

Resolved to Know Christ Crucified (and Raised!)

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Please consider donating to this work in the San Francisco Bay Area online at ChristChurchEastBay.org. Good morning, I'm Hannah Sue and I'm a member of the North Berkeley Community Group.

This morning's reading is a reading from the Acts of Apostles, chapter 18, verses 1-11, and a reading from 1 Corinthians, chapter 1, 18-25, and chapter 2, 1-5.

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles. After this, Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. There he met a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all Jews to leave Rome.

Paul went to see them, and because he was a tentmaker as they were, he stayed and worked with them. Every Sabbath, he reasoned in the synagogue, trying to persuade Jews and Greeks.

[1:17] When Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia, Paul devoted himself exclusively to preaching, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah. But when they opposed Paul and became abusive, he shook out his clothes in protest and said to them, Your blood be on your own heads.

I am innocent of it. From now on, I will go to the Gentiles. Then Paul left the synagogue and went next door to the house of Titius Justus, a worshiper of God. Crispus, the synagogue leader, and his entire household believed in the Lord, and many of the Corinthians who heard Paul believed and were baptized.

One night, the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision, Do not be afraid. Keep on speaking. Do not be silent. For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city.

So Paul stayed in Corinth for a year and a half, teaching them the word of God. A reading from Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise. The intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate. Where is the wise person? Where is the teacher of the law?

[2:36] Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since in the wisdom of God, the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached, to save those who believe.

Jews demand signs, and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength. And so it was with me, brothers and sisters.

When I came to you, I did not come with eloquence or human wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

I came to you in weakness, with great fear and trembling. My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God's power.

[3:52] This is the word of the Lord. Good morning. We are continuing today in a sermon series that we started back in May.

And we're looking at the life and the letters of the Apostle Paul. Particularly, we've been in the Acts of the Apostles, chapters 16 through 19, looking at the way that the greatest Christian theologian, the Apostle Paul, was driven by this urgency to get the gospel out there, to inject the gospel into the heart of every city center in the Roman Empire between Jerusalem and Rome and beyond.

And he wants to be sure that within his lifetime, within his generation, he establishes as many Jew plus Gentile churches as he possibly can in all the major metropolitan areas.

And as we've been looking at these different texts, a pattern has begun to emerge, at least for me, and I'd like to show you the pattern, is that Paul takes the gospel to these Greek cities that are not very unlike the Bay Area.

He takes the gospel, this word of the cross, this message of Christ crucified, and every time, he gets a mixed reception. Reception. There's a small minority of people who are persuaded, they believe, they're baptized, they become vital members of the church, and then there's really a vast majority of people who are opposed.

[5 : 28] They don't believe. They revile Paul. They even, as we saw in this text, they abuse Paul. And you might remember back to Philippi, when Paul went to Philippi, he was, we're told he was seized, he was dragged before the authorities, he was accused of, quote unquote, throwing the city into an uproar, he was stripped, he was beaten, he was put in prison, and then he was exiled from the city.

And then Paul just kept going. He goes on to the city of Thessalonica that we saw last week, and we saw how a mob formed, and they started a riot, and Paul was forced out of the city, other Christians were dragged before the officials, and they had to pay a fine, and they said, hey, these people are turning the world upside down.

They're defying the decrees of Caesar, they're claiming that there's another king whose name is Jesus. And we have a map, just to kind of remind you of where all this stuff is in the world, and what's happening where, but Paul goes from Philippi to Thessalonica, and then he goes to Athens, the cultural capital of Greece.

And when he arrives there, most people sneer at Paul. They say he's a babbler of strange ideas.

And Paul decides, okay, well, now I'm going to go to Corinth, the commercial capital of Greece.

And when he arrives there, he meets all the same opportunities and challenges. All the basic stuff that's been happening keeps happening. It's been said that history may not repeat itself, but it often rhymes.

[7 : 07] And you can see that in Paul's ministry. What's the result of his gospel mission in the city of Corinth? It's this, that a vast majority of Jews and Greeks hear this message of Christ crucified, and they reject it as either a stumbling block or foolishness, as something that's just deeply, offensively stupid in their eyes.

But, for some people, the word of the cross is the power of God and the wisdom of God, and so they believe it and they're baptized into it.

And you would think when Paul sees the conversion of Crispus, the leader of the synagogue, his entire household, he'd be massively encouraged by that breakthrough and by these conversions.

And I think that he was, but if you ask any Christian leader who's been doing this for any amount of time, they'll tell you that you have to learn how to live in the paradox between encouragement and discouragement, between hope and fear, between, you know, a confidence in the Lord and a real sense of insecurity about yourself and your circumstances.

And that's why the Apostle Paul, when he's afraid, he has this vision in Corinth and the Lord Jesus comes to him at night and he speaks to him in this vision to address the fears and the discouragement that Paul has and to give him some reassurance.

So we're going to look at that. We're going to look at that vision and then we're also going to look at Paul's opening words and the letter that he then writes to this church that he's planted in the city of Corinth.

[8 : 42] So, three headings. First of all, what keeps us going in our mission for the city? Second question, what is the heart of our message?

And third question, how can we live with real power and wisdom? What keeps us going in our mission for the city? What's the heart of our message? And how can we live with real power and wisdom?

First of all, what keeps us going in our mission for the city? This is now my 20th year as a missionary to Berkeley, a church planter and a pastor in the Bay Area, which is still what it was

when I came here.

It's still the least religious, most unchurched metropolitan area in the entire United States. And it feels a lot like Acts chapter 16 to 19, which is why we're preaching this.

There are very similar dynamics, similar patterns of the rejection of the gospel, the acceptance of the gospel, and similar feelings of encouragement about that and discouragement about that.

[9 : 47] And the Apostle Paul, it seems, is sufficiently discouraged. He's sufficiently afraid such that he needs this visitation in the night. And here's what it says in Acts chapter 18, verse 9.

One night, the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision, do not be afraid, keep on speaking, do not be silent, for I am with you, and no one is going to attack you and harm you because I have many people in this city.

So Paul stayed in Corinth for a year and a half teaching them the word of God. Paul had experienced so many setbacks at this point, so much opposition, so many beatings, so many riots, so much rejection, that he needed a word from the Lord to calm his fears and to encourage his heart and to steal his nerves and to keep him going in his mission for the city.

And in some way, I hope that Paul's fear and Paul's discouragement is a comfort to us because we've met this guy who's the most courageous, least fearful, most resilient, unflappable person who's probably ever existed.

What does he do? Right? Remember in Philippi when he's shamefully stripped and he's unjustly beaten and then he's wrongfully in prison and he's horribly mistreated in that prison.

[11 : 15] What does Paul do? He prays and he sings at night to the Lord in the darkness at midnight. His motto, remember he's sitting in a jail writing that letter to the Philippians that we studied and his motto is in Philippians 1.21, he says, for me to live is Christ and to die is gain.

He seems to be completely fearless. Philippians 4, he said, don't be anxious about anything but present your request to God. He says, I've learned the secret of being content in any and every situation and yet, he says here in this text in 1 Corinthians 2.3, he says, I came to you in weakness and with great fear and trembling.

And he's in such a state that he needs a vision and he needs a word from the Lord that says, do not be afraid. One of my favorite of Paul's letters is 2 Corinthians because it's written out of a place of deep pain and deep darkness.

And Paul says in 2 Corinthians 1, he says, we are under great pressure far beyond our ability to endure so that we despaired of life itself. Now, if you came to me and you said, Jonathan, I don't think I can go on.

I'm in such, I'm experiencing such excruciating discouragement and I'm despairing of life. I'm heading into a deep depression and maybe toward a breakdown, I would say and think to myself, you need special help.

[12 : 45] And that's exactly what the Apostle Paul needs. He needs special help. He often needs special help. Again, in 2 Corinthians 4, he says, we're hard-pressed on every side, we're perplexed, we're persecuted, we're struck down.

He says in 2 Corinthians 7, he says, there were fightings without and fears within constantly in my ministry. And so how does he keep going in the Lord's mission for the city when it's so physically and emotionally taxing and so spiritually discouraging?

And how do we keep going? How do I keep going? Well, yeah, how do we do this ministry in Berkeley in the Bay Area when it can feel sometimes appropriately overwhelming?

when you think about the mission we actually have to share the gospel? Well, I think this vision in Corinth is kind of a clue and a help because the risen Lord Jesus, he comes to Paul who keeps experiencing serious opposition and hostile receptions in city after city and what does he say to Paul in the darkness of night?

What does he say? He says, do not be afraid. How many of us are beginning our days and ending our days in 2025 listening to that voice of fear with all of his dark lies and dark temptations?

[14 : 14] It says, be afraid. Jesus, risen from the dead, comes to his apostle and he commands him, stop being afraid.

afraid. Fear no longer. Take your fears and look at them and say, no. He says, do not be afraid. Keep on speaking. Do not be silent for I am with you and no one is going to attack and harm you because I have many people in this city. See, the apostle Paul needs to know three things all of which I think apply to us here at Christ Church.

He says, first of all, I'm with you. I'm with you. You're not as alone as you feel because I'm with you. You're not as weak and defenseless as you feel because I'm here to protect you.

You see, what drives our mission for the city, it's not us. It's not our gifts. It's not our skills, our passions, our experiences, our vision, our resources, our sense of confidence in ourselves.

[15 : 21] what drives our mission for the city is Jesus Christ risen from the dead who's living and active who says, I'm right here with you and he's promised to not just be with us but to build his church.

He's promised to protect us in such a way that the gates of hell will not prevail against his church. our gospel mission to our city is completely reliant, it's totally dependent on the presence and the power of the resurrected Lord Jesus and if he is not with us then whatever we purpose this year will come to naught.

It'll be nothing. But if he is with us then we can keep going with confidence. So first of all, I'm with you, he says. Secondly, I have many people in this city not only am I with you but I have many people in this city.

Jesus is saying to Paul, I own this city. I sovereignly rule and reign over this city. I'm at work here in the lives of all the people in this city. They owe their very existence to me.

And he says to Paul and to the church through Paul, he's saying, I've sent you to gather a people who will willingly and self-consciously belong to me.

[16 : 43] a people who will live for my name and for my glory. And because I have so many people in this city and because I'm at work in this city, my church therefore has a great work that remains to be done.

A great task that remains unfinished. A great commission that remains to be worked out. And friends, this encourages me that Jesus has many people here in the city of Berkeley.

He has many people in the city of Oakland. He has many people in the city, all the cities of the East Bay. A people out there whom he wants to reach. A people whom he wants to save by the power of his grace.

A people that he wants to add to his church. A people that he wants to gather for his glory. A people that he wants to conform into his love and to his image. And this is why he wants us to keep going. To keep initiating relationships with people. To keep finding people of peace. To keep saying to our co-workers in our office and the people that are living on our streets and in our schools.

[17 : 51] The people with whom we've developed a friendship around common interests. Right? The members of our families. He wants us to bring them around our table and listen to them.

And to love them. And to ask them great questions to say, you know, what is it that gives your life meaning? Where do you turn for help and for strength when life inevitably gets hard?

Do you ever have a sense that God is real? You see, if the Lord has people in the city, then one of our primary tasks is to go and find them.

And to befriend them. To listen to them and to love them into the kingdom. Jesus says, I'm with you. And I have many people in the city. And then he says, keep on speaking.

Do not be silent. That's the way my great commission will be worked out is if you keep on speaking this simple message of Christ crucified so that as many people can hear the gospel as possible.

[18 : 55] This is why we're looking forward to running our Alpha course again in January. It's why we're hoping that you all will be praying for the people that God has put in your life that they would begin to explore faith and we can create spaces for people to do that very thing.

Our risen Lord Jesus says, I'm with you. I have many people in the city and keep speaking. And the Lord, I think, made good on that promise to Paul.

Paul, unlike all the other cities before, he's not forced out of the city. He's enabled to stay in Corinth for about 18 months. His heart is now encouraged. His faith is strengthened.

His nerves are steeled. He has a newfound assurance and confidence to stay the course until his work is completed in spite of inevitable opposition.

And my hope is that all of us would be able to operate out of that same encouragement, that same strength, that same confidence as we enter into a new school year, a new ministry year together.

[20 : 02] So, what keeps us going in our mission for the city? It's not us, it's Jesus. Secondly, what is the heart of our message? What is the heart of our message for our city?

Well, Corinth was a lot like the Bay Area. The Apostle Paul came here to Corinth because it's the best place to make contact with all sorts of people. It was this crossroads between the eastern and

the western Mediterranean and between northern and southern Greece and so Paul could meet here people of varying social statuses and spiritual orientations and that's exactly what he did for the next 18 months.

He would talk to people while he was working in his leather shop, while he was selling tents in the marketplace, before work, after work, Paul's talking to people up and down the social ladder and across the spectrum of all the ideologies out there on offer primarily represented by the ideologies of Jew and Greek.

And Paul says in 1 Corinthians 1, 22, he says this, he says, Jews demand signs or signs of power and Greeks look for wisdom. And of course, the Bible for Jews is the Moses and the prophets, you know, from Elijah to Ezekiel and in interpreting that Bible, people were then valuing signs of supernatural power and all the wonderful works of God that you see in the plagues in Egypt and the parting of the Red Sea, they were focused on the power.

And of course, for Greeks, the sacred text for the Greeks was Homer and Plato and Aristotle and they valued not so much power but wisdom. They valued the logos and ethos and pathos of rhetoric and masterful, skillful dialogue.

[21 : 54] And in some ways, these cultures of Jew and Greek represent our modern desires today. We desire power. We desire the power of an active life, the power to get stuff done, the power to change the world.

We desire wisdom. We desire the wisdom of a contemplative life, the wisdom of reflecting on what we've done, the wisdom of explaining and understanding the world. But Paul, he comes to these two alternate visions of reality and he outflanks them both.

To quote some popular Berkeley bumper stickers, Paul questions authority. Right? He subverts the popular, the dominant paradigms. And he shows up with a totally different message.

He comes to the city and he says he comes in verse 18 with the message of the cross, of the word of the cross. In verse 23, he says, we preach Christ crucified.

He says in 1 Corinthians 2.2, I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. He says to these visions of reality that are on offer and are most popular to all the people, he says, these visions of reality are insufficient.

[23 : 09] your vision of God and of the world is incomplete. And let me see if I can illustrate this with Superman. Have you guys seen the movie yet?

Okay, you need to repent and go and see this movie. I think it's probably the best of all the Superman. Of course, it's an immigrant story.

It's a story of an alien who comes to the United States. He's committed to truth, justice, in the American way. These bedrock principles that you defend the defenseless and you help people in need, right?

And these essential aspects and attributes of Superman are what define how he deals with evil. How he deals with corrupt politicians and unscrupulous businessmen.

And in this particular, this isn't, these aren't spoilers by the way, but in this particular version of the movie, Superman is battling tech billionaires who hang out in shadowy lairs beyond, you know, real authorities who are trying to control the universe.

[24 : 19] And Superman's taking on mass bad guys with guns who are dragging random people away to be imprisoned in cages where nobody can find them. And the central bad guy in the movie, you know him, Lex Luthor, he believes himself to be a genius and yet he's jealous of anyone that makes him feel weak.

Okay, so does any of this sound vaguely familiar or remotely relevant to our time? And Superman's there to protect the little guys and pummel the bad guys, right?

Well, there's this great book by Glenn Weldon called Superman, the Unauthorized Biography, and here's his thesis. He says, there are two central definitive attributes to any good Superman story to tell you that it's legit, that it's real.

He says, the real Superman is always selfless and he always operates by resolve. Right? He's known by his selflessness and his resolve.

Superman must always put the needs of other people before himself and refuse to give up. And he says, if either of those factors is missing from the story, then our minds just rebel against it.

[25 : 29] We reject it. We say, this is simply not the real Superman. Right? The real Superman places himself between vulnerable citizens and mortal danger and he's resolutely saving lives.

He even, this is a spoiler, he saves the life of a single squirrel. Okay? And you might be wondering at this point, what are you talking about? What does this have to do with Jesus?

Well, I want to pull up a slide that captures everything Paul's trying to say. And at the heart of the apostles' message to every major city throughout the Roman Empire, he says to Jews who value power and to Greeks who value wisdom, he says, if your vision of God, if your narrative of God does not include two central definitive truths, then it's simply not God.

And what are those two central definitive truths? Number one, there must be a divinely appointed Messiah and number two, he must be crucified. He says, if the story that you're telling yourself about reality, if the story you're telling yourself about God does not include a heaven-sent messianic king, then it's not God.

And if that story that you're telling yourself about God doesn't have at its center a Messiah who's laying out his life in sacrificial self-giving love as the substitute for sinners in need of this most shocking intervention in order to be saved, then it's simply not God.

[27 : 03] Paul says in verse 22, Jews demand signs of power, Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles. You see, Jews heard this message of the cross through their cultural value of power, and in the cross they do not see power, and so it's a stumbling block.

The word Paul uses there, it's a scandal on, it's a scandal. The Greeks heard this message of the cross through their cultural value of wisdom, and in the cross they could not see wisdom, and so they called it foolishness, they called it morion, where we get our word moron.

This message did not meet their preconceived criteria and conditions for what was culturally acceptable. Why? Why was the cross of Christ, and why does the cross of Christ continue to remain so weak and so foolish in the eyes of so many people?

Why is it seen as madness? Why is it seen as nonsense and absurd? Why is it seen as the craziest message that anyone could imagine? Well, because it is. Sometimes we've been so domesticated to the cross that we've forgotten how awful it truly is.

Death on a cross in Roman society was regarded as brutal, disgusting, and abhorrent. It was reserved for hardened criminals, incorrigible slaves, and convicted terrorists.

[28 : 39] To shamefully die on a rubbish heap at the wrong end of the empire, that's just, it's humiliating.

Right? It's a disastrous defeat of unspeakable shame and stigma. It means that, if that happens to you, it means that you've been reduced, you've been erased as a nothing and as a nobody.

So look at Jesus in that place. He's spread-eagled, he's skewered on his cross, he's robbed of all freedom of movement, strung up with nails, pinned there, absolutely powerless, totally defeated.

You see, the Greeks who imagined a divine savior figure robed in wisdom, and for Jews who expected a Messiah anointed in power and crowned with majesty, Paul says, look, if your sacred story about what's really real, right, the truest truths of the universe, if your sacred story does not at the center have God's king bearing all the inhumanity and the brutality of the world and of your heart as symbolized in this cross, then it's simply not God.

You see, this is a front, it was an outrage, it was madness, and it still is, frankly. Many people want to change the message. They want to minimize and remove the weakness and the foolishness of the cross and insert something at the center that is more relevant, more attractive, more triumphant, more pragmatic.

[30 : 30] But Paul says in verse 24, to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, the cross of Christ is the power of God, God and the wisdom of God. What he's saying is there is that only if God calls you can he enable you to see that the reality is actually the opposite of the appearance.

That what appears to be the defeat of goodness by evil at the cross is exactly the opposite. It seems as if Jesus is overcome, but he's actually overcoming.

overcoming. It seems as if Jesus is being crushed by all the powers and the principalities, but he's actually crushing the head of evil itself.

You see, the victim is the victor, and the cross is the throne from which Jesus is still ruling the world. And only God can enable you to look at the weakness of the cross and to see God's power there that's forgiving sin and overthrowing death.

Only God can enable you to look at the foolishness of the cross and see there God's wisdom that's brought both his justice and his mercy together, his wisdom that has launched from that very place

of foolishness and weakness, a kingdom of righteousness and life.

[31 : 47] You see, when Paul spoke about this man who was crucified by the Romans and all the powers behind the Romans, and yet that God had raised up from the dead and who is now the Lord of the world and who is summoning all people everywhere to faithful obedience to him, he knew what people were going to think when he talked about that.

But he also knew that every time he talked about it, every time he told that story, it would reveal God's power beside which human power looks like weakness, and it would reveal God's wisdom beside which all human wisdom looks like foolishness.

And this has to remain the heart of the church's message. We cannot change the message. Okay, so what keeps us going in our mission for the city?

It's not us, it's Jesus. What is the heart of our message? It's not about worldly power or worldly wisdom, it's about God's power and God's wisdom in Christ crucified. And I'll end with this, how can we live with real power and real wisdom?

Don't you want to live with power and wisdom? Who's not seeking that that you know? Who's not going after power and wisdom? But what is real power?

[33 : 08] What does it mean to live with real power and real wisdom? The philosopher Alistair McIntyre died this past May and he had this famous line, it's so good, he says this, he says, I can only answer the question, what am I to do if I can answer the prior question of what story do I find myself apart?

I can only answer the question of what am I to do if I can answer the prior question of what story do I find myself apart? He says, you will not know who you are, you will not know what you're to do, you will not know your identity and your purpose in this world apart from a story that's bigger than yourself.

So the question is, what is that story? And for most people, they say, well, I'm part of the story of my family, I'm part of the story of my tribe, my race, my class, my gender, I'm part of the story of my nation and that is the thing that's driving my life.

And in a lot of ways that can be good, right? But if you are waking up in the morning these days and you set your thoughts and your mind on our nation, right?

And the first thing you think about is how the President of the United States is disappointing you. Or if the first thing you think about in the morning is how your family of origin, someone, your sibling, your parents, you're thinking about the things that you've not forgiven from your past.

[34 : 31] Or you're thinking about your boss, your colleagues that you disagree with. You're thinking about your tribe and all of its grievances, all of its resentments. I'm here to tell you that is a recipe not just to be unhappy.

You will be unhappy. But it's a recipe also to be unhelpful. You won't be helpful to other people if that's how you're starting your day. Because what Alistair McIntyre says is your story will direct your thoughts and your thoughts will direct what you do and what you do becomes your life.

And so what I want to challenge us with today is what if we were to wake up every morning this week and think about the cross? What if our first thing in our minds that we sort of coded our neural pathways with was meditating on God's sacrificial self-giving love for me, for you?

And what if we saw the cross and we saw this great demonstration of the love of God for us and we said, oh, now I remember the story of which I'm a part. Now I know who I am and what I'm to do.

Now I know my identity and my purpose. Paul says, look, if you do the most counterintuitive thing and you seek power in the weakest place and you seek wisdom in the most foolish place, then you're going to find in that most unlikely place the ultimate expression and fulfillment of power and wisdom.

[36 : 02] And then you will know how to live not according to the power of this world and the wisdom of this world. You'll know how to embody the power and the wisdom in the way in which Jesus has redefined them.

And I'll close with this. If God came in person, if he came in the person of Jesus not to get power over other people to be served by them, but rather to show us the power of becoming small and getting low and serving people that are quote unquote beneath us.

And if that's the story that I'm a part of, then I know what I'm supposed to do today. If Jesus' story is the way of downward mobility, of humbling himself in vulnerability and weakness for the sake of forgiving others and reconciling others and that's, and I'm part of that larger story, then I know what

I'm supposed to do today.

If in the cross of Christ God became a nothing and he became a nobody to give himself away in sacrificial love that seemed like a foolish waste of time and an unwise use of his life.

And if I'm part of that larger story of who God is, then I know what I'm supposed to do today. If Jesus used his smarts, he's the smartest person who ever lived.

[37 : 29] If he used his smarts and his learning and his knowledge not to impress other people or to get approval or to get ahead, but rather use them to draw people to God. If he exercises wisdom for the well-being and the flourishing and peace, not of just the people that he liked, but even for his enemies, and I'm a part of that larger story, then I know what I'm supposed to do today.

We've got to ask ourselves in our work, in our dating, in our money, with our spouse and our kids and our community groups and all of our free time, does this choice look like Jesus on the cross? And if it does not, it's not God's power and it's not God's wisdom. See, God is calling us to operate in an alternative reality.

He's calling us to operate in this counter-cultural way of living that makes no sense to the world around us. It looks like weakness. It looks like foolishness.

But in the eyes of God, it's real power. In the eyes of God, it's real wisdom. And so I want you to think about that.

[38 : 43] I want you to just fix your eyes. If you could just close your eyes and meditate for a moment on the cross of Christ. And let's just think about this as we come to this table with his body broken and his blood poured out.

And let's just prepare ourselves to receive from Christ all the power and all the wisdom that he has to give us. In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Amen.