Why are people easily ensnared by the marks of those who die in their sins? What's the appeal there? Why are they so ensnaring?

[49 : 57] Second, how can Christians avoid being ensnared by the marks of unbelief? Because we can easily be ensnared in these things, can't we?

But how can Christians avoid being ensnared by them? And then finally, why is it essential that Christians preach Christ crucified?

And I'll already tell you, it's essential because if Christ has not been crucified, if He has not risen from the dead, then we are without hope. But He has been crucified, and He has risen from the dead.

Amen? Amen. If you've heard the sermon and you realize that you feel like you are the one who's going to die in your sins, would you please come and find me at some point in time? Would you please reach out to me at some point in time?

Whatever it is, a phone call, a text message, an email, it doesn't matter. I would love to talk to you more about the gospel, share it with you. And if you've heard it and you believe, we want to rejoice in this great thing that has happened in your life today, that you who were blind now see that you have been transferred out of the kingdom of darkness into the light and life of Jesus Christ.

[51 : 13] Let's pray. Lord God, we thank you for your word. we understand, Lord, that apart from you saving us, all of us would die in our sins.

We're so thankful that you loved us, willing to send your own son to us, and he was fully capable as God to live the sinless life, Lord, that none of us is capable of living.

Lord, we struggle to go a minute or two without sinning. Jesus was perfect. God, we're thankful that he was willing to go to the cross, willing to die upon it, willing to be crushed by your wrath for our sins in our place, that in believing in him, Lord, he takes our wrath and we receive his righteousness and we are declared children of God, children of light, those who have been saved, those who have been redeemed.

God, I pray that those of us who have been saved, that we would not so quickly and readily pledge our allegiance to men, to systems designed and created by men, or anything else over our allegiance to Jesus Christ, who actually knows our name and who substituted his life for ours.

So, God, we pray that you would embolden us as your people to preach the gospel, to preach Christ crucified, and to declare that on the third day, our Lord who died for sinners was resurrected, the tomb is empty, and you are at the right hand of the Father, and we anticipate your return, and until that time, Lord, may we be diligent about doing what you've called us to do.

[53 : 20] Empower us for the work, Lord, and be blessed by what results we pray, in Jesus' name, amen. Thank you.