

Joshua 7 "The Make-Believe gods Meet The Real God"

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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.

Father, we ask that you would continue to gently but powerfully pour out the Holy Spirit upon us. Father, pour out the Holy Spirit upon us so that we might have the Bible as you intended to be a mirror, so that we see and understand ourselves truly, and also that it might be to us a window into your great beauty and glory, your grace and your mercy. And we ask these things in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior. Amen. It's, if you hear me stuffed up, it's allergies still, not cold. I feel fine. Just a bit tired.

I had the great privilege and honour on Friday, well, I got invited on Wednesday if I would come and speak on Parliament Hill to some of the Christian staff workers on Friday, and I did that at lunchtime.

[2:04] There were, actually, it was a really full room, 25 plus, maybe up to 30. The room was really full. Every seat was taken, and then some, and it was a great honour and privilege to be invited. And so I, the rule is that if they ask me relatively at the last moment to speak to them, they get a early draft of my sermon.

So I began my talk yesterday, or Friday, by saying, I'm sure none of you working on Parliament Hill have dysfunctional offices where anybody is trying to boss other people around. I'm sure all of you get along in peace and harmony all of the time, no fighting. And I'm sure all of you as well, when it comes to your families, I mean, it's Thanksgiving weekend. I'm sure all of you have really, really, really well-functioning families where everybody loves each other and cares for each other, and there's no fighting. So I said, for you people, nothing in this scripture text today is going to make any sense to you because of your context. But if you have, in fact, dysfunction, etc., etc., at home and in the office, then this text, which on the surface is very shocking, actually has, once again, profound wisdom to us about why it is that I could say that to a group, and everybody knows that in their offices there's some degree of that. And many of them, if they're in a season of not much of that, they know that it's that it's very, very common. So if you turn in your Bibles to Joshua chapter 7, we're looking at the whole chapter. It's not really a Thanksgiving Day sermon. We don't really do Thanksgiving and Mother's

Day and Father's Day here. I mean, I've ordered some of the application points at the end around the idea of Thanksgiving, but we don't, we just, we don't really, I mean, we'll have prayers around it, but the sermon's not a Thanksgiving sermon, although it's actually something that we should really be the most thankful about at all. And I've sort of organized my talk, my sermon today into sort of three sections or three headings. The first one is the shock of the story. The second one would be nailing God. And the third one would be the best option.

Excuse me. And then I was, as I was driving into the Ottawa Little Theatre this morning, I realized in some ways every sermon in Joshua could be divided under those three headings. The shocking story, nailing God, and then the best option. So let's look at that. The first part is the shocking nature of the story, the shock of the story. And so 7-1, I'll read it and I'll give you some of the context. And 7-1 goes like this. But the people of Israel broke faith in regard to the devoted things. For Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took some of the devoted things. And the anger of the Lord burned against the people of Israel. Now, if this was a, like a, you're turning this into a Netflix episode, if you decided, you know, you had the money and you're going to do the book of Joshua as a Netflix series. Sometimes when you watch a series or an episode or a movie, the movie opens with something quite dramatic or some type of big announcement. And you realize that it's really talking about something that will be coming clear five minutes by the end.

[5:32] But it's sort of forming you about something that's happening that hears about the anger of the Lord against the entire nation of Israel. And that takes you in a sense looking over all the events until, like, verse 22 or 23. And then the story will continue. So that's, we the listeners know that this is a story about the anger of the Lord. But the characters in the story don't know that they're walking in a story about the anger of the Lord. And now that obviously brings a couple of questions up.

Because generally speaking, the anger of God is something which Canadians don't like, and they don't like it for lots of good reasons. Because generally when we meet human anger, it's over the top. And probably every one of us knows somebody who's anger driven, or has had a season in their life where they're very, very, very anger driven. So I'm not going to say very much about this other than to say two things. Every time you see the anger of the Lord in the Bible, you need to remember two things. First of all, it's always an appropriate reaction to real evil and injustice. It's always connected to that. It's not connected to him being petty, not getting his own way, being self-centered or narcissistic. It's not a tool for him to keep people distant. All the ways we often experience anger. It's always an appropriate response to real evil or injustice. And the second thing is, God is never overwhelmed by emotion. We can get overwhelmed by lust, by greed, by envy, by anger. God is never overwhelmed by an emotion. So that's all I'm going to say about it. I might say a little bit more about it in the next sermon. The second thing is that you're going to be maybe a little bit confused about what's going on. Because if you look at verse one again, it says, the people of Israel broke faith in regard to the devoted things. And actually, it's really interesting, just a bit of an important aside. The words there broke faith. It's the language of adultery.

The implication is that Israel has committed adultery against her husband. It pictures God as, in a sense, the husband and redeemed humanity as the bride. And it's looking as if the redeemed humanity is committing adultery. And that's sort of all the way through the story, right? That's explaining the whole story. But the people of Israel broke faith. And then it says, Achan did something.

And then the anger of the Lord burns against his people. So that's going to cause lots of difficulty for us as Canadians, and probably for many people throughout the world. And then the people of Israel are going to cause a lot of pain. And then the people of Israel are doing something wrong. And if it's Achan doing something wrong, then why is God, the Lord, mad at all of Israel? And if the Lord is mad at all of Israel, why is he picking on just Achan? And so those questions are percolating in the back of our mind. I want to say one other thing about God not being... I should have said that there were three things about God's anger.

You know, the first one is it's always appropriate response to real evil or injustice. The second thing is that he's never overcome by emotions. And the third thing is, if you want to... How you think about God is really important. And the way that you should fundamentally understand God is not anger, but that he's happy. God is happy. The Bible's described that when you are in the presence of God, you are in the presence of a fullness of joy, that he has eternal pleasures at his right hand.

[9:28] When we are in heaven face to face with God, that will be a place of unending happiness. A happiness that if we were to have even the tiniest little taste of it on this side of the grave would break our heart.

Because it's so... There's so much happiness that it would unmake us. So that's the thing you have to always remember with this, that the way that you fundamentally should understand God is he's happy.

That's his nature. It's joy. Anyway, what happens? So the story's going to begin. And I'm going to tell parts of the story and then we're going to read parts of the story. Tell, read. So what happens next?

That was partially, mainly what Josiah read up now, just before that. What the context is, the people of Israel have come into the Promised Land. God has done a mighty miracle at the Jordan so that they could come into the Promised Land. And just before this, there's been another mighty miracle where God has caused the walls of the city of Jericho to come crumbling down. And Jericho has been defeated, been destroyed. And Rahab and all who are with her, as God promised, because she cast herself on the mercy of the Lord, she's been saved and delivered. And so Joshua decides he's going to go to the next city, which is a small one. He thinks, I don't have to send a lot of people. He sends a few people, relatively speaking. And then they're completely defeated. They run away with their tails between their legs. And the people go through the elders and Joshua are going through a period of just bewilderment because now they're worried that the people of the Canaan will hear that they've suffered a defeat against a very tiny little city state. They are going to gang up on Israel. Israel will be destroyed. And Joshua is wondering, should we have gone back on the other side of the Jordan?

We already have some land there. And maybe that's where we should go. And he's just also really concerned about the glory of God's name, his fame, as it looks like they're about to be defeated. And so then what does God say next? Well, what happens next is what he says. And he doesn't say, yeah, by the way, you guys, you suck. You're terrible. You should have prayed more. He should have done.

[11 : 42] And he doesn't say anything. In fact, a lot of times, pastors who talk about this text, get it all wrong, about Joshua's not praying and all that other type of stuff, the text already tells you why everything, what's going on is over them doing something about the devoted things, not about prayer. So what does God say? Well, verse 10 is what you hear a message from God that he gives to Joshua. The Lord said to Joshua, get up. Why have you fallen on your face? Israel has sinned. They have transgressed my covenant that I commanded them. Now you see covenant. That's like an image of almost like a marriage relationship between Israel and the Lord and his people. That's what God desires.

A type of belonging and intimacy and union. Then it continues, they have taken some of the devoted things. They have stolen and lied and put them among their own belongings. Therefore, the people of Israel cannot stand before their enemies. They turn their backs before their enemies because they have become devoted to destruction. I will be with you no more unless you destroy the devoted things from among you. I just sort of pause before I go any further. I talked a little bit about devoted for destruction last week. The book of Joshua is like ground zero or the front lines of a lot of ex-evangelicals or skeptics about why you shouldn't believe the Bible, why God's a moral monster. And I can't deal with all of them every week, so I sort of pick one or two every week to look at. And if you're curious, you can listen to my previous sermon about that. And I'll talk about it a little bit more, I think, one more time before we're done. But I won't explain that right now, but it's a very sobering thing.

And it continues in verse 13. Get up, consecrate the people and say, consecrate yourselves for tomorrow. For thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, there are devoted things in your midst, O Israel. You cannot stand before your enemies until you take away the devoted things from among you.

In the morning, therefore, you should be brought near by your tribes. And the tribe that the Lord takes by lot shall come near by clans. And the clan that the Lord has taken shall come near by households. And the household that comes near that the Lord takes shall come near man by man. And he who is taken with the devoted things shall be burned with fire, he and all that he has, he has, because he has transgressed the covenant of the Lord, because he has done an outrageous thing in Israel.

[14 : 28] You can see why I said it's not really a Thanksgiving sermon text. It's a very, very sobering text, and it should sober us. It made me think, once again, of this fellow that I've been coming friends with, who's a Muslim, and who's told me he's now read the entire Bible. And he said to me about the Bible, he said, the first part is brutal, and the last part is beautiful. And I'm probably thinking of a text like this when he says the first part is brutal. So it doesn't sound, it sounds extreme.

It doesn't sound like something Jesus would do or say. And it's still all very confusing about why Israel and why that one person and what on earth is going on.

So that's why we're still in the shock of the story. So what happens next over the next eight verses is that the lots, they consecrate themselves, the lots are done. Achan is revealed as being the one who has done this act. It's revealed that he's stolen gold and silver and a beautiful robe.

And he says that he's done it as well. And now we come to what the reaction is after he said that he's done it.

Jump ahead to verse 24. And the text goes like this. And Joshua and all Israel with him took Achan the son of Zerah, Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver, and the cloak, and the bar of gold, and his sons and daughters, and his oxen and donkeys, and sheep, and his tent, and all that he had. And they brought them up to the valley of Achor. And Joshua said, why did you bring trouble on us? The Lord brings trouble on you today.

[16:28] And all Israel stoned him with stones. And they burned them with fire, and stoned them with stones. And they raised over him a great heap of stones that remained to this day. Then the Lord turned from his broken, his burning anger. Therefore to this day the name of that place is called the Valley of Achor. So that leads to the second section. If the first section is a shocking story, like the whole family, right? I mean, it's, it goes to the next section, which is called Nailing God.

We want to nail God for this. We want to indict him for what he's said in this text. And, because it just seems so extreme. So first of all, we actually, like, why is the punishment so extreme? And, and all, well, this isn't going to satisfy all of your questions. But we do need to take a step back and realize that on one level, we aren't as upset with this as we think we are.

We're, maybe that we're not being quite as consistent as we, as we really should be. Imagine that you heard in, on the news or something. I mean, I know, I know only like 10% of you actually listen to the news anymore. So some type of others feed where you get your news. And imagine there's a story about there's a place that's very, very beautiful. The water is always looking very, very still. But underneath the very still water is a current that always takes people, even the strongest swimmer will go to their death. And so there's a big sign in several languages that says, don't go in the water, you will die. Don't go in the water, you will die. And there's a news story about somebody who comes up, looks at the sign, takes their outer garments on, so they're just down to their bathing suit, and then goes into the water and dies. Now, a news story like that would be filled with, like, what is he thinking? They might nominate him as a candidate for the next Darwin

Award, you know, somebody whose death helps to improve the human race so his bad genes aren't carried on, or whatever. But you could say, what on earth would he do after seeing that sign like that and still go ahead in the water? Well, that's a little bit what's going on here. If you turn back with me to Joshua 6, verse 18. Joshua 6, verse 18. And as I tried to explain last week, in terms of the whole story, these verses 17, 18, 19 are very, very important to understanding a lot of things in the text, because there's this dramatic pause between the shouting of the Lord and the walls coming down.

And this is told to everybody, so Achan would have known about it. But you keep yourselves from the things devoted to destruction, lest when you have devoted them, you take any of the devoted things and make the camp of Israel a thing for destruction and bring trouble upon it. So if you take one of the things, you will make all of Israel into a thing of destruction. That's what God says. And it's even more dramatic in the context, because the way to understand the entire book of Joshua is you always have to remember the crossing of the Jordan River and the walls in Jericho. They're dramatic, dramatic, dramatic public miracles, not private little visions, but public miracles. The water stopping, the ground getting dry, the people of Israel crossing, looking at the water stopped miraculously.

[20:13] And now the story of the walls of Jericho, the mighty fortress come tumbling down at the shout of the Lord. Two remarkable miracles. And in the context of that, God says, don't do this. And Achan says, yeah, whatever. Or WTF. I'm going to do whatever I want. You know, what the fire truck, like whatever you, you, you, you, you, he just, that's what he just says to God. He doesn't say, wow, like the Lord really does exist. Like the Lord really is almighty. Like the Lord is all-powerful. Like the Lord is serious.

It's just like a casual aspect of complete and utter dismissal. I want to do what I want. I don't care what you say. I don't care what you do. I want to do what I want. And that is what's going on here

inside this, this, this story. And it's also, if you think about it in the context of that what God desires with his people is an intimate relationship. Even if you don't think, think about it in those terms, you realize that a small thing is sometimes not a small thing, but an indicator of a very serious thing. So for instance, if, if, if one of the Sunday school teachers was watching a brand new teacher deal with the kids, and they noticed the way that one time, they noticed maybe the first and the second time that there's a touching of the teacher with the student and a smile of the, of the teacher towards the student. And the, the other teachers have this sense that sometimes a smile is more than a smile and a touch is more than a touch.

That maybe this is the beginning of a grooming for sexual abuse. And they would tell me about it and we'd have to do an inquiry into it to see whether in fact in that particular case, the smile was more than a smile and the touch was more than a touch.

What's going on here is that as it's revealed in the story, it's not just about the fact that God's out a little bit of gold and a little bit of silver and a robe. But the action is more than just an action.

It reveals something far more deep-seated in Achan and how he understands himself. But some of you might say, well, George, okay, okay, okay, okay, okay. But I mean, gosh, George, you've got to nail God for one for all. Like, why on earth is it that just because Achan does this, like why is, is his family implicated? Why is all of Israel implicated? In terms of the family, it's very simple. You have to take it within the context that the family was complicit.

[22 : 55] It says sons and daughters, not babies, and that they all worked together to hide it. They all knew about it and they were complicit in it. But Achan's the one first responsible for it. But why is it that all these people suffer because of one person's thing? That doesn't make any sense.

So once again, I was at Parliament on Friday talking to Parliament Hill staffers who are Christians or curious about Christianity, I said, out of all the people in Canada, you are the ones who should understand this the best. And I think some of them were a bit surprised. I said, why? Because we all know how important sometimes the leader is. If Trudeau had not resigned, Polly Eve would be the Prime Minister of Canada today.

And I said, you all work for MPs. And if it comes out next week that your MP was a serial sexual abuser of children, the MP would be kicked out of the party and you would all be without a job.

And nobody would be surprised at that consequence, because sometimes the act of one is something that has an act for the rest of them. So, but you might say, okay, well, I sort of, yeah, yeah, I sort of understand that, George. But, you know, it, why is it that God doesn't just take action? Why is it that Israel has to be the ones that stone him? And don't you still think that stoning is like really brutal and like way over the top and too extreme? And why do they have to do that? Well, once again, we all actually understand this and agree with it, believe it or not, maybe not the extreme bit, which I'm still going to get to, but we all understand it. And here's what we would understand. If it came out in the news, I discover in the news that somebody in our church has sexually abused one of our children.

Everybody in the city would say, look at that church of the Messiah. They're all terrible. What would have to happen is that if we don't judge and punish the person, it would show that in a sense we are complicit in it. Why is it that there's so much anger at certain churches and other types of institutions that something like sexual abuse or some other thing happens? And why is there anger towards it? At first it's just because the person, but the real anger comes if it turns out that the higher ups and the body knew about it and did nothing about it. And when they do nothing about it, then they've done it. It means they agree. If it comes out that, you know, somebody on the liberal party has been posting or conservative party has been posting anti-semitic stuff or something like that, and it comes out and the party does nothing about it, then it means the party is anti-semitic.

[25 : 52] That's what it means. If they post something racist and nothing's done about it, it means the party is racist. So we understand this, and that's why Israel had to show that no, they weren't wanting to commit spiritual adultery with the Lord. They wanted to be the Lord's. They needed to act on it. We can understand that at a very, very deep level. But we're a little bit confused, George.

Okay, George, uh, okay, but I'm a little bit confused about the fact that aren't you all about second chances? And aren't you all about the fact that, you know, you can cast yourself on the mercy of the Lord and he's gonna give you forgiveness?

And doesn't Aiken actually, you didn't read the bit, but doesn't Aiken acknowledge that he's done all of those things? Well, he does, but here's where an old Irish saying is very helpful.

And the Irish saying is when somebody says something, like maybe they say, I'm a raging alcoholic, or, you know, some other type of thing. And the Irish saying is, are you bragging or confessing? Are you bragging or confessing? You see, everything in the book of Joshua, and especially after chapter 6, is downstream from what happened to the, to Rahab. And we're going to see this several other times in the weeks to come. But Rahab understands that the Lord has done this mighty miracle, and her response is to cast herself upon the mercy of the Lord, so that she has spared judgment and she becomes his because she realizes that he's the true and living God, and she wants to be his, and she has nothing that she can really offer, and she casts herself on the mercy of the Lord. And Aiken said, yes, I did those things. And Joshua, could you intercede with the Lord for me that he might have mercy on even one like me? But his cry for mercy is not there at all. His confession is bragging.

Not confession. Not confession. And another, the words of his lip are a symbol of bragging, not confession. He doesn't cast himself upon the mercy of the Lord.

[28:12] Okay, George, well, you've dealt with a lot of stuff, but why is it still so extreme? I mean, gosh, it's just some gold, a little bit of silver. I don't know, some Hugo Boss and Armani clothing.

I mean, like, it's not a really big deal. Do you agree with it being so, so, so extreme?

Well, several things you need to understand about this story, because at the end of the day, I agree with it. I agree with it ultimately because it's the Bible, but there's, there's reasons for it. The first thing is that if you read Joshua and you read Judges and you read the rest of the Bible, one of the things that you see is that, first of all, the so-called conquest of the promised land is not really so much a conquest as it is a punishment upon the sin of Canaan. And it's not a sign that God is quick-tempered, because if you go back and read Genesis and read the first, like Genesis 12 to 15, 16, and you'll see that when God promises Abraham this land, he says, I'm not going to give it to you yet because the sins of the Canaanites have not reached that level that it's so offensive to me that they need to be judged. Fast forward 600 years. That's not an example, that's not an example of God being impatient. 600 years later, the punishment comes. So in many ways, it is on one level, the people of Israel coming into the promised land that God has called them, but it is also just as important, a punishment, God's punishment about deep-rooted sin in that whole country which is imbued in their culture, their worship, their politics, their attitudes, their stories, their imagination. It suffuses and infuses everything. The second thing is that the entire conquest is a story of once and done.

It's not a story setting a pattern for the future. It's very, very limited. It's connected to the judgment of the Canaanites, and it's a once and done story, as you see if you read the rest of the New Testament. And so, and the other thing, and the final thing is this, and this is connected to it being a once and done story. You know, we say in the Creed that we believe that God is going to judge the living in the dead. And Christians understand that judging the living and the dead will mean that there is a thing called judgment which leads to something like hell, and it stays very abstract.

It's a story that this story makes it real. The story is a foretaste of the final judgment judgment.

Where those who have lived in rebellion against God, or basically just given God the finger, or said WTF to God their entire lives, they appear before Him face to face, and there is a judgment.

[31:17] And they will die. They will be punished. And that's part of the reason we don't like this story, is because it is a picture of the destiny of all human beings to appear before a holy God.

So now some might say, George, okay, you've explained a lot of those things, but you know what, I could never worship a God. Everything like that, everything about this God is just completely and utterly wrong. I don't think He exists. I think He can't exist. Even if He does exist, I would refuse to worship Him. Every person should turn their back on a God like that. They should want to have nothing to do with a God that's so bloodthirsty and so hard, and everything like that. And if for some reason this came up at your workplace because somebody had come across just Joshua chapter 7 and asked you as Christian what you think about and agree with it, if they were to say that in front of a group of five or six of your co-workers, or if your families aren't followers of Christ, five or six people who are family members who are outside of Christ, and even if a couple of the people there are Christians, they would have their heads down and their eyes down because they wouldn't quite know what to say. When that person says, everything about this story is wrong, a God like that shouldn't exist. Even if He does exist, I'd have nothing to do with Him. And George, if you still defend Him, I will think vastly less of you, and I don't even know if I would want to have anything to do with you. And if that happened to you, you would probably have a period of silence as you look

down because you probably wouldn't know what to say. But here's what you should say. Why is it all right for you to banish God into eternal non-existence, to shame Him and punish Him and accuse Him of wrongdoing, and He can't do that to you? Why is it you can do that to Him and He can't do that to you? Who died and made you God? Who died and made you God? Who died and made you God? And now we start to see why there is often so much dysfunction. Because in a sense, if this was me in the room, and I could say, who died and made you God? [33 : 48] Who died and made you God? Because you all agree with the statement, who died and made you God? Who died and made you God? And because in my heart I understand the sting of the statement, I could say, who died and made me God?

You see, if you have a marriage where both people think they're gods, little gods, that marriage is going to constantly have conflict. In fact, if you have a marriage where one of the two people think they're gods, that marriage is going to constantly have conflict. It's inherently unstable. That's why you have discord. And it's only an act of grace when there isn't. Part of God's common grace. Now we come to that part of the sermon where we talk about the best option. Because many people might say, well, George, okay, that caught me by surprise. And I'm not quite sure what to say about that. But I think you just think you're better than other people. I think you think that somehow or another God won't judge you, or if He does judge you, somehow you're going to have such a good score that nothing happens to you. [34 : 59] And often if a person outside the Christian faith says that about a Christian, often, unfortunately, it's true. Because one of the things is that Christians, despite the Bible, do believe they're better than other people.

And if you're one of those, we should repent of it. Something for you to repent of before you receive communion. What I would say is several things. The first thing about this is the way to read and understand this story in the book of Joshua isn't, what are the principles I could learn to be like Joshua?

You could maybe even have a pastor who sort of just plays around and ignores those little nasty bits, but says, you know, if you want to be like Joshua, what you need to do, you want to be a guy who understands, who hears from God, and is a man of prayer, and is able to be prophetic with people around them.

Well, you need to practice this prayer, and you need to do this, and you need to breathe in through your nose, not through your mouth, and you need to... The point of the story isn't how to become like Joshua. The point of the story is, George, you're Achan.

That's the point of the story. You're Achan. And now it's where we get the hope of this part of the story that sometimes the sin or the virtue of one person can carry over to the many.

[36 : 24] This thing that we all understand that, amongst other things, one of the reasons the Liberals are in power today is because Trudeau resigned and Carney became the head of the Liberal Party.

Sometimes, in a sense, what one person does can carry on for the rest. And some of you have heard this example before. I still think it's the most brilliant example, and it's well worth remembering.

But here's what the Christian hope is. And it's connected to if in 2019, a couple of years before she died, a couple of years before COVID, when she was probably one of the most popular people in the world, the Queen of England, Queen Elizabeth. And if there was a soccer match or a tennis match at Wembley Stadium, and there's 110,000 people in it, and then it's just like a scene out of one of those movies where the terrorists are able to infiltrate, take over the command booth. They're able to put bombs and chains on all the doors. They station snipers at strategic places. And they reveal that the stage for the halftime show that's in the center of the stage actually contains a small nuclear device. And they say that unless you meet all of my demands, we're going to blow up the stadium, and you're all going to die. And if in that case, Victor or Frank or my wife, Louise, one of them was to call up the terrorists and say, listen, why didn't you let everybody go and all sit on the bomb instead? And nothing personal to my wife, Louise, or Victor or Frank. They would just laugh at you because you guys are nobodies. I offered they'd laugh because I'm a nobody. But if the Queen of England called up and said, I will sit on that nuclear device if you let everybody go, they would rub their hands in glee and accept that in a moment. They have the Queen of England on that bomb. They have all of England, all of the UK, all of the Commonwealth, all of the

First World, and even large parts of Russia and China would be gripped by it.

[38 : 30] They have billions when they have the Queen sitting on the bomb. And the good news is that God, the Son of God, who better than God, the Son of God, Jesus, the second Adam, to represent billions and billions and billions and billions of people.

And the Christian hope is not that I can figure out how to not be as bad as Achan. The Christian hope is that Jesus was condemned in my place and died the death I deserve.

And he can truly represent me. And so when he dies on the cross, he is dying in my place. And what he offers me is the life that he deserves that I do not. And that is what is offered in that sacrifice and that exchange. And that is the Christian hope. In my place condemned, he stood. If you could put up the first point, Claire, it would be that exactly. That be thankful that in my place condemned, he stood. Just a couple of things in closing from this about what that means in terms of our daily lives. If the first thing is to be thankful that in my place condemned, he stood. The second thing is that God calls us to never make a treaty with sin.

But he's not telling us to have a type of legalism whereby we always look outwardly like we're righteous, but inwardly we go ahead and do things that are bad or secretly we do things that are bad. He calls us to never make a treaty with sin. In other words, what he says is this, George, you can't be like, okay, I know you used to be like 10 feet deep anti-Semitic. Now you can be like six inches deep. Like that's a sort of a manageable amount of anti-Semitism that you can live with. Or George used to be 10 feet deep of racist. Well, you need to just, you know, that's really hard to manage because you're your friends or, you know, you're anti- like anti-Semitic friends or racist friends. So just be six inches deep of not of racist and and not all of that. You make a treaty with that. Like with greed, with, with, you know, with pornography, with any type of sin. Just, just make a treaty with the George, just six inches deep. Not know the Bible. Jesus is always going to be pushing against that.

[40 : 55] The Holy Spirit is going to be pushing against that. Going to be pushing you to never make a treaty with sin. Never make a treaty with sin. If you could put up the second point, that would be very helpful.

What does it be thankful that in Jesus, the Father always offers true repentance in the Holy Spirit? God calls us not to make a treaty with sin, but he calls us for a long repentance in the same direction that emerges out of mercy and grace, is carried by mercy and grace, and will end with mercy and grace.

But he calls us to a true repentance, a long repentance in the same direction. And if you slip into an anti-Semitic thought, or a racist thought, or an adulterous thought, or a greedy thought, or an angry thought, or anything like that, and if you do that 20 times a day, then at the end of the day you repent 20 times and say, Lord, grant me true repentance in your Holy Spirit that I might amend my life according to your word. Make the gospel more real to my heart, that it is your gospel that drives me to a willingness to repent, because repentance is always the best option. That's the whole section I forgot to say that this third thing is the best option. And then just a final thing, as I've gone just a few seconds over my time, if you could put up the final point. You know, I hope what you see with this is that when you take parts of the Bible that seem most offensive to Canadians, and you press in with them, and trust that God is the author of Scripture, just remember this. Don't ask, what would Jesus do? Although that's obviously a good question to ask. Just remember that when Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead, and he did that because he loves you, he did that because he wants you to come to him, that he can save you, that he can bring you into intimacy with God, a covenant with God, to belong to God, to be in union with God. That's what he wants for you. And Jesus says that ultimately everything in the Old Testament is all about him. And so don't look at the text, and and so the invitation is, if you put up the third point, is to be thankful that the Bible is a mirror and a window and a window, and to treat it that way. So to say, what is this text revealing about me?

The real me. And the other thing is, what is this text? That's the mirror. The window is, how is this text revealing the importance and the glory and the beauty of Jesus, and what my destiny is in him, and how I walk with him. Be thankful that the Bible is a mirror and a window, and read it. Read it by yourself. Read it with others. Read it and pray. Read it with the church fathers. Read it with wise people like C.S. Lewis. But read it and pray, knowing that it's a window, a mirror, and a window. Invite you to stand. Bow our heads in prayer. Father, we give you thanks and praise that you do not weigh our merits, but you pardon our offenses. We give you thanks and praise. We confess before

you the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus, our Lord. And we ask, Father, that you would make the Gospel ever more real to our hearts. And also, Father, make your judgment known and real to us, that we might have a deeper desire to bear witness of Jesus and the beauty of the Gospel to those of our friends who are outside the Christian faith, that we might have a deeper heart and burden to pray that people will come to a saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, because your judgment is real and your salvation is what you desire for people to have.

[45:01] So bring these truths home to us and make us people of prayer and people willing to bear witness to Jesus in the hope that they will come to a saving faith. And we ask these things in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior. Amen.

Amen.