

Discussion of "Unless You Believe"

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Date: 15 November 2020

Preacher: Mike Scrivani

[0 : 00] Good to see you all. Before we begin, I spoke with Tom about an hour ago, and he's feeling a little bit of pain, but looking forward to his procedure tomorrow.

Take out his gallbladder, which you think, well, why not? So just be praying for Tom and be praying that he is able to have that operation tomorrow and that everything goes well.

I spoke with Monty earlier today as well. He appreciates, and Tom said, you know, let the church know I appreciate their prayers, and I certainly feel them. So I wanted to pass that word along as well, that he loves you. And then for Monty as well, his mother's funeral will be tomorrow.

A graveside service, and so a lot of families in town, so if you'd just be praying for them as well and for their time together tomorrow, I know that would be appreciated.

And just a little funny story, it's when we were in the car driving home this morning after church, Jack had some questions about the sermon this morning, and one of the questions was, who is Ted Bundy? So I get to explain as best as I could that he was just a bad guy that did a lot of bad things, right?

[1 : 36] Okay, so if you had that conversation with your children or grandchildren today, you know, I guess I apologize if you had to explain who that person was.

But anyhow, John chapter 8, verses 21 through 30 was the text from this morning, so I'm going to read that, and then we'll go through our application questions together.

If you want to follow along with me.

So they said to him, So the first question was, If you remember the marks that are mentioned in this text were self-righteousness, worldliness, and unbelief.

Why are people so easily ensnared by the marks of those who die in their sin? I have a microphone up here. I believe Jack. Okay. Doyleene's got her hand up.

[3 : 39] Yeah. I'm just going by the notes here. Yet to the last you brought out that all three of those are basically pride. And so I think that is the beginning of it is self-centered and pridefulness.

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Behind all of these things is an attitude of pride. I am proud of my works. I want to believe that I can earn my way to heaven. Worldliness. There's pride behind that, right? I want to have as much as I can and feel better about myself.

And it makes me, you know, look down upon those who don't have as much as me. And then ultimately unbelief. Yeah. Pride. I'm not going to believe this because I'm too proudful.

Prideful too. Okay. Cameron. To put it easily, sin looks fun. Yeah. It is very attractive to our human nature.

[4 : 48] You know, when you look at worldliness especially, going out, having a good time, the parties, the scenes, everything you can get into, especially in our culture nowadays, it's so easily to be attracted to all of it.

Yeah. The attitude that says, eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die, right? We'll put off those thoughts about what is eternal, what happens after death for tomorrow.

But as for today, let's live it to the fullest, which often means, you know, indulging in all kinds of sin. Nick? Something I was thinking about is just it's the natural condition of all of us, apart from the Lord, to be ensnared in these marks.

So I was thinking about sheep and goats and how it's like we could change the question to why are goats so easily snared in the marks of those who are goats?

It's like, well, because they're goats and they're going to do goat things. Yeah. That's not to minimize it, but it was just, I don't know, it's just kind of like, yeah, we all had these things before the Lord saved us.

[6 : 02] Yeah, for sure. Sinful people will act sinfully. Okay. Doylene and then Wes. I was just thinking about, you know, pride again.

And I think they're proud of their pride. They don't see their pride as being an issue. They don't see their pride as being a problem.

That's a good thing. It's self-confident. You know, good self-esteem. I'm proud. And we see that a lot in some of the leadings of our culture, you know, the pride movement and all that.

So I think, you know, they're easily snared by this, ensnared by this, just because they don't see being proud as a bad thing. And in our Sunday school with Julia's foundation of faith that we're studying and we're talking about the body of Christ this week and how one of the key foundations of unity is being humble.

Yeah. And that's not being taught out in the world. And so I think it's just they're thinking pride is a good thing. And we're teaching here, no, it goes before the fall.

[7 : 14] And so I think until they understand that, it's hopeless for them. Yeah. Good observation. Yeah. We and then back here to West, Jack.

There is a celebration in our culture of pride, all different kinds, especially, you know, with LGBTQ. It's all about pride.

And and certainly in our nation, there's a lot of talk about pride being a good thing. But as Doyleen has mentioned, we look at Scripture. Scripture talks a lot about us being humble.

And do you hear the culture preaching humility to to us? Do you is that a message that we hear from the world?

No, not that I am aware of. You know, it's all about pride, pride in who you are. Be proud of whatever. Or, you know, be proud of your sin. That's what a lot of a lot of what our culture has to say.

[8 : 17] But but not much about humility. Wes. Well, I was going to say the thing that Cameron said about sin seems like so much fun. But I thought you guys would throw your Bibles at me. So I didn't say it.

But that is a big part of it. The culture today, just so much of it is heading in that same direction. It seems like you're going counterculture.

So you want to blend in and things like that. So even though you might be not in those kind of sins, you might not be standing up and saying things against it just because you don't want to seem like the odd man out and stuff.

You're standing around the water cooler and they're talking about the great time they had this weekend and stuff. And you might just be silent when we really should say something about this. Like, you know, you really shouldn't be doing that.

But so much of it is that sin is appealing and Satan just gives you this little glimpse of how fun this is going to be for this little bit. But he never tells you the long story how, OK, you're drinking and drinking and now you're getting drunk and then you got a speeding ticket and you got a DWI and got in a car crash or something like that.

[9 : 17] It's always just a little bit, a little bit of fun. And then he doesn't show you the long term consequences of some of the things that people might do. Yeah. Good.

Jack? It kind of reminded me what Wes said. He said, like, for example, like I thought in my head, I was like, you know, there's good people over here.

But I love my sin, so I'm going to stay over here. Kind of like that. Kind of like an example. Just kidding. OK. Good. Yeah. Sin is, I mean, it's tempting, certainly alluring.

And there is an appeal, obviously, to our flesh that makes it fun, but it ensnares. And, you know, you can go back to the drug addict that first time that they took a hit of that drug or whatever it was, you know, but now what it costs them.

You know, all the relationships it costs them and everything else. And they're trapped within it. OK. Dan.

[10 : 22] I want to read a couple of Scripture passages. One was shared this morning in the sermon, but 1 John 2, 15. Do not love the world or the things in the world.

If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. So the system of the world, the schemes, the desires of this world, we are not to love that.

And that's what John, you know, through the Holy Spirit through John has shared with us. And then Romans 12, a very similar statement.

Verse 2, it says, Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind. I think a lot of people have said this already.

It's a common thing for us to be thinking this way. I mean, it's, you know, every day I wake up and I think like the world because that's just the natural way to think.

[11 : 21] Every one of my children think like the world. Even from birth, they thought like the world. That's just the way it is. And so we are given these warnings not to think like the world.

And the world wants us to think like the world. And when we don't think like the world, we're doing something wrong. And I think the only way the world teaches humility is in humiliation to those who don't think like the world.

Yeah, that's true. Yeah. Yeah. Good points. Yeah. And again, thinking, you know, those in the world, this is it.

So why not eat, drink and be merry and, you know, think about these other things about death and what's after death until some other time.

And then spend your life pursuing the world's riches, thinking that that's what life is about. And I know I've made this point many times before. But, you know, you look at the people who seem to have all the things that the world wants and they don't seem content to me.

[12 : 28] You look at our celebrities. They don't seem content to me. They're constantly beginning and ending relationships. They can't stay committed in their marriages.

They have any luxury that you could think that you would want. But yet, you know, they don't seem all that happy and content to me.

And I know I've also shared this before. For Al Davis, the former owner of the Oakland Raiders who's passed away. And I know I've shared this, so just bear with me.

But it just struck me when I heard it. I think I was in college maybe when he made this statement. On ESPN, they used to have the Sunday conversation. And I would watch it after church.

But, you know, they would have an interview with some figure in sports. And it was Al Davis. And the interviewer asked him, well, what's the point of life? And I don't even remember how they got to that question.

[13 : 28] But asked him, you know, owner of the Oakland Raiders, what's the point of life? And he said, isn't it obvious that he who dies with the most wins? And I think that's a lot of how the world thinks, you know.

I want to die with as much as I can gain. But it's folly because we know that there's more than just this life. And that whatever you treasure in this world, you cannot take it with you.

And eventually it will pass into the hands of others. You know, that valuable item that you don't want anybody to touch in your house is one day going to be touched by a lot of people.

And it's going to be owned by somebody else. And eventually it will probably end up in a garage sale or the thrift store or something like that. I had an uncle who collected Studebakers, you know, the old cars.

And he had this really nice one. I'm not a big car guy, but he had this really nice Studebaker sports car. And he would let us into his garage.

[14 : 35] And he's since passed on. But at the time, he would let us into his garage every once in a while on special occasions to look at the cars. And he would open the doors and let us sit in and everything. But as we were, and I was probably in middle school age, and I had my other cousins who were about the same age.

And we would go through and, oh, this is such a cool car. And we would touch it. And he would follow behind us with his handkerchief. And everything we touched, he would quickly wipe off all of the fingerprints.

And then after we were gone, he would spend, I don't know, time in the garage just making sure that he decontaminated his prize. And when he did pass away, and maybe before, I don't remember, but eventually it was sold to somebody else.

And so it will be. You can't take these treasures with you. So let's move on to the next question.

How can Christians avoid being ensnared by the marks of unbelief?

Don't we get ensnared by self-righteousness? Can't we be ensnared by worldliness? And also, are we sometimes tempted to be ensnared by unbelief?

[15 : 41] Maybe not unbelief in the sense that we in any way doubt that Jesus Christ is the Son of God who is our Savior, but we express an attitude of unbelief when it comes to what we see

happening in our own life or in our world.

And we can be tempted to be doubting of God and his sovereignty. And don't we see this a lot in Scripture? Christians in churches who are ensnared in either self-righteousness or legalism or unbelief of some sort or worldliness.

I think we see this a lot, don't we? This isn't something that Christians today have to battle. This is something that Christians of all time have battled.

So how can Christians avoid being ensnared by the marks of unbelief? I think number one is stay in the Word, so it's always fresh on your mind.

You've got to keep reading it, and it's got to keep soaking in so that it's always back there all the time when you think of something like this, that this is not the thing to do. And I was looking in 1 Corinthians, and it says, Do not be deceived.

[17:12] Bad company ruins good morals. So if you've got friends, and this is, I had my best friend, he's a successful guy, and he had told me, you know, he reads a lot of books and stuff how to be successful.

And it's like, if you want to be successful, you hang out with successful people. Don't hang out with all the losers and things like that. Well, the same thing applies here where if you've got friends at work, they might be decent friends, but if they're immoral and they're thinking these ways, you need to part company.

It's going to kind of rub off, and you're going to want to be like them, too. So I think just seeing it and being able to identify it, and then just sometimes you might lose a friendship. I need to stay away from you because you're going to corrupt me if I just keep hanging out with you.

You're going to tend to be like the people you hang out with. So if you hang out with the winners, you're going to be like a winner, losers, losers. But hang out with the Christians, and you're going to want to be more like Christ. You're going to want to be more Christ-like.

It's a wonderful thing when I come to church or when I go to, I went to John MacArthur Conference, and you're with all these Christian people, and it just really rubs off on you. It just really, really does.

[18:19] So the people you hang out with is going to make a difference on how you kind of view this stuff. That's a good point. What you're listening to, what you're watching, who you're hanging out with, right?

We're called to be, we're not of this world, but we are still in this world. But we're in this world to be about the mission of Jesus Christ, which is to share the gospel.

And if you find yourself in a relationship where they're rubbing off on you more than them, then maybe it's time to step away from that for sure so that hopefully you can enter back into it.

But with you being the one who is rubbing off on the other person. Yeah, good. Ben? And kind of along those lines, I mean, I just think about this in terms of myself, how much I need the church, how much I need the body of Christ to help me stay on track of where God wants me to be.

And so Hebrews 10, 24, let us consider how to stir one another up in love and good works, not neglecting to meet together as some are in the habit, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

[19:30] Good. Yeah, important to surround yourself with God's people in God's word who can sharpen you, who can keep your focus on Christ.

Okay, Cameron? So I feel like you can almost like insert, you know, church answer A, B, C, D here, you know, whether it be read the Bible, pray more, hang out with good friends, go to church, which is all important.

But to take, you know, A from the top section of self-righteousness and maybe turn it around and say self-discipline. Hmm. And I think that's what, you know, we got to say all that, but it's going to all boil down to our self-discipline.

Are we getting ourselves to church every time it's open? Are we getting ourselves in the word when we have quiet time at home? Are we making sure we have prayer time? And so for me, that was kind of an interesting way to kind of turn around that first point and say, you know, self-discipline.

We need the help of Christ, but we also have to have that self-discipline to go to Christ for that help. Good. Yeah. Good point. Do what?

[20:51] Follow that down? Okay. So instead of being self-righteous, be self-disciplined. Be Christ-centered instead of self-centered. What about what would be the opposite of worldliness?

Godliness. Good. Unworldliness is good too, but godliness hits it. Good. So instead of being worldly, be godly. Okay. Heavenly minded.

Heavenly, Christ-centered, but with the focus on eternity, right? Not just what's temporal. What about, okay, and then unbelieving would be believing.

Faithful. Trusting. Maybe I need to go back and rewrite that sermon because I like these other three points too. Good.

What about whenever this infiltrates the church though? Because we've seen that happen, okay?

Within the church. And one scripture that came to mind was 1 Corinthians 1, 10 through 13.

[22 : 05] Let me see if I want more than that. So anyhow, on Tuesday, this past Tuesday, we were at the state convention and Hans Dilbeck, our executive director, preached on this passage and made a really great point, which I think is really applicable to what we're talking about here, what we've already talked about.

It says there, I appeal to you brothers by the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and have the same judgment.

For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is quarreling among you, my brothers.

So here we have a church and we have a church divided. We have a church in conflict.

So he continues on, what I mean is that each one of you says, I follow Paul, I follow Apollos, or I follow Cephas, or I follow Christ.

Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you or were you baptized in the name of Paul? And so he made a really good point that what kills these divisions, or actually before that point is what's the cause of these divisions?

[23 : 23] And isn't it pride? Again, going back to what is behind these marks of unbelief, and there's pride issues that the church has at times, right?

And so those divisions, those quarrelings, those conflicts, a lot of times what lurks behind it is pride. You know, I'm too proud to maybe seek forgiveness about this thing, or I don't know, you can be prideful in your knowledge, you can be prideful in a lot of different things.

And so here was a church that was proud and had pride, suffered from pride, and so as a result of that, it caused quarrels amongst them and divisions. And the solution that Paul is getting at, and will continue to emphasize, is the cross, and that the cross kills pride.

Because we realize that without Christ, we're hopeless, but that Christ has saved us. That makes us humble, doesn't it? We humbly come before the cross, and we realize that we are incapable of saving ourselves, that without Christ, we would be doomed to eternal hell.

And so the cross kills pride. Because we look at the cross, we look to Christ crucified, and that's the message we preach, because we cannot save ourselves, and we wouldn't be a part of the body of Christ, and we wouldn't be saved unless Christ died for our sins.

[25 : 03] And so really, how can Christians avoid being ensnared by the marks of unbelief? I think as everybody has already mentioned, all the things that everybody has mentioned, but I think again, we've got to be careful with pride.

Because pride has a way of ripping apart a church and their unity. Have you seen that happen before?

Where somebody, for some reason, created a lot of problems, and I think if you would dig deep enough, you would see that lurking there at the root was an attitude of pride.

Anybody else want to answer this question? How can Christians avoid being ensnared by the marks of unbelief? I think we've done a pretty good job, and I really liked the thought to reverse them.

And I'm sad that I didn't think to do that this past week. So, that's good though. I'll preach it again sometime, and I'll reverse it.

[26 : 12] And I'll give you the credit, Cameron, and Amy and everybody else who participated. Let's see, let's go down then to the third question.

Why is it essential that Christians preach Christ crucified? Remember, we've just, before what we're doing now, where we're going through these application questions, we watched our video, American Gospel, Christ crucified.

The second part was all about this question. So, why is it essential? Jack, can you take the microphone back to Cameron, please?

Yes. Leandra said it, but she won't take the microphone. Oh, come on. She turned to me and she said, well, what are we doing if we're not?

Yeah. And that's kind of the point, right? Yeah. We need to be presenting the Gospel. And what is the Gospel without Christ being crucified and raised from the dead for our salvation?

[27 : 29] Yeah. If we're not preaching that, we've totally missed the point. Yeah. Yeah. We're preaching a different Gospel at that point, right? And it becomes a Gospel of morality.

And people will look at the cross. Back here to West, Jack. Thank you. You're doing so good. And they'll think, well, that was just like a picture of doing the right thing or something like that, you know?

Well, and we can talk about that too, maybe after West, like how you've seen other pastors present the cross and what, you know, what it was for or what they preach about it.

You know, what did it achieve? What did Christ achieve on the cross? West? I couldn't find this Scripture verse where Paul said, though, if Christ isn't crucified, we're the most to be pitied. Yeah. So we're chasing after something. If he really didn't die on the cross and raised from the dead, we're just chasing nothing. And I think that's a lot of it right there. Yeah.

[28 : 36] Absolutely. Okay. I'll get you a microphone. Okay. Okay.

Thank you. Who else? Well, let's talk about how have you seen or what have you heard in these different Gospels where they're claiming to be Christians?

They're claiming to preach the Gospel, but they've emptied the cross of its significance. Have you heard or have you witnessed how that is happening a lot in our country?

Back to West, Jack. Yeah, maybe, yeah, hang out there. I think we've all heard, and Dan, you know this one, how a lot of churches, they're taking out of their hymnals anything that says anything about the blood of the Lamb and things like that.

It's too messy, and it sounds, you know, cruel, and I don't want to talk about somebody having to die. God just loves everybody, and everybody goes to heaven and all that kind of stuff. But the price for sin had to be paid, and, you know, without the remission of, without the shedding of blood, there's no remission of sin.

[29 : 58] So it had to happen that way. Nobody wants a judge that just winks his eye at sin, right? And so it had to happen. So to take it out, and we think about the Gettys in their song where they wanted to just take this one little part, we want to get rid of the word blood out of there, and they're like, no, it goes in there.

It's part of it. So just a lot of churches doing things like that, or they just avoid singing those kind of songs. Yeah, good. Okay, Nick over here. Yeah.

It's offensive. Okay? Yeah, and I think something about this, like we see churches doing this right now, but I think it's important to realize that churches have already done this.

Because you look at Europe, and you see countless thousands of churches, and they're almost all entirely empty. And it was because in the 1700s, they started to remove the message of Christ crucified.

And then in the United States, starting in the 1880s and running all the way up until today, the mainline denominations have been uncomfortable with this message of Christ crucified. And that's one of the reasons why the mainline denominations are hemorrhaging members every single year.

[31 : 11] It's like, what happened to them? They got away from this message. And praise the Lord, the Southern Baptist Convention has held on to it, but it's only by His grace. It's always a temptation to talk about other things, but this has to be the center.

Yeah, good. And then Doylene up here. Yeah, I think of up here to Doylene Jack. I think it was Ronald Reagan, right? Wasn't it his famous quote about freedom and how, you know, we can't take it for granted.

It's something that we need to continue to pass on to the generation, what this country stood for, or the time will come when it will be gone. And I think even with the Southern Baptist Convention, which, you know, our church is a part of too, and thank God that we haven't abandoned it, but we can't also take it for granted.

That one day we may see our denomination go the course of the United Methodist Church, or you name it, all these other liberal denominations that we see that are a shell of what they used to be. And so it's important, too, that we, you know, hold the line, that we make sure that, you know, we're not abandoning this critical teaching. Because otherwise, if we're not preaching Christ crucified,

then we are preaching another gospel, and the Lord is not in that.

[32 : 29] Doylene. You mentioned it this morning, but if we don't preach Christ crucified, then we no longer talk about the wrath of God, of a holy God.

And if we start ignoring that, we're not representing God in all of His holiness. So, we, and I think that's where the world's gone.

They don't want to hear about the wrath of God, because it leads back to, it's going to hurt your pride. Yeah. And so, but yeah, for, it's all about the wrath of God. We need to bring that back in. And the holy God that loves us so much, He also has to be our perfect judge. Great point, because that was exactly where I was going to go with the next part of this question.

I was just thinking, why don't people preach Christ crucified? Or why have so many churches abandoned Christ crucified? The wrath of God is part, right?

[33 : 29] And we've heard in the video, remember, I can't remember all the names of those who were on it, but, you know, they talked about cosmic child abuse. And man, it's just sad to hear them talk about that, because clearly they're not in the Word.

Clearly, they're not seeing the beauty in the cross, you know, where the love and wrath of God meet.

But yeah, the people, people are offended by the thought of a God who is wrathful. Anybody else want to elaborate on why you think they are so offended?

Mike. Mike. In Sunday school this morning, I think it became very clear.

We were talking about Jesus and the disciples going to Emmaus, and when they were discussing all of the things they were discussing, and Jesus came up to them and said, what are you talking about?

[34 : 35] And they said, are you the only guy who doesn't know what's happened in Jerusalem? And then it talked about going back to the Moses and the prophets.

He taught them how everything pointed toward him, toward the Messiah. And if you go back to all of that, you've got to see the sacrificial system that they had, where they had to shed the blood.

I mean, all through the Old Testament. And I think a lot of churches today, they don't like the Old Testament because they don't understand what it actually is.

And by, you know, couldn't hardly talk this morning in Sunday school because we got to the point where, you know, the two men, after Jesus disappeared, they said, well, didn't our hearts burn within us when they were, when he was telling us about this?

And you're like, gosh, oh, for our hearts to burn. Yeah. Yeah. Amen. Something to pray for. Because, send it back to Wes again, Jack.

[35 : 42] Good job. Well, we have a message from Andy Stanley, what? A year or two ago that, you know, he said we need to unhitch ourselves from the Old Testament.

And what tragedy. Because it's one book and it all tells one story, just as you pointed out. And Jesus didn't unhitch himself from the Old Testament as he was on that day and ever.

I mean, he was preaching from those scriptures. And so, what a ridiculous thing. But why do people want to unhitch it? Because they see in the Old Testament a different God that they don't like.

And they see in the New Testament a God that they do. But God hasn't changed. You know? He's unchanging. He has wrath.

And in fact, if you read the New Testament, the New Testament speaks a lot about the wrath. Jesus preached a lot about the wrath of God. Wes? Wes? I think also it might be the reason why people don't want to hear.

[36 : 42] It's kind of twofold. You think of all the churches that they're just trying to build their membership. They get more people through the door and all that stuff. So, they want to say things that are pleasing to their ears. We think about our snowflake culture where you just disagree with my political thoughts or something.

And you're screaming in somebody's face. Or just all kinds of things that people just get so offended. And they've got to have a little room to go pet a puppy. Stuff like that. Well, then when you're talking about someone, you know, the flogging that Christ took and nailed on a cross and all that kind of stuff.

They don't want to hear that. You know, it's just so they don't want to preach it because it's going to hurt somebody's feeling. And they're going to get offended. They're going to walk out the door and go down the street. And, you know, same thing kind of applies with what I like about the

expositional preaching.

Is that you don't skip over certain passages. It's because you've got some couples in the church that are living together. And we don't want to talk about sexual immorality. So, we'll skip that and go to the next thing.

Well, then you come along and then it's about, you know, something else. Maybe homosexuality or tithing. It's like, I don't want to preach that. So, we'll just skip right over it. If you go verse by verse, I'm sorry, but this next one says this and we've got to explain it.

[37 : 55] And so, people just get offended way too easy. You know, they think they're going to live their life and no one's ever going to hurt their feelings and all that kind of stuff. So, the pastors that are trying to build their numbers just for the numbers sake and the money that comes in through that, they're just going to skip right over it.

Yeah. Well, now I have to put my plan for the puppy petting room to... That was going to be good. That was going to be...

Like, right back here we have these rooms and we'll just put some puppies in there. If anything offends you, there's puppies. Yeah, where's the puppy petting room?

I think... Yeah. Man, we've got it. Yeah, we'll be right. No. But I think you're totally right. It's offensive.

The cross is offensive to people. The wrath of God is offensive to people. And if we offend people, the thought, the fear for a lot of these pastors in churches is that they'll leave.

[39 : 02] That's not what they want to hear. We want to preach an encouraging sermon. But really, then, you know, what they're turning Jesus into is a... Yeah, tickling their ears.

Well, a good moral teacher. A therapist. Self-help guru. What did you say, Cameron? Motivational speaker. And that's what you see a lot of the pastors end up being of those churches, aren't they? If you listen and analyze their messages, they sound like motivational speakers. They sound like self-help guru. They sound like therapists. You know, come to church for your weekly therapist session where you're built up, you know, and you're encouraged.

You can do better. You can be better. The answers are with you. But no, if we read Scripture, we see that we don't measure up, that we sin, that we fall short of the glory of God, that there is wrath stored up against our sins, and that if we don't believe in Jesus Christ, as he said, unless you believe, you will die in your sins and you will suffer the eternal consequences of those.

And that's an offensive message.

[40 : 39] I don't want to be a charity case.

We celebrate boasting because, you know, now you get a trophy just for participating, right? You just get an award. We'll just give you an award. Didn't earn it.

Well, you earned it. But you didn't really earn it. Whatever. Okay. But you know, and then to the Greeks, what? Why was it a stumbling block? Foolishness?

Worldliness? God would come and die for people? That sounds like rubbishness. Rubbish to me. Is rubbishness a word? Did I just make it up?

Okay. Yeah, it's foolishness. Because again, they're proud of what? Their knowledge.

[41 : 59] Their philosophies. Their understanding of the world and how it works and whatnot. It's a stumbling block to them as well. So, any other answers for this question?

Why is it essential that Christians preach Christ crucified? Is it essential? Because, let's go to James. I'll wait to say what I was going to say in case you were going to say it, James. Like Mike said this morning in Sunday school, Jesus was walking with the two going back to Emmaus. And he started teaching from Moses and the prophets and the Psalms all concerning about him. Fast forward to your passage this morning.

Jesus was talking to the religious leaders that should have known all of this. Should have been teaching the people what to look for with the Messiah's coming.

They totally got off track and were so consumed about pride of being Jewish and pride of their status as religious leaders.

[43 : 11] And they just totally missed the whole concept of what the Scriptures were teaching. And they chose not to teach that to their people.

Good. Why else is it essential that Christians preach Christ crucified? Well, didn't Christ preach Christ crucified? If we look at our Scripture, Jesus answered them.

Wait, let me move up. So Jesus said to them, when you have lifted up the Son of Man, what's he talking about? He's talking about his coming crucifixion. Then you will know that I am he, that I do nothing on my own authority, but speak as the Father has 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. And even before he was crucified, as he was saying this, many people believed in him. Jesus preached his crucifixion.

He was constantly talking about where he was going. He was constantly talking about the fact that he'd be crucified and why he would be crucified. Jesus preached Christ crucified. The apostles and the disciples preached Christ crucified too, did they not?

[44 : 16] Again, a passage used from this morning in Romans 3, Paul, verse 21. 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, 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 divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness at the present time so that he might be just and the justifier of one who has faith in Jesus.

I'll continue on. Then what has become of boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? By a law of works? No, but by the law of faith. For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law.

So we preach Christ crucified because the Bible preaches Christ crucified, right? And if we don't, then we've abandoned the gospel. And if we've abandoned the gospel, then we are no longer preaching the truth.

[45 : 32] Miss Amy. All right. And we are the caretakers of that message now. As each one of us is a disciple.

The world isn't going to tell anybody about it. We've got to be the ones to do it if it's going to happen. So just, you know, don't hold back.

Amen. Do your thing. I mean, they ain't going to like you, and they didn't like Jesus either. So, you know, I'd rather them be mad at me now than be mad at me all eternity for not saying anything.

Yeah. So I've got a phone call to make tomorrow. So you all pray for me. Amen. We will. The world hates you, right? Hated him first.

Back to Wes again, Jack. Also, this is probably not news to anybody here, but read Psalm 22, and they talk about exactly what's going to happen.

[46 : 37] Everything in there, dividing his clothes and casting lots and piercing his side and scoffing and saying the things that they said. It's all in there, too. So it is part of the scriptures to be fulfilled about how he was to die, too.

Good. Yeah. Good points. And I think, you know, and Amy hit on something that's really critical for us to understand.

This is our time. This is our time to stand firm on what is true. And we've got to understand what our mission is. Our mission isn't to draw a crowd. You know, if we were about drawing a crowd, and, you know, in the world's eyes, we could appear successful because look how large that church is. But if we're preaching a different gospel, then shame on us for doing so. Shame on those who are telling people that they're following Christ when they don't know him at all.

Shame on those who are preaching Christ minus the cross because they're not preaching the gospel. And we have a responsibility.

[47 : 48] And so that's like this morning. You know, again, if you look at scripture, Paul calls out people by name, doesn't he? He calls out false teachers by name.

And I don't think that we're doing anything unbiblical by putting a name to those false teachers and to warn people, don't listen to this person. They're a false teacher.

They are not preaching the gospel. They are preaching a different gospel. And I've been a part of that conversation before where somebody thought I was being mean because that person, in this case it was Joel Osteen, well, he's a good guy, right?

He's got that beautiful smile and he just seems so happy. Well, listen to his sermons. He's not preaching Christ crucified.

And that's an issue that we can't stand for and that we shouldn't stand for. Now, I think we speak the truth in love, right? Because what we could be guilty of doing is pouring contempt upon him and others like him when shouldn't we be praying for them first?

[48 : 50] Praying for their salvation? Praying for their salvation? And too often we're quick to do the opposite, which is to judge them and want to, you know, pray for them. We'll say we'll pray for them, but our prayers are more along the lines of God, smite them.

Vanquish them. Instead, where maybe our prayers should be, not maybe, our prayers should be, Lord, have mercy on them as you've had mercy on me. But still, make sure that we're holding the line, that we're bold, we're courageous, but that we make sure that we're speaking the truth in love. And that we're not ashamed of the gospel, right? That we're not ashamed of Jesus Christ and him crucified because it is the power of God to save sinners.

And they are saved in no other name besides the name of Jesus Christ. And so we've got to continue to put the cross forward as we share the gospel, that people understand why Jesus came, why it was essential that he died on the cross for our salvation.

And we can't unhook ourselves from the Old Testament because the Old Testament, it's God's word. And it speaks of the coming Messiah. We get to the New Testament, the coming Messiah has come.

[50 : 05] And the Old Testament talks about, you know, the sacrificial system, talks about the Passover lamb. And, you know, and Jesus comes on the scene, behold the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

And so it all is telling one story. And so we can't abandon that either. And we can't get caught up in thinking about drawing crowds and being afraid to offend people.

Because we're not doing them, we're doing them a disservice if we're concerned about how they will receive our message. We preach the gospel. We preach Christ crucified. The results are up to the Holy Spirit.

And we hear and we see and we're told through Scripture that as a result of our doing so, people will be saved. Disciples will be made. People will hate us.

People will persecute us. They won't like what we have to say. They don't like what Jesus had to say. We should expect that. But we should also expect that as we do it, people will come to faith in Jesus Christ. Okay, let's close in prayer.

[51 : 07] Heavenly Father, we thank you for this time that we've had to come together as we've been able to sharpen one another using your word as that sharpening instrument. God, we pray that we would take this message to heart.

Lord, we confess that oftentimes we are caught up in the marks that characterize those who will die in their sins.

Lord, a lot of times we are tempted to trust in our own self-righteousness, to think that we're better people than we are. We can be tempted to fall into legalism.

Lord, forgive us that we do that. And Father, help us to avoid falling into that trap. We're also guilty, Lord, of being a part of this world. We know that we've been saved and that we have your spirit, but we know that the flesh still remains.

And daily we've got to crucify it so that we can take up our cross and follow you. We need to be putting sin to death in our lives.

[52 : 11] We need to be putting worldliness to death. And so, Lord, help us to not seek to be worldly, but seek to be godly. God, we know that also at times we're tempted to be unbelieving.

And we can look at the world around us and wonder and sometimes, Lord, doubt that you are causing all things to work together for the good.

So, Lord, we pray that each day we would wake up preaching the gospel to ourselves, that we would be disciplined in coming to you, that your word would abide in us, that we would not be ensnared by the traps of the enemy, but that, God, we would be witnesses, that we would be disciple makers, that we would share the gospel boldly, that we would preach Christ crucified.

And so, Lord, help us to do that. And, Lord, we pray that we would be faithful during this time that you have called us to exist, to be in this world.

Lord, now is our time to hold up the gospel. Now is our time to defend it from error and to point out where there is error, but to do so in a loving way, Lord.

[53 : 24] And so, we pray that you would help us to do that. Help us to do that like Jesus Christ. God, we pray for Tom. And, Lord, we pray for a successful operation tomorrow.

We're praying that he's able to have that and that everything goes smoothly, that the doctor and those who will be with him in the operating room, Lord, would just have steady hands and clear minds as they perform that operation, that it would go without any issue, that Tom would then be able to recover quickly and come back to us and to what he does here that's so important in our church.

And, God, we pray for the hails. We pray for the funeral service tomorrow, Lord. We're thankful to know that his mother is a believer, that she's with you. And so, Lord, we pray that as the family gathers, that it would also be a joyful time for them as well as they remember this woman whom they loved so much and whom they know is with you.

And, Father, we just lift them up to you as well and pray for comfort and peace. God, as we leave this place, we pray that you would use our lives to make much of the name of Jesus Christ.

And we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. All right. God bless you all. Have a great week. Amen.