

Joshua 5 "Knowing the True and Living Lord Changes Everything"

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Date: 27 September 2026

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[0:00] Hi, my name is George Sinclair. I'm the lead pastor of Church of the Messiah.

! It is wonderful that you would like to check out some of the sermons done by Church of the Messiah, either by myself or some of the others. Listen, just a couple of things. First of all, would you pray for us that we will open God's Word well to His glory and for the good of people like yourself?

The second thing is, if you aren't connected to a church and if you are a Christian, we really, I would really like to encourage you to find a good local church where they believe the Bible, they preach the gospel, and if you have some trouble finding that, send us an email. We will do what we can to help connect you with a good local church wherever you are. And if you're a non-Christian, checking us out, we're really, really, really glad you're doing that. Don't hesitate to send us questions. It helps me actually to know, as I'm preaching, how to deal with the types of things that you're really struggling with. So God bless.

Let's just bow our heads in prayer for a moment. Father, once again, we come to a passage of Scripture Father, which sort of shocks us, shocks our sensibilities. But Father, we know that even when you shock us, you shock us to wake us up, to help us to sit with your Word and learn its precious truths. So Father, we ask that your Holy Spirit would bring this Word from your Word deep into our hearts, that you might form us through your Word in the power of the Holy Spirit to your honor and glory.

And we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Please be seated. So I grew up in a Christian home. And like a lot of people, when I became a teenager, I started to drift away, in fact, wander away from the Christian faith. And I really was not interested in being a Christian. I had a different type of thing planned for my life as I was going forward.

[2:17] All within the limits of being a fairly meek teenage kid. Meek for a teenage guy, let's put it that way. You might, I'm sure my parents thought I was a huge pain in the whatever. But I then started to be from a, just out of, completely out of left field. I started to be interested in Christianity again.

And I went through about a one-year period of going to certain things and hearing certain speakers as I was becoming more and more drawn to the Christian faith. And I fought it. I fought it for the whole year. And the reason I fought it, there are several reasons why I fought it. Three different types of fears that I had about becoming a Christian.

And none of them were because I didn't want to be like my parents. That's a, that's a whole other developmental issue. It had nothing to do with that. Three fears. The first fear was, I didn't want to be weird. I mean, I didn't want to necessarily fit in with everybody, but I did have a type of cultural group that I really liked and wanted to get more and more involved in. And I wanted to be able to fit in with them. And I was worried that I wouldn't be able to do that if I became a Christian, that I would appear weird to them. The second thing that made me hesitate about becoming a Christian, and not just hesitate, like actually in hindsight fighting it, keeping it at arm's distance, was that I was pretty convinced that if I became a Christian, the Bible and Christ would tell me that certain things I really wanted to do, I couldn't do. And I didn't like that because I wanted to do those things. And I knew that I became a Christian. He would be always saying, no, no, George, you shouldn't be doing that. And then the third reason was probably connected to both of them. I had a, I didn't want to lose control. I didn't want to lose control. I wanted to, in fact, you know, as a teenage boy, what I really wanted was to grow in control, not lose control. And so I pushed Christianity away for, for, well, for six months, nine months before I finally became a Christian. I mention all of that because the text

that we're going to look at in a couple of minutes, which, which Chris read for us, is a text that probably, I wouldn't be surprised if none of you have ever heard a sermon preached on it. It's a very weird text.

And it's quite brutal and filled with blood and gore. And, and it touches on a lot of these fears that we have about becoming a Christian. And if you're visiting with us, or if you're listening online, you might not know this, but it's a constant issue for Christians that it's almost like there's a little voice, not, not God's voice, but a little voice in our ears that say, be careful, be careful, don't get too close. He's going to hurt you, you know, maintain some control. And so this is touching at some very deep levels. And so it would be a great help to me if you turned and took out your Bible and it's going to be Joshua chapter five, Joshua chapter five. And just rather than jumping in with giving you a little bit of the context of the text, we'll just read the first verse. And then that gives a very good opportunity for us to just think about the context that's gone on before this in the story.

[5:37] Joshua chapter five, verse one. As soon as all the kings of the Amorites, who were beyond the Jordan to the west, and all the kings of the Canaanites who were by the sea, heard what the, heard that the Lord had dried up the waters of the Jordan for the people of Israel until they had crossed over. Their hearts melted and there was no longer any spirit in them because of the people. So one of the things that was that when we looked at last week, it was chapters three and four, and the Lord did a series or a set of very, very powerful miracles. And we talked a little bit, you can go back and listen to the sermon about how there, if you took miracles out of Christianity, there would be no Christianity.

It's absolutely essential. And the Christian miracles aren't like miracles of other groups where nobody else saw the tablets or nobody else saw this trip or anything like that. They are, they're public types of miracles. And the miracle was that God said to the eight, to the people of Israel, we're going to cross into the promised land. And so I want you to stand 800 meters back from the priests. The priests are going to carry the Ark of the Covenant. And this, the Jordan River is overflowing its banks because it's the spring. So the winter, you know, all the extra rain and all the extra, you know, the melt up in the mountains, all making the river quite a bit wider. And the priests are going to step. And as soon as the first priest puts his feet in the water, the water is going to stop.

And you're going to be able to cross over in dry land. And that's what happened. And I talked a little bit about how if you go back and look at it, the story sells the miracle. The language isn't the language of once upon a time. They give dates. The language is, in fact, like historical types of language. It's clearly not a metaphor. It's clearly not a vision. And in fact, the story not only is the story in historical type of language, it's actually a very intricately written story with time shifting and everything like that. And so that's what happens that the priests put their feet. I mean, that's the claim of the book. And I believe it happened that the priests put their feet in the water, the Jordan stops. And the very first miracle is that the Jordan stops. The second aspect of the miracle is it's not like if there's a couple of you who are very, very handy. And if we had to put a blockage across a stream for some reason to do something for a short period of time. And as soon as you put the blockage on the stream, the water piles up right from the blockage and gets higher and higher right there. But in this particular case, the water stops. So if you imagine that the water is about this high, it just stops and stays at that height. And the water doesn't back up right here like normal water would.

It backs up farther downstream. That's the second aspect of the miracle. And the third aspect of the miracle is that if you've ever come to maybe, you go to somewhere by the, you know, where there's salt tides or something like that. And as the tide goes back, what's left is mud. And what doesn't, what's not there is mud. They cross on the dry land. And it's a very, very major miracle. And we see now with this that it's a pub, another, it's really is a public miracle because the kings of the Amorites, excuse me, it's allergies, which I'm coughing by. For those of you who suffer from allergies, September, October is one of the worst times of the year. So I'm, I'm feeling fine. It's just my allergies.

Anyway, the, so the, the, the, the pagan kings, because this is a public thing, can't be done sort of in a corner, secretly, imaginary water is stopping in an imaginary way, way, way, while you play make-believe. It's public, they see the water backing up, they see, they have lots of reports of the land being dry. And, and how, and that's how they react, what we see in verse one.

[9:41] And if you just look down a little bit towards the end of verse one, it says their hearts melted, and there's no longer any spirit in them because of the people of Israel. So not only do the, the pagan rulers see that a really, really remarkable miracle has happened, several, a set of them. They also, the language in the, in the original language, there's a sense that God's, they feel God's presence.

They feel God's presence at the same time. They not only see what God has done, but they actually feel the Lord's presence. And the response to it is to be afraid. And as we're going to see in subsequent chapters, their response is either going to be to try to hide or to fight. Not actually say, one moment, like, maybe the Lord actually exists. Like, that's, like, this is just astounding. Like, maybe we should find out about the Lord. That's not their response. They're not like Rahab, who's in chapter two. Their response is to fight or to hide. And so, it's a very, very public miracle. And they have a sense of the Lord's presence, but it creates within them a type of anxiety and unhappiness. So what's going to happen next? Well, if we were writing this in a Hollywood movie or something, I don't know, maybe there'd be a little bit of, you know, domestic drama or something like that. You'd pause to get to relate to some people, find out that, you know, some people like dogs or some like cats or they like playing with their children or whatever. And then they'd move in to take over the land. But the whole thing takes a very, very bizarre turn, at least from a Canadian point of view. It's a bizarre turn. Let's look at what happens next. It's verses two to nine.

The chapter five has, in a sense, four parts. The thing about the kings and the next three parts are all going to get a little bit at how do you respond to the Lord? How do you respond to an obvious display of God's existence, his presence, and his power? How do we respond? And, but here's where it gets to it. Look at verse two. At that time, the Lord said to Joshua, make flint knives and circumcise the sons of Israel a second time. Now just pause. One of the problems with ESV, the glory of the ESV is it's quite literal. The problem with it sometimes is it's quite literal. And so really what this should be translated as, it's a bit of an idiom. And what it really means is the next generation. Let's let's circumcise the next generation. And so verse three, so Joshua made flint knives and circumcised the sons of Israel at Gilbiath Harloth. Now just one other thing. I think the writers, the translators, the ESV wimped out here. What they should really have done is given you the full gory name. They named where this happened, the Hill of Foreskins. That's what it means literally, if you translate it into English, it's the Hill of Foreskins. So Joshua is commanded by the Lord to circumcise with a flint knife. And as we'll see in a moment, it's every male between eight days old and 40 years old are commanded to be circumcised, cutting off their foreskins. Verse four, and this is the reason why

Joshua circumcised them. All the males of the people who came out of Egypt, all the men of war, had died in the wilderness on the way after they had come out of Egypt. So all the people who came out had been circumcised, yet all the people who were born on the way in the wilderness after they had come out of Egypt had not been circumcised. For the people of Israel walked 40 years in the wilderness until all the nation, the men of war who came out of Egypt perished because they did not obey the voice of the Lord. The Lord swore to them he would not let them see the land that the Lord had sworn to their fathers to give us, a land flowing with milk and honey. And I'll explain a little bit more about the significance of this in a moment, but it's a very bloodthirsty thing. There would have been blood everywhere. Blood everywhere. This is done, I'm going to make the story worse rather than better. There's no anesthetic. And referring to the original miracle, I mentioned a couple of weeks ago that the original miracle of the parting of the Red Sea, which is a similar miracle, the people who came through that after all of the miracles that God had done earlier and this remarkable miracle, when it came to the border of the Promised Land, they basically thought in terms of their own strength that they couldn't do it. They never thought to ask themselves, good grief, if there is a God that does exist and whose name is the Lord and he's actually able to part the Red Sea, then surely he can bring us into the Promised Land. And so they spent seven, 40 years in a sense in rebellion against the Lord.

[15:02] And given that, as we'll see, circumcision is a sign of obedience to the Lord, that's why there was no circumcisions for 40 years. Verse 7, so it was their children whom he raised up in their place that Joshua was circumcised, for they were uncircumcised because they had not been circumcised on the way.

When the circumcising of the whole nation was finished, they remained in their places in the camp until they were healed. No kidding. And the Lord said to Joshua, today I have rolled away the

reproach of Egypt from you. And so the name of that place is called Gilgal to this day. Now, from a Canadian point of view, everything about this is barbaric. Right? I mean, I'd be just try to think about getting your neighbours together to study this passage. Or your co-workers. It's a, from a Canadian point of view, this is a very barbaric thing. Canadians have a hard enough time whether or not to have an eight-day-old baby circumcised, but with a flint knife, 40-year-old men. Again, that's a no-go zone. A no-go, a no-go, and that actually, yeah, it's a no-go zone. So what's, it seems crazy, it seems barbaric. I began my sermon by saying one of the reasons I didn't want to become a Christian was that I thought he'd make me do weird things and things that would hurt me. Ta-da! This text. So what's going on? Well, let's think of two conversations first, and then I'm going to draw out some truths. Just two imaginary conversations. So the circumcision is the ritual by which you enter into the covenant people. You become gods. You belong to God. Using modern Christian language, it's a little bit like being adopted by God. And that's what circumcision is all about. And so conversation one is this.

[17:11] I'm talking to Louise, you know, this is like when I'm, you know, 40, 42, 43, 44, and I'm talking to Louise. And I say, Louise, boy, I didn't know this was part of the deal, that I have to get circumcised with a flint knife. I'll be honest with you, Louise, I really thought that's something that God had decided he wasn't going to do anymore. And I don't know what I think about it. I think I might want to give this a pass. And I could just imagine Louise saying, George, George, the only way me and your four daughters can become part of the covenant people is if you get circumcised. You won't do that for me? In a sense, man up. That's one type of conversation that might have gone on. Second conversation, which is the more traditional Canadian conversation, would be something like this. Husband and wife are saying, boy, I thought this stuff was all over. I thought we'd moved into a new thing. God was going to do something new. I didn't realize this was part of the deal. And the woman says to the man, listen, don't do it for me. Like this is just crazy talk, you know, just crazy talk. Don't do it for me. And then the man stops and thinks for a second, and he says, one moment. If you just use your imagination for what the miracle was like, you're walking along and the water's this high and there's an invisible wall stopping the water water and it's not piling up. And you might even be able to see fish.

And you walk by on dry land. And in the second conversation, maybe one of the two of them says, one moment. Like that's so many miracles. The Lord did this. Like only if the Lord exists, you do that. And if he really means he's the Lord, it means there are no other gods and goddesses. It means there is no other. It means he is the Lord of heaven and earth.

He's the one, he actually exists. And he's shown that he's all powerful and he's shown that he's merciful. And so maybe I shouldn't evaluate this by my criteria, but by his. And that's the hard discipleship question.

See, for us as Christians, who would accept these miracles because we accept the big miracle, which is the incarnation, which of course is hard to prove, but the resurrection of Jesus, the big miracle of the resurrection. Like if that really happened, if it really happened, and everything in the gospels, it's historical language, not make-believe language. There's a wide number of witnesses. There is the explosive growth of Christianity. Right where it happened, it's the fact that this miracle of the death and resurrection of Jesus happens at a time when the city's crowded, not when it's empty, not way out in the wilderness. You just got to take these guys' words for it. And several of these people, most people, many people will die for a cause, but most people won't die for a fact. And the fact is that several of these early witnesses of the resurrection died for that fact. Yes, he really did die on the cross. Yes, he really was buried. Yes, he really did rise from the dead. And yes, I did see him. And you can't tell me that that didn't happen. It happened. I'm willing to die for this because it's so important and remarkable.

If this is true, it means that Jesus is God. It means the way that Jesus describes God is the proper way to describe God. It means that God actually exists. And if God actually exists, then really what I need is not to have criteria that make sense to me that act as if God doesn't exist, but to start to trust his criteria. And so they go ahead and get circumcised.

[21:46] Now, I mean, on one level, we don't really know exactly why God chose this particular means for those in the Jewish people before the death and resurrection of Jesus, why this was the mark that would be placed on people as part... Like, I don't know why he didn't do something else. I don't really know why, but I can explain what the whole thing means. Okay? And just before this, one of the things is that it's very important that the people of Israel take out 12 of the river stones

from the bottom of the river, and they're placed in Gilgal, the same place that the circumcision is happening. And they're said that this is a teaching opportunity for all eternity because...

Or for ages and ages and ages, because God's not going to be performing mighty miracles every day, every week, every month, every year. Very remarkable public miracles like this are going to be a little bit rare. But these stones are there so that in the future, when my kids are walking with me by this, and they say, hey, Daddy, why are those stones there? And I say, those stones remind me and remind you and everybody else that God did... The Lord did a mighty miracle to stop the Jordan River so that we could cross on dry land. That's what they're there for. That's a public type of memorial.

Circumcision is a beautiful expression of the promises of God. In a sense, circumcision is like a memorial. And while you need public memorials that families and communities can all remember, and you need memorial actions, which we're going to talk about in a moment, it's also really important, it's part of the wisdom, actually, of the Bible, that you need private and personal memorials.

So in a sense, every time a man was to look down there, or his wife, it is a visible expression of the promises of God. That I will be your God, and you will be my people. And I will love you, and I will care for you. And I, in me, I will make sure the end of your story is a glorious and a beautiful story. It's a private, personal, behind-closed-doors reminder. The circumcision declares God's covenant promises to his covenant people. And not just covenant people as an abstraction, but George, as a citizen of that covenant, as a citizen of that covenant, under the Almighty God, my Father in Heaven, who loves me. It's a private remembrance. It does not symbolize my obedience. It does not symbolize my sacrifice. The circumcision isn't a rite of passage. It's not magic. It's not showing a test in my bravery. It's showing none of those things. It symbolizes God's promise to me, and it summons me to obey him. That's how a Jewish person should have understood it at this time. In some ways, that's exactly what I think of our baptism. Our baptism isn't my accomplishment. The baptism is pointing to God's accomplishment, and God calling me into a new covenant with him through faith in Jesus Christ.

[25:22] And in a sense, whenever we do a baptism, and we're called to remember our own baptisms, we are called to remember. We're called to remember. I am called to remember that God has made promises to me, and he will keep them, and it summons me to obey him. It is a personal and private memorial that summons obedience. Now, in historic Christian thinking and reading, baptism and circumcision are the Old Testament and New Testament correlate. So circumcision is how you entered into, in a sense, the people of God known as Israel. Baptism is the means by which you enter into this new covenant people. In theory, a Jewish man who becomes a Christian is both circumcised as part of the people of Israel and baptized as part of this new covenant people. And the next bit, which is the Passover, the equivalent in the New Testament is the Lord. So the miracles and promises that God has made grounds everything that happens in this. The only way to understand how it is that all the men 40 and under would actually get circumcised is if it's grounded in the miracle. Otherwise, it makes no sense.

It's a cult-like thing of mass hypnosis and loss of efficacy and loss of power. But this is the exact opposite of that. The miracle grounds the obedience. And the miracle begins to reorient you as to what the real world is like. The real world is not the world described by CBC and the mainstream media and academia, where there is no God, or if he does exist, or she exists, or it exists, or they exist, they're just sort of up there doing their own thing, and it's all up to us to take our power. And we're the ones who form things and do things. No, in the real world, there is a God who does exist, and he is the Lord. And he has revealed himself like this to Israel. He has revealed himself by miracle and prophecy and wisdom throughout the generations, and he has most perfectly revealed himself in the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. And to live in a world as if there is no God who desires to be your father, is not living in the real world. It's not.

So the second thing, you know, I said there's not only the public memorial, which is the stone, the private memorial of the circumcision, but there's also, in a sense, a remembering, an action, that for the Jewish people is once a year for Christians, depending on your church, four times a year to every Sunday, depending on the type of tradition you're from. And that's what's described next.

Look what happens in verse 10. While the people of Israel were encamped at Gilgal, they kept the Passover on the 14th day of the month in the evening on the plains of Jericho. And the day after the Passover, on that very day, they ate the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched

grains, and the manna ceased, the day after they ate of the produce of the land. And there was no longer manna for the people of Israel, but they ate of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year. Passover is the great miracle of the Lord delivering his covenant people out of slavery and bondage in Egypt, the most powerful empire in the world, and he delivers them out of slavery and bondage. Out of that, he desires to them to be free, and in their own land, a land not marked by slavery, not marked by oppression and terror, not marked by lies and myths and misconceptions, not marked by cruelty, but under his rule, where the people are called to flourish under his rule in his presence as his people in the land that he has given them. And he has delivered them out, and that all gets short cut when they refuse to go into the promised land. So in a sense, you know, human sin can postpone things that God wants to do, but it doesn't stop them. And so the people of Israel, just as God had promised, he doesn't say, by the way, I'm going to wait until you with your mighty power and might enter into the promised land.

No, it's always he is going to bring them into the promised land. And even when people completely rebel and completely disobey and completely mock and think they know better and use their criteria and not the Lord's and don't submit or obey or trust him, he still has his way, and it's the very children that they were worried about that are going to enter into the promised land, and the Lord is bringing them into the promised land. And Passover is the remembrance of that profound act of obedience, sorry, that profound act of deliverance that the Lord did for the people of Israel. For Christians, of course, we remember that, we rejoice in that, we celebrate that. That is something that we share with our Jewish friends, that we should recognize this mighty act of deliverance, but we know that it points to a truer deliverance, a greater deliverance. If you think about it for a second, there's all sorts of things in the Passover, the firstborns die, there's all sorts of things that kill children in the natural world. In terms of this particular miracle of the Jordan, engineers can make dams. There's all sorts of ways to stop water from flowing. But Jesus does something that nothing, no human being can do. He dies and experiences all there is to experience of death, and he defeats death, and that which causes death in his resurrection. No one can do this. And the miracle of the resurrection is the culmination of miracles, which helps to explain why the disciples did not believe that Jesus could possibly die on a cross. Apart from the fact that it's something shameful, they would have said to themselves, whoa, one moment, remember how he raised that dead son of that widow in Nain?

[31:42] You know, and remember how he stopped the waves and stopped the storm? And you remember how when he walked on water? And you remember how he healed people with leprosy? And you remember all these times he healed people? There's no way he could die. There's no way he could die. He must be speaking in parables or something like that, because there's no way that he could die. And the culmination of these remarkable public miracles that even his enemies, like even in that story written in the gospel, they had to acknowledge that he did this remarkable miracle. And the culmination of them is this, well, it's the shock of God's love. Why is it that Christians say it was his love that held him to the cross? Because only it has to be his love that held him to the cross. Jesus could endlessly heal the blood that flowed from him. He could endlessly, endlessly, endlessly stop the wounds. He could endlessly do whatever he wanted. It's only his love for us that leads him to die. In the Passover, there is a lamb who dies so that humans can live. In the death and resurrection of Jesus, it is God, the Son of God, who dies, so that all who put their faith and trust in him will live in him in a new covenant. And the great profound truth is that Jesus really did rise from the dead. And if he did, everything changes. The way he taught is the true way, and there is no other. All other ways have to be judged in terms of how close they are to his way. And now there's this tiny thing at the end, which is sort of weird, but it actually gets at whether we get it. Look at verses 13 to 15. An angel shows up.

When Joshua was by Jericho, verse 13, he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man was standing before him with his drawn sword in his hand. And Joshua went to him and said to him, are you for us or for adversaries? Now just pause. As you're going to see later on, it's an angel that appears.

And Joshua asks the very, very common natural human question. Are you for me or against me? For me or against me? It's a very, very common question. And it's very interesting how the response goes in verses 14 and 15. Look what happens. And the man says, no. So Joshua says, for us or against us?

And the man says, no. No. You know, the descriptions are quite fierce, right? They're just, they stick with the details.

You can think in your mind, if we were making a Netflix thing about it, you'd maybe have Joshua's internal conversation. Like, what do you mean no? Like, no to one? Like, what do you mean no? [34:51] And it might be that he's puzzled, and then slowly it dawns on him. Because listen to what the angel says. No. But I am the commander of the army of the Lord. Now I have come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped and said to him, what does my Lord say to his servant? Now this might have taken some time. It might have been Joshua offended, bothered, and then it dawns on him.

See, this is where religion and the gospel part company. This is where you can hear all about salvation by grace in Christ, etc., etc., but on one level, at a deep level, you don't really believe it. It's where we get to the real heart of discipleship over the years as to how you grow. It's moving from the first question to recognizing what the real question is and responding to what the real question is. You see, the normal human question is, are you on my side or against me?

And the real question is, am I on God's side? If I'm on God's side, I can't lord it over people. All I can do is get on my knees and on my face and say to God, what do you say to me? I am your servant. You know, one of the ways I describe what the fear of the Lord is as a Christian virtue is that it's very, very common problem that, you know, I've given money to the church, I've given money to the poor, I've read my Bible, and then God owes me. No, no, God never owes me.

[36:33] I'm completely and utterly in his debt all the time. For all eternity, I am in his debt. Everything I receive is an act of grace from him. And it's very, very easy to start to think that, you know, I would really like this, and I think this is really good, and all my Christian friends think this is really good, and so therefore God must think it's good. No.

No. It's not my good, it's his good. Now, this shouldn't terrify us because we're understanding this in the context. In the story, it's the context of the Red Sea and of deliverance through the Jordan River, and for our context, it's not only that, but on top of it, that God, the Son of God, would come and die for us. There's a Phil Wickham song that has this as his chorus.

My heart will sing, I almost start to sing it, My heart will sing of the King who forgave me, Left heaven's throne, and he suffered to save me. He rolled the stone away, rose up from the grave, Worthy is the name, Jesus Christ.

Hallelujah, he's alive. Hallelujah, he's alive. That's the context of obeying and submitting. It's never, our churches, if we start to think that God's on our side, we're in trouble.

We always have to be saying, no, no, no, no, we need to make sure we're on, it's not that he's on our side, we need to make sure we're on his side. You see, that's, and it starts to change everything about a relationship.

[38:00] You see, like, Morris works, and Josiah works, and if Josiah, for us, right, and Jono, and if Jono thinks, the Lord's on my side, that means he's not, that probably means the Lord's not on my side.

But if all of us are thinking that, then we have trouble, and we're going to always be having conflict. But if the four of us are oriented around making sure we're on the Lord's side, it's a very, very different set of relationships, under the Lord's healing authority.

And, you know, if you think about it, so, you know, so the question then is, it's easy to go through a religious ritual, like circumcision or baptism, it's easy to go through religious rituals, like the Lord's Supper, or the Passover meal, but in our heart of heart, we still really think that this is something, we're just jumping through hoops to get what we want.

And Christ and the Bible and the Holy Spirit, the pressure and the move is to us to understand that we need to be formed by him.

He can never be formed by us. That is delusion. And real wisdom is to be formed by him for his purposes and for his glory.

[39:12] And we have the precious promises of the Bible that as the Lord forms us, the fruit of the Spirit grows in us. And what are the fruit of the Spirit? Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control, not arrogance, narcissism, hatred, anti-Semitism, prejudice, violence, not those things.

He'll form me into love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. He'll form me into desiring to know the truth and to abide in the truth and to never abide

in the lie.

That's how he will form me. And by the way, just in closing, just hearing about this, right? God delivers. We enter into his, to be part of his covenant people for Christians, it's by giving our lives to Jesus, asking him to be our Savior and Lord and say, we want to, Jesus, I want you to be my Savior and Lord and I will trust that you form me.

I will be your servant. Please take me for yourself. And then we remember what he's done for us on the cross through the Lord's Supper. And these things in his word forms us and trying to reorient us. And all of the things in this story, if you think about it for a second, especially the end, it really prepares us to understand how to pray the Lord's Prayer. The Lord's Prayer should be the story of my life.

[40:39] What do we pray in the Lord's Prayer? Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive others. That is a prayer that the Lord has given to form us and it should become the story of our lives.

I invite you to stand. Father, I don't know if there's someone here who's been really drawn to Jesus and maybe they've related to some worries about what would happen.

I ask, Father, that your Holy Spirit would just move gently but powerfully in their hearts, whether they're here or watching online or downstream. And, Father, we ask that you would carry them over that threshold, that your Holy Spirit would so draw them to Jesus that they are able to say, I am your servant.

You are my Savior. You are my Lord. And I am yours. And I will learn to be under you. And I ask, Father, not just for those who might be on the outside of the Christian faith looking in, but we ask for ourselves, Father, that you help us to be completely and utterly reoriented, away from our selfishness of wondering whether you're on our side and acting like you're on our side and humbling us so that we trust your criteria.

[42:18] We trust your wisdom. We trust your view of the world. And we understand that we are regularly to seek to be on your side, on the way that is your way as you draw us day by day through all of the things that we go through in our lives until that blessed time when we appear before you face to face and you welcome us into your forever kingdom.

And so, Father, we ask that your Holy Spirit would do this wonderful work in our lives. And we ask this in the name of Jesus and all God's people said, Amen.