

Self-deception

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[0 : 0 0] Father, we confess before you that a lot of us are sort of in a rush a lot of times. And Father, that when we come to your word, we're in a bit of a rush. And so if things just don't make sense really quickly and easily to us, we just sort of think the problem is somehow not us.

So Father, we thank you that you know us. We thank you that you love us, that we don't catch you by surprise. So we ask, Father, that you would gently pour the Holy Spirit upon each one of us this morning to calm our mind and our hearts and our wills, our memories, our imaginations, that your Holy Spirit would calm us so that we might sit with your word and dwell with your word.

And Father, we ask that you would write your word in the command center of our lives. And all this we ask in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior. Amen. Please be seated.

So this week on Friday, I had the great honor and privilege. I really do consider it a great honor and privilege when I get invited to go on Parliament Hill to speak to the Parliament Hill Christian Fellowship.

Some of you know that there are Christian MPs on Parliament Hill and Christian senators. They meet privately on some other day of the week just amongst themselves so they can sort of share across party lines and pray for each other.

[1 : 2 6] It might be a good idea for some of us to pray for them when they do that. But on Friday, some of the staff workers and some of the people who work in civil service right near Parliament Hill, they come together for a time to get to know each other, encourage each other, and somebody usually opens the Bible and talks to them about what the Bible teaches.

And that was my great privilege this past Friday. And I gave them sort of like a little bit of a preview of what I was going to be trying to say to you folks this morning. And so one of the ways I began, here I am on Parliament Hill, and I said, it must be really nice to work on Parliament Hill where you don't have to deal with anybody with big egos.

And I got a bit of a chuckle out of that. And then I said, you know, if I was in your seat, I would immediately respond, George, it must be so nice to work in the church where you never have to deal with big egos.

Because, of course, there's a lot of big egos in the church. But why are there big egos in the church? You know? And why is it that we're a lot better at seeing other people's big egos than we are at seeing our own big egos, right?

I mean, that's the fact of the matter is, that we're a lot better at noticing big egos in other people than we are with ourselves. And so the text that we're going to look at today in Galatians chapter 5, it has a lot of great wisdom and insight about the whole problem of big egos and our ability to recognize them or not.

[2 : 5 3] And it might be a bit of a surprise to you for me to say that, because for many people when they read the text, which I read earlier today, the main thing that strikes them isn't that it's talking about big egos, but how it seems to contradict itself time and time again.

So if you look at the text with me, it's Galatians chapter 5, verse 26. It's the last verse of chapter 5. Galatians chapter 5, verse 26.

And here's what it says. Let us not become conceited. By the way, it's just six verses that we're looking at today, but they're very packed and powerful verses.

And here's how it begins. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another. Brothers and sisters, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him or her in a spirit of gentleness.

Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. By the way, this text isn't giving us permission to go around and be like a group of moral police, examining each other, hoping to catch people in something.

[4 : 08] That's not what the verse is talking about at all. And notice this command about the self-awareness that we're tempted ourselves, and we're to do it gently. Verse 2, and this is where some of the contradictions, or at least apparent contradictions, start to make themselves clear.

Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself.

But let each one test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone, and not in his neighbor.

And just sort of pause before the last verse. Doesn't it sound a little bit as if it's saying, that we can boast, that we're allowed to boast, but isn't boasting a sin? Like, how does boasting go along with the spirit of gentleness and not being tempted?

And then it says, for each of us, each will have to bear his own load. That's verse 5. So how is it that we have to bear each other's burdens, and we each bear our own load? And it just seems on one level to be a little bit confusing in the text.

[5 : 16] And it starts off with this command. It's easy to command people not to be conceited. Of course, as you know, one of the problems is that we can end up being proud at how humble we are. Boy, God, I thank you so much that I'm not conceited like those other people.

I mean, you know, that's part of the dilemma. The very moment when you start to think that you have some victory, the devil can completely and utterly undercut you by making you proud at your victory.

And which is, by the way, one of the reasons why the ancient spiritual writers considered pride to be the deadliest of sins. Because no matter how much victory you got on some of the other sins, pride could always rear its head and bite you in the butt or infect you.

That it's, in fact, very, very hard to stamp out. Many, many years ago in a previous church, I had a fellow in the congregation, and I went to his 100th birthday party.

And I used to bring him communion about once a month. And his name was Eve Byers. And, you know, we had a bit of a conversation. And just some of us, you young guys, you just have to trust me with this one, just like I have to trust Eve Byers.

[6 : 27] But when you're 100 years old, you don't have the temptation for lust as much as you did when you were 20. Some of those desires die a little bit by the time you're 100.

But it's still easy to be proud of the fact that you've outlived so many people. Like, no matter how old you are, pride can still rear its head. So what's going on here on the text?

And why is it that there's so many big egos? Why is it that we're blind about it? And why is it that so many of us don't think that we have the problem with big egos?

We have battered and timid egos. In fact, many people outside the Christian circles, if they were to talk about Christians, they would see us as either being very, very timid, far too timid, or they would think of us as being far too full of ourselves.

Well, let's just look at this one verse to sort of try to tease this text out a little bit.

[7 : 29] Look at chapter 6, verse 4. It says, So here's the first insight about the text.

This is a very odd text. We're going to talk about it a bit. But here's the first thing. If you could put up the first point, Andrew, that would be very helpful. It is very hard for me to judge myself or assess myself.

Maybe assess would be a better word right here. It's very hard for me to assess myself without assessing or judging myself by comparing myself to other people.

You ever notice that? It's almost completely impossible for us just to assess ourselves as us. Like, you know, if I'm assessing myself as a pastor, it's very hard for me not to compare myself to other pastors and how they preach and other churches and how they seem to be doing on metrics which the world thinks are very, very important.

It's very, very, very hard for me to do that. Like, even if I try to do it, very quickly I'll start to notice that there's this comparison with others that sneaks itself in, sneaks into my attempt to understand myself.

[8 : 58] In fact, I would suggest that this is a human problem, that human beings have a hard time doing this now, just being able to assess themselves as if there's just almost as if they're the only person who exists and God, and what other people are doing and how they're handling things are sort of irrelevant to assessing ourselves.

It's a human problem. And it's a bit of a shock to a lot of Christians to discover that they're still human. And we are. That even if we've been saved by grace alone, through faith alone and Christ alone, it's human beings who are saved, and we still have to grow and deal with the human condition.

And so some of you might say, Well, George, that's really, really, really helpful for you to tell me that we have this human problem that we're going to have all of our lives. I was hoping for something a little bit more hopeful than that.

And then some of you as well might be saying, Well, George, here's the problem with this. If I was to really try to just assess myself and judge myself as if only I exist and God, aren't you encouraging Christians to ignore social cues?

Like there have, I was just giving somebody in another church a week or two ago some advice. They had a person in the congregation, and, you know, I don't know what the issue was.

[10 : 23] Maybe it was there on the autism spectrum a little bit or whatever. It was a bit of a mental illness or just whatever it is. I don't know. I wasn't a psychologist. But what the problem was is that the person was causing trouble in the church because the person didn't pick up social cues.

Like they were hugging women, and the women didn't want to be hugged. And they would come and talk to people, and they'd stand way too close. And one of the advice I gave is that for people who suffered that, you have to be far more direct.

You almost have to be what... If I was to talk to the person I was giving advice to, a pastor, if I was to talk to you in this way, you would be unbelievably offended. But for people who can't pick up social cues, you have to realize there's something wrong with them, and so you need to be far more direct and blunt with them and in their face about it than you would be with a person who can't pick up social cues.

But the question is, if in fact the way forward is just to judge myself without comparing myself to other people, George, you're not encouraging churches and Christians to...

They're not dealing with their big ego. They're not dealing with being too timid. All you've done is made them like this person who can't pick up social cues. Well, no, the Bible is far wiser than that.

[11 : 42] Listen to verse 4 again. Actually, no, before we read verse 4, could you put up the next point? Here's the issue. God never judges me by comparing me to other people.

Look all the way through the Bible. Now, there will be times when God will say to Israel, for instance, listen, you're even worse than the nations. There is a time in 1 Corinthians when Paul says, you guys are doing things that even the pagans wouldn't do.

But the heart of the judgment isn't that they don't match up to pagans. The heart of the judgment is, guys, it's wrong to have a young man sleep with his mom.

That's part of the issue in 1 Corinthians. It isn't the issue of whether or not there's some type of curve going on. But that God, in fact, all the way through the Bible, God never judges me by comparing me to other people.

And yet, I can't judge myself without comparing myself to other people. And, you know, the Bible does something, you know, just like, I mean, this is really actually a very, very important thing to meditate upon.

[13 : 02] You know, the average Canadian, and most of us are average Canadians, but not maybe in this particular way. What does the average Canadian say? You know, you sort of, you know, parse out or take out the well-instructed atheists who really are very consistent atheists who say that when they die, they become worm food, and that's it.

And maybe you take out the very well-instructed Muslims who would believe that a small percentage of the human race will go to where all the virgins are, and everybody else goes to hell.

And you take out the small number of very well-instructed Hindus and Buddhists who would understand that after the cycle of life and rebirth and life and rebirth, eventually you merge with the one and you sort of disappear because you've merged with the one.

And then you take out the very, very small number of maybe well-instructed Christians. But the average Canadian, once you've taken all those things away, and it might be, I don't know, 80% of Canada, what do they say when you die?

You go to a better place. Now, why do they say that? Because they say, I mean, they have no reason for saying that, but they say that because at the end of the day, they think God grades on some type of curve.

[14 : 16] And they might say those mean, nasty Muslims, they think only the top 2% are going to get into heaven. And those crazy Christians, they maybe only think the top 10% is going to get into heaven.

And we have no word at all to describe Jehovah Witnesses that only think a fraction of a fraction of a fraction of 1% will make it into heaven. We're far more tolerant.

We think like 60% of people will be going to heaven, or 80% of Canadians will go to heaven, or everybody in Canada except those who voted for Donald Trump will go to heaven. And we just sort of think that.

We just sort of think that God looks, and he compares us and say, yeah, you folks are all good folks, you're all good lads, all good women, and yeah, yeah, you're all going to go. Because how do we think?

We think that God judges us in comparison to other people. And the Bible says that God never judges me by comparing me to other people. Like, never. And so, when we start to realize this, if you look now, look at this, look at chapter 6 again.

[15 : 21] Look at verse 5. It says, for each will have to bear his own load. And just so you know, in case I run out of time later on in the sermon, the original, I mean, in most of your English versions, it'll have a different word for burden in verse 2 and load in verse 5.

And that's because there's very, very radically different words in the original language. And the word for load would be the same word as the pack that a soldier puts on to go off to leave the base to go for battle.

He would carry, or she would carry, their pack. It is, in a sense, it would be that if you go on a hiking trip and you have the things you need to survive the hiking trip on your back or in your car if you're going moose hunting or something like that, you carry the things with you.

And in a sense, it's the things of your life. The word for burden, which we'll look at a little bit more in a moment, the word for burden is something which is very, very, very heavy, which in effect you can't really carry by yourself and you have to carry for a very, very long distance.

And so they're very, very different ideas. So if you look at verse 5 again, mindful of the fact that God never judges me by comparing me to other people, the text says each will have to bear his own load.

[16 : 49] I'm held responsible for how I do with you folks. I'm held responsible for how I deal with the money that I've been entrusted with from God with my own family.

It isn't that I'm judged in terms of like Bill Hybels with his big church or somebody with a... Like I have my load and I need to deal with my load.

God will judge me in terms of how I deal with the things which have been placed in my care. And, you know, look back at verse 4. But let each one test his own work.

Then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbor. You see that whole idea there about testing your own work and not your neighbor in terms of... That we're so used to judging ourselves in terms of our neighbor.

And we'll talk a little bit in a moment about boasting about himself alone. But just a very simple idea there, right? Remember, the idea is very clear in the Bible that humility is not telling lies about yourself.

[17 : 52] If Einstein said, I suck at math, that wouldn't be humble. If Usain Bolt said, I can't even keep up with a 95-year-old and a walker, he's lying.

And humility isn't telling lies about yourself. It's other things about it, but it's definitely never telling lies about yourself.

And look up at verse 3. For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. And that's all going to be seen in a moment about... We're going to understand how the Bible means it, but we tend to think of ourselves as being nothing and compared to others.

We're something and compared to others. That if I meet a whole pile of pastors and they have churches with only 25 people in them, it's... I mean, this is self-disclosure. You pray for me.

It's easy for me to think I'm something. And if I go to something and everybody there has churches that have like a thousand on a Sunday, I feel like nothing. But God never judges me by comparing me to other people.

[19 : 04] Like, never. Like, never. So, some of you say, okay, George, well, I'm not sure where to go with this.

Well, let's go back to how the text begins in chapter 5, verse 26. It's just a few small words, chapter 5, verse 26, but it's very, very, very powerful, very, very deep, very wise, and very insightful about the human condition.

And it says, let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another. And just so you know, when it says here, let us not become conceited, provoking one another, and envying one another, I guess if I had thought about it, it's not as if there's three things that we have to deal with, conceited, being conceited, provoking others, and envying others, it's a very clear direction that there's this problem with being conceited, and that leads and shows itself in two different ways, provoking other people and envying other people.

Like, it flows from conceit, these other two problems. And so, just to sort of unpack it a little bit, if you could put up the next point, underneath this text, is something which isn't very flattering about the human being, the human person, but it's very true.

I am like you. Yeah, you come here so I can insult you. If the Bible, it's not me, it's the Bible. I am like you. I have glory hunger. I've adapted this idea from something Tim Keller talks about very movingly, and he calls it honor hunger.

[20 : 47] And that is that human beings have this hunger, this desire to be honored, to be recognized, to not just be recognized as, oh yeah, there's old Joe Blow, or oh yeah, there's Sue, but to recognize as, whoa, there's Joe, or whoa, there's Sue.

They're fantastic. They're awesome. They're brilliant. They're beautiful. They're whatever. And every human being has this honor hunger or glory hunger.

And it's not even necessarily something we struggle about because it's almost hard for us as human beings who can't assess ourselves without comparing ourselves to others.

It's almost completely impossible for us human beings to assess ourselves and somehow leave behind this hunger we have for recognition and for honor.

And here's so many places where the Bible is just unbelievably wise. Because, you know, it talks about how in Genesis 1 and 2 how human beings are made in God's image and likeness and how God makes the entire created order for us as human beings to dwell here as our home.

[22 : 02] And he's given us, you know, a role in terms of like almost representing and being the ones who can give voice to the unceasing praise of the mountains and the seas and the birds and the animals and the stars.

And his desire was that he could walk in the garden with us in the cool of the day. And we choose to rebel against God and rather than being able to walk with God in the garden, we decide we want to be like God.

We want to be God because we don't trust God's word. We don't trust that he's going to be good enough. We're going to be God ourselves. And when that happens, there's this bending and this fundamental break in our relationship with God and our relationship with ourselves and our relationship with each other and our relationship with the created order.

And it creates within us because we're creatures made in the image of God. We are created with this hunger to be connected to the one in whose image we are.

a hunger to walk with God in the garden where God in a sense every day as we walk with God in the garden puts his arm around and he says, how's it going?

[23 : 12] I love walking in the garden with you. And because he's God, he can do it for a billion people, seven billion people, 20 billion people, 50 billion people to each one.

We were in a sense made for God to put his arm around you and say, gosh, it's good to walk in the garden with you. I love spending time with you. It's like we have a type of a wound within us.

That hunger for honor, for recognition, for being in glory which can only really be not by being like a God ourselves but by being with the true creator God and sustainer God and that's just gone.

And that's why if you could put up the next point, the word translated as conceit, it's a very, very, very good word but this is actually one of those cases where the old King James version of the Bible actually has a better word.

If you go back and you look up the King James version of the Bible, it doesn't use the word conceit, it uses the word vainglory. That's really old-fashioned. But this word, although I think there's a video game involving lots of mayhem and murder called it, but that's separate.

[24 : 30] So other than people who watch, you know, play those games, it's an old-fashioned word. But I am like you. I desire vain glory, glory for myself in regard to matters that are in reality unrighteous.

So, if I would ever get to do this sermon again, I'm going to use that line a little bit different because there's sort of three ideas behind this idea of vainglory and only one of them is around unimportant matters.

Quite a few years ago when I was in my previous church, which was a rural country church, I was doing a wedding rehearsal one night and I was having a lot of trouble with my Chrysler minivan, my Dodge Chrysler minivan.

And so, the women hadn't arrived but the guys were there. And this is country. Every one of these guys, I mean, they could have built their own sawmill, built their own truck, built their own airplane, wired the house.

I mean, these are like the archetype, burly, country, handy guys. So, I think we have a few moments. I'm going to ask one of them to come over, the groom, the future groom, to come over and have a look at my van which is giving me some problems and he saunters over in his jeans and his cowboy boots and he looks at it and for the next five minutes, and his buddies and the dad and all, they come behind him and for the next five minutes, he ragged on me for being so stupid as to buy a Chrysler.

[26 : 05] And basically, if you're stupid enough to buy a Chrysler, there's nothing you can do for something which is a Chrysler. And for five minutes, he and his buddies ragged me on this issue and it only ended when it turned out there were about six of them and four of them were Chevy guys and two of them were Ford guys.

So then they ragged on each other for being so stupid to drive a Chevy or a Ford. And, you know, it was as if it was a point of importance to them that they're not stupid like other people.

And this was in the early 90s. They would have gotten very foul-mouthed if it came to Japanese vehicles, let me tell you. Had to be American, North American.

And so, but here's the thing, okay? So this word which we translate in our Bible here is conceit which could also be translated as vainglory. One of the aspects of vainglory is that we think we're important because of things which are completely and utterly unimportant.

There was a thing in the National Post just a week or two ago and to my amazement it said that a lot of women in their 20s spend \$300 a month on makeup.

[27 : 20] I wish, I couldn't believe it. Imagine the better Chevy you could get with an extra \$300 a month. But I couldn't believe it so I asked one of my kids and they said, yeah, yeah, that's very, there's a lot of young women who spend \$300 a month on makeup and then they said, you should be so glad you have me as your daughter and you're married to Louise and I'm very grateful for them as my daughters and Louise because they definitely don't spend \$300 a month on makeup.

But people can be very proud about that but makeup? Your ability to put on makeup? You know, you read style magazines and people are proud about their ability to pick out the right color or proud about their ability to pick out the right whiskey or proud about their ability to pick up the right coffee or whatever it is or the anti type of stuff.

You know, we don't waste our money on all that stuff. We go to Costco or wherever, whatever the hipster reaction is. But so part of vainglory and judging yourself to other people is a pride over things which don't matter at all.

If you don't know this, you've heard me say it before, God never judges you by how much money you make. He doesn't judge you and say you're bad if you're poor and good if you're rich or bad if you're rich and good if you're poor and he doesn't judge you in terms of whether you have 10 extra pounds or 20 extra pounds or whether you're too skinny.

He doesn't judge you on how many muscles you have or whether you're good looking or whether you're ugly. He doesn't judge you on whether you're smart or whether you're dumb or your IQ's high, your IQ's low, your EQ's high, your EQ's low.

[28 : 50] None of those things which matter so much to us does God ever judge us on. And we really think we're something on a lot of those issues and that's vain glory.

And the other aspect of vain glory is that it's a desire for, it's a desire to be seen by others as being important.

In effect, it's a desire by others to be seen by others as if you're somehow a little bit of a God and there it's a matter of, that's a vain pursuit, right? It would be like, like a vain pursuit would be, I don't know, like a football analogy to Cleveland Browns trying to win the Super Bowl this year or next.

That's a vain pursuit. There's no hope in it whatsoever. If they win it next year, that would be really, I'm not a prophet, okay? If they win it next year, that would be shocking.

But a vain pursuit. And then the third aspect of it is it just means vain in the sense of self-centered and conceit. A vain person. And it's all captured in the original language and it's all wonderfully captured in this word vain glory, which I understand why they don't translate it because it's an old word and has to be explained.

[30 : 04] And so what the Bible is saying is, I am like you. I desire vain glory. Glory for myself in regard to matters that are in reality unimportant. Or I desire vain glory because I'm vain.

I just think there's something unbelievably special about me. Or I desire vain glory because I want to have everybody honor me. I have an honor hunger. I have a glory hunger. And I walk around with this glory hunger and honor hunger all the time.

But some of you might say, George, I so wish my husband could hear this because you've just described him perfectly.

Or I just so wish my dad could hear this because you've just described him to a T. But George, I've been beat up by people like that all my life.

And that's not my problem. Let's listen to the text again. Remember I said, let us not become conceited or let us not become vainglorious.

[31 : 10] Remember I said that in the language it then says there's two different things that flow from it. provoking one another or envying one another. If you could put up the next point. So here's what the Bible has said. When I believe I am doing a great job in attaining vain glory.

I know Scotch so much better than everybody here in the room except one person. Like just, you know, come on. Give me the kudos, right? When I believe I am doing a great job in attaining vain glory, I provoke people.

And the word provoke here in the original language it means challenge people, irritate people. bother people. But when I believe I am doing a poor job in attaining vain glory, I envy other people.

In other words, many of us who struggle with inferiority complexes, our problem is we have a vain glory project and we just suck at it.

Or we think we suck at it so we're depressed. And other of us have the exact same vain glory project but because we think that it really matters whether you buy your coffee at Starbucks or Tim Hortons, we think we're better than other people.

[32 : 23] Like how stupid is that? That's why the text says we deceive ourselves. Like we deceive ourselves all the time. And you see, this is a very, very unbelievably insightful Bible passage.

And it's also, by the way, it's also a little bit, see it's also very, very helpful because people are complex. You know, like, so what can happen is, so, you know, I think there can just be somebody, some people are just so beat up by life that they're basically almost always doing, thinking they're doing a poor job of attaining vain glory.

And there's other people who basically all the time think they're doing a spectacular job and so they're dealing with provoking people all the time. But most of us, we're a mixture of these things. So it might very well be that at work, the husband thinks he's really spectacular.

No, sorry, got this wrong. It might be that at work, he looks at himself and he thinks, I'm not getting the promotions I should be getting and I don't, I can't drive, you know, I'm stuck driving a Ford Ranger and I'd really like to have enough money to buy an F-150 or an F-250.

And so they're comparing themselves to other people and they feel insecure, inferior, and envious at work, but they go home and they think their wife's a loser and they feel superior.

[33 : 56] And so they go through their day and they're a week like a yo-yo. They leave the house and they feel inferior, they come home and they feel superior.

And you can multiply this with friendships, with sports, with all sorts of things, is that we can go from one to the other. But the fundamental problem is that we have a God project and a glory hunger and an honor hunger that's completely and utterly unexamined and isn't being killed.

and isn't being replaced by something else. So, you know, I don't say all this to depress you. I mean, think of all of us. If you could put up the next point, great.

In the midst of our pursuit of vain glory, God, the Son of God, emptied himself and died for us to save us. In the midst of my pursuit of vain glory, God, the Son of God, emptied himself and died for me to save me.

I mean, you think about the gospel for a second. This is what's so completely counter to how we think in terms of comparing ourselves to others and having an honor hunger is that the Bible describes it from, in Philippians 2, it's very powerfully put that from all creation, God, the Son of God, the second person of the Trinity, he lives in glory and majesty and splendor and divine prerogatives and he has this unceasing love and affection with God, the Father and the Holy Spirit is like the love between the Father and the Son and is his own person and there's just, and God, and God, the Son of God, out of love for human beings like you and me who've rebelled against God, turned our back on God, shaken our fist at God, broken ourselves, are walking around with vain glory projects, glory hungers, honor hungers, comparing ourselves to each other and dumping on each other and dumping on ourselves and that's what we're doing and God, the Son of God, looks down at us and sees that we cannot fix ourselves and so out of love for us, he doesn't yell at us but he sets aside his glory and he sets aside his honor and he sets aside his divine prerogatives and he sets aside everything that even makes himself look like God and he sets all of this aside but he remains in his fundamental nature God and he enters the womb of Mary taking into himself our human nature and God, the Son of God, the creator of all things, the sustainer of all things, the shaper of all things, of unbelievable glory and majesty that when we enter the new heaven and the new earth as redeemed individuals, we will spend all of eternity and not exhaust the beauty and the glory and the majesty of God and that same God, the Son of God, enters the womb of Mary emptied of all but that which continues to make him God but he empties himself of all appearances and his emptying continues by living a human life in a remote corner of the Roman Empire under a conquered people and he empties himself even further by dying on the cross and on the cross he bears your burdens and mine, he bears your load and mine, he bears your curse and mine, he bears our shame, he bears our sin, he bears our death, he bears our rebellion with nothing left over that continues to be poured into him as he empties himself and tastes all there is to taste of death and even for our sake tastes abandonment from the Father and he does it all to save you and me.

[38 : 23] Could you put up the next point? Only God can save me and only because he loves me and only by what he did by his son's death upon the cross and only, and it only becomes mine by faith in his promise to save.

Just like a little kid, if you go out after the service and with the parents' permission and you say, if you just put your hand out, I'll give you ten bucks. And that little kid has to not just have faith that you're a rich guy or a rich gal, but that you do it and they put their hand out and you put it in, the ten bucks in.

And that's the same thing with salvation. God accomplishes something in the person of his son and the work of his son and he tells us that he's accomplished it for us and faith is putting our hand out to God and he puts that in our hands.

So how does this story help as we're gripped by the gospel, as the Bible comes into our lives, as we think about the gospel and in thinking about the gospel, that we now start to desire that we want to have God's word written in our heart because the gospel now, what does this text say?

This text says something to those of us who feel superior over others. This text tells us those of us who struggle with feeling, who don't even struggle with feeling superior over others, but this text tells you and me who think we're superior to others and just think it's natural that our situation apart from grace was unimaginably worse than we could ever imagine.

[40 : 14] the worst nightmare that Hollywood or writers or poets could imagine does not even begin to come close to our desperate need and the horror of our situation.

Therefore, all superiority should be broken. And this very same gospel story tells those of us who struggle with feeling that we are losing the battle, that all we can do is envy.

We just feel inferior. We've come to a point in our lives where we just feel inferior. And this same gospel story tells us that you are loved by God.

That no amount of pride can even start to... No amount of narcissism. No. You are loved by God in a way which you will spend all of eternity with God experiencing His love for you and all of eternity with God experiencing His love for you and it will not come to an end because it is so inexhaustible.

And as we're gripped by the gospel with what Jesus did for us on the cross and as from that perspective God's word starts to get written on our heart it begins to shape us and give us the place to stand to deal with all sorts of things that we could not deal with before.

[41 : 51] It nudges us to put a death to our superiority it nudges us to put a death to our inferiority it nudges us into the places that the rest of this text tells us to go to that when we see a brother or a sister caught in some trespass that rather than us on one level secretly gloating and saying well I'm more superior than them the desire is to restore them conscious that we ourselves are beset by sins and when we see somebody bearing a burden and rather than feeling that we're superior because that's such a big burden that there starts to be a nudging or a shaping that maybe I should get up close and personal that person and help them carry that burden because in the gospel Jesus carried my burden didn't he and maybe for those of us who are too proud to confess that we have burdens the gospel will start to shape us in a type of humility to say it's not wrong to say to another person brother or sister

I have a burden I'm having a hard time carrying could you pray for me or maybe even help me and that in such a context that maybe we I can test myself and if I test myself it's not by thinking about myself do I preach as well as Matt Chandler or Tim Keller but how am I doing compared to a year ago and it's maybe not you know have I put on five pounds that I don't want or lost five pounds that I wanted to lose but gosh Lord how am I doing with the fruit of the spirit do I love more and better than I did a year ago am I more patient than I was a year ago am I more gentle than I was a year ago you see as as the gospel grips us and the Holy

Spirit then starts to use that gripping to write God's word in our hearts God God works to start to free us because wouldn't it be so freeing to be a human being who doesn't miss social cues but no longer thinks that we have to compare ourselves to others but can carry our own load in light of the God who loves us and sent his son to die for us just to I have other points just I'm just going to put them up and then we're going to pray next one Andrew every Christian has burdens don't believe health and wealth gospel people who tell you that you can come to a state of being filled by the Holy Spirit you no longer have burdens Bible says they're wrong every one of us here has burdens we will always have burdens they'll change but we'll have them next one the Lord the Lord did not redeem me to bowl alone but to be part of a one another local church home a one another church home where we learn to bear each other's burdens you know pray into this for us as

Messiah next one no one deceives me better than me myself and I I mean this text is inviting us to call out to the Lord to show us each of us and as a congregation how we're deceiving ourselves not how my wife is deceiving me or my boss is deceiving me or my friend is deceiving me or the prof is deceiving me I mean you can keep praying about that if you want but most of us spend ten times hundred times a thousand times praying about that and rather asking the question father how do I deceive myself please stand just as as we go into this I don't know where you are in all of these things but I just want to assure you of one thing the gospel is for you if you're here and you think George if you knew some of the terrible things I've ever done you wouldn't think the gospel is for me and all I can tell you is you're right I don't know the terrible things you've done but God knows them and God knew them when he sent his son to die on the cross for you and if some of you are saying

George if you knew how much of a failure I am in so many areas of my life you wouldn't think the gospel was for me and you're right I don't know how much of a failure you are in all those areas but God knows him and still he sent his son to die on the cross for you there is no one here so broken or so successful so rich or so poor so sinful or so self-righteous that Jesus did not die for you on the cross and there is no time better than right now to call out to him for mercy to thank him for what he's done for you on the cross and to believe his promise that if you put out your hand what he has accomplished for you in the person of Jesus that that will come into your hand and into your life and into your mind and into your heart and into your soul and into your body and that God will never let you go there is no better time than right now to do that business with God let's bow our heads in prayer father you know that most of us aren't even struggling with self-deception and we ask father that your holy spirit would start to use your word and the gospel to reveal that to us but father we thank you so much that you are a gentle God and a loving God and you won't do it in a way that unmakes us but father bring that home to us so that we might cling to

[47 : 55] Jesus and cling to your word and cling to your promises and father you know those of us who haven't even begun to deal with our vain glory project our glory hunger and and suffer under inferiority or superiority and father you know the marriages which are in danger over issues like this and you know father the jobs that are in danger over things like this and the friendships that are in danger over over things like this father even know the ones who are cutting themselves over issues like this or thinking of suicide over issues like that father you know each one of our hearts and we ask father that you're that the holy spirit would be poured out upon us and that you would make us disciples of Jesus who are gripped by the gospel gripped by the gospel and learning to live free for your glory and all this we ask in the name of Jesus your son and our savior amen you you you you you you you you you you you