

Good News. God Does Not Love You Unconditionally.

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[0 : 00] Before we pray, last week, if you were here, I asked you to pray for me because next Sunday, I get to speak on one of the favorite topics of Canadians, which is wives be subject to your husbands. And so I was asking that you would pray for me. I realized this week that I should have asked you to pray for me every, I mean, hopefully you pray for me every week. But this week, I get to talk about homosexuality. Next week, wives be subject to your husbands. The next week, slaves, slavery and Christianity. And then I get to talk about demons. So I have four really easy sermons in a row. And so please pray for me every week. Let's bow our heads in prayer. Father, we ask, we give you thanks and praise that you see us as we really are, with perfect clarity, and yet you love us. And we give you thanks and praise that every word that you speak that seems hard is a word that you speak to us for our good and comes out of your desire that we would connect with you and that we would repent and turn to Jesus and receive those far vastly better things that you have in mind for each of us. We ask that the Holy Spirit would fall with might and power and deep conviction as we think upon your word. Lead us to Jesus. And this we ask in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior. Amen. So the Bible text is Ephesians chapter 5, verses 1, the following. It would be probably helpful to you if you have a Bible. The text will be up on the screen, but it's really good to have your own Bible. And I just want to begin, before we start reading, I've sort of already let you know a little bit about what's in the text, and we're going to go there very quickly.

But one of the first things we need to understand is that God does not love you unconditionally. For many Christians in Canada today, that sounds like blasphemy. But the fact of the matter is, is that God does not love you unconditionally. God loves you with a love that is incomparably better than unconditional love. And the more we are gripped by the idea of unconditional love, the harder it will be for us to understand the Bible, and the harder it will be for us to understand God and Jesus and the gospel. So I'm going to come back to that, why I would say such an odd statement.

We're not going to begin with verse 1. I'm going to look and just try to bring your attention to the actual text in question. So some of you might be wondering, why do I talk about texts like this today? Let me tell you this. My hope and prayer is that you'll come to accept the gospel, and that you will know Jesus as your Savior and Lord. The Christian walk, to be known by God, to know the perfect forgiveness that comes through Jesus, to know the security that when Christ takes you as his child, he will never abandon you, he will never abuse you, he will never let you go, that you can begin to know the incomparable, inexhaustible love of Jesus is vastly worth it.

And my hope and prayer is that everyone here and your friends and co-workers and families and neighbors will come to know the incomparable, vast, deep, pure love of the triune God. That's my hope.

And one of the things we do in this church is we preach through books of the Bible. And that should be really good news to you if you're here as a seeker, or you're here as a skeptic, or you're here just as somebody who's just a bit curious. Because we're never going to hide things from you. It's not as if we're going to talk about all these, I can jump around a different text, and then you become a Christian, and then you find out there's all these nasty bits you didn't know about. You know, this is like taking you through the fine print. But when you go through the fine print of the New Testament, you understand even more deeply the boundless, deep, pure love of Jesus.

[4 : 29] So that's why we're looking at this text, not because I have some hang-ups about sex or homosexuality or anything like that. It's just because I want you to know Jesus. And I don't want to hide anything in the way of you becoming a follower of Christ. And for those of us who are Christians, that your walk with Christ will be deeper and freer. So I want to begin with the hard part, and then I'm going to look, we're going to jump back up to verse 1 and 2, and so we see how it is that the Bible introduces this topic. But I want you to understand some things. Look at verse 3.

But sexual immorality and all impurity were covetousness, covetousness, must not even be named among you as is proper among saints. Let there be no filthiness, nor foolish talk, nor crude joking, which are out of place. But instead, let there be thanksgiving.

Now, just to make sure that you understand this sexual immorality and impurity and covetousness, Paul mentions it a second time. Look at verse 5 and 6.

For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous, that is, an idolater, has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

Let no one deceive you with empty words. For because of these things, the wrath of God comes upon the sons and daughters of disobedience.

[6 : 01] Now, it's a very, very hard text in some ways. And one of the things, you know, I sometimes joke, in fact, I often joke, I look it up on the internet, so it must be true. The three words that you see here, sexually immoral, impure, and covetous, if I was to be doing a sermon point, and actually, if you go on the webpage later and you see my points, I have three different points, and I use the Greek word porneia, which is the word that's being translated here as sexual immorality.

And if you Google porneia, what does the Greek word porneia mean? The very first entry you see to define porneia, if you Google it, is a lie. It's completely, utterly, thoroughly wrong, in case you don't know what my view is on the matter.

It's completely invented, a completely and utterly invented explanation of what porneia is. You have to go down to several of the other ones, and you get the true answer.

And what porneia is, is this, that God created human beings so that we would have an interest in sex.

He made us as male and female, and he designed sexual relations, and he designed human beings that sexual knowledge and sexual stimulation is reserved for the holiest state of matrimony between one man and one woman.

[7 : 33] That's how God designed male and female, man and woman. It's how he designed, from the very beginning of creation, us to know sexual pleasure for those of us who are called into it.

So God designed sexual knowledge and sexual stimulation to be reserved for those who are in a marriage of one man to one woman.

And anything which is not that is porneia. Anything which is not that is porneia. So that would include everything from going to a strip club to looking at pornography to same-sex sexual knowing to cheating on your husband or your wife or engaging in sexual knowing outside of marriage.

All of those things would be described as porneia. And that's the Greek word there for sexual immorality. And the next word, which is translated there as impurity, that's a bit of an odd word.

And there's no really good word in English to try to describe what the sin is. But as I talked about it a little bit last week, and I don't expect you to remember that. I have a hard time remembering what I said last week.

[8 : 53] Impurity is referring not to sexual matters directly, but a relationship with God. And at the heart of it, what impurity is, is the attitude and the habit of saying to God, God, you're not my boss.

You're not my boss. Now, most of the time, we just live in the way that God maybe designed us. We don't do bad things. But at a very, very deep and fundamental level, in every single human being, there is a part of us that wants to say to God, you're not my boss.

You're not my boss. You can't tell me to do that. If I do it, it's because I want to do it, not because you say I should do it. Because I'm the boss of me. You're not my boss.

And the third sin, which is mentioned here, is covetousness. And if you look at some translations, it's translated as avarice. And the Greek word can be translated either way.

Covetousness is the sin of, well, actually, what avarice is, is just basically greed. Just want more, more, more, more, more, more, more, more, more, more, all the time. More possessions, more money.

[10 : 06] It's disorder, desire for possessions and money. And the other word, covetous, is a similar type of idea. It can mean that thing, but it also is more competitive.

So, covetousness would mean that you not just look at George and say, you know, George is just a very ordinary guy.

And if he can be a pastor, I think I can be a pastor. That's not covetousness. Covetousness says, I want George's job. You know, that George will lose his job so I can take his job.

That's the sin of covetousness. Although it also includes the idea of just wanting more and more and more and more. And the Bible describes both, all three of these things as sort of categories of sin.

And the thing you need to understand about it, there's several things you need to understand about this, which will become very clear when we go back and read verses one and then we see how it is that the Bible comes to this place.

[11 : 10] The first thing you have to understand is that this is not us versus them language. This is not us versus them language. This is describing the persistent perennial problems of every single human being.

In other words, I stand before you today as a man whose sexuality is disordered. And I don't mean to offend you, but I am speaking to a room full of people whose sexuality is disordered.

I am a man whose relationship with God is disordered. There is part of me that whether I'm conscious of it or not wants to at times say to God, you're not my boss.

And I speak to a room who have the exact same problem. And I stand before you as a man who has a disordered relationship to money and possessions.

possessions. And I stand talking to a room full of people who have disordered relationships with money and possessions. The Bible text is describing the human problem and the human condition.

[12 : 27] It's not describing us versus them, the pure versus the impure, the elite versus the rabble. It's bringing to light the fundamental human condition.

And in every case, what the Bible is describing is that there's something in us, in our sexuality, which is disordered.

There's something about us in our relationship with God that is disordered. There is something about us that our relationship with money and possessions and positions of authority that is disordered.

And that's, on one hand, very bad news, but it's also very good news. Because it means that what God desires for each of us is something better.

That's what he desires for me. So let's look at this covetousness, for instance, and possessions. Here's one of the things. Every single one of us, it's normally easier for us to recognize a disordered relationship with money and possessions in other people than in ourselves.

[13 : 41] I'm just trying to think of how many funerals I've done. Next year, I'll have been ordained 35 years. In the first 10 years of my ordination, maybe even the first 15 years of my ordination, I did probably between 10 to 20 funerals a year.

I was Barry and George. And so I don't know. I've maybe done 200 funerals. I haven't done very many funerals the last 7 or 8 or 9 or 10 years. Let me tell you this.

Let's say I've done 200 funerals. There has been only one funeral that I have ever done where when I'm talking to the family before and the family and friends before and the family and friends afterwards, there's only been one funeral that I've ever done where anybody has ever said the problem with, and I'm going to mention his name because it's not an embarrassing thing, the problem with John is he was too generous.

200 funerals, only one person has ever said about another person that the problem they had was that they were too generous. They gave away too much money.

Isn't that interesting? Like, I can tell you this. They're not going to say about me at my funeral, at least if I die like in the next 10 minutes. The problem with George is he gave away too much money.

[14 : 59] And I don't want to offend you. I don't know how many of you they're going to say that about either. Now, the funny, funny, funny, funny thing about John, John Pierce, by the way, a couple of us know him, is that the person who said it to me that the problem with John was he gave away too much money.

When he died, he had lots of money still in the bank. In fact, I said to the person who said it, I guess you were wrong. He gave away too much money. He didn't have lots of money, but he had enough money to live every week, even though the complaint about him was that he was way too generous.

He gave away way too much money. See, the fact of the matter is that we notice other people that they're cheap, that they seem to be obsessed with possessions. And it doesn't, you know, a friend of mine said, this is in class talk, by the way.

A friend of mine once said, the poor man has three rust buckets in his driveway, none of which work. The rich man has a jaguar.

So it's not the matter that the poor man is consumed with possessions because he has three cars. Right? It's not a class thing. It's something which affects every single human being.

[16 : 10] We have a hard time giving stuff away. We have a hard time being generous to missions, to the poor, to the needs of the church. We have a hard time giving it away.

We have fixations that we can have about sunglasses or watches or shoes or purses or jackets or clothing, about a better car, a better house.

And you see, what's there isn't that we shouldn't desire. This isn't saying that, you know, if you're a young man or a young woman here, this isn't saying, covetousness isn't saying you shouldn't have any desire to try to make more money so you can provide for your needs and the needs of your family and the needs of your friends.

We didn't look at it last week. But if you go back and read the last bit of chapter four, you'll see that Paul says that when the gospel hits a thief and a thief receives the gospel, what a thief, what the gospel will do in a thief's life will be eventually to make them have the desire to work very, very hard so they can provide for their own needs and be generous.

That's how Paul says the gospel will impact somebody who's a thief. And so, what the Bible is saying isn't just that if you receive the gospel, it's going to take away any desire for ambition.

[17 : 33] It's going to take away any desire to earn. No, it's not that. It's just that we somehow have a way of making certain possessions and having more and having these things, they become a key part of our identity and they never satisfy.

They never satisfy. And then the same thing with this thing about God, you're not my boss. The thing which is disordered there, it's several.

It's as if unless I, at times when it comes up, you know, shake my fist at God and say, you're not telling me what to do. I'm going to tell me what to do.

I'm the boss of my life. I'm the one who's going to pursue that. I mean, most of the time we don't say that, but when all of a sudden the demands of God, well, let's just say with money, that maybe you should consider giving 10% of your money away for the furtherance of the gospel.

Whoa, you're not my boss, God. But at the heart of that is this disordered understanding that God will care for you and that you have a type of integrity and a type of value and a type of worth that God himself guarantees.

[18 : 55] You see, because we have this disordered relationship with God and we think we have to assert our place that we won't be forgotten, that I have autonomy, that I have integrity, that people can't walk over me, and there's not anything wrong with some of those desires that people can't walk over you, they can't just treat you with disrespect, they can't belittle you, they can't do all of those things, but it's disordered because we feel that it's all up to us so that it even comes in terms of God without understanding that the very, very heart of the gospel is that God saw you and he loved you so much that Jesus comes, God, the Son of God, leaves heaven, strips himself of his divine prerogatives, his authority, his glory, his majesty, but still remaining God, takes into himself our human nature, lives a fully human life, dies bearing in himself all your sin, all your rebellion, all your shame, all this stuff about you that's just not right, every accusation that could ever be against you, he does that and he takes it for you and dies for you because he loves you, because he wants to restore you to the integrity and the value and the dignity that you should have in this life and that you will have into all eternity and so our disordered relationship with God means that we have to grasp these things and we have to usually end up saying them at the expense of others because if God wants me to let's say be more, you know, to be sexually faithful to my wife and I end up saying

I don't want God, you're not my boss, I'm going to do, I'm the boss of my life and I end up doing something that not only offends against God but ends up damaging my wife and my family and my kids and the church and everybody, right?

Because that's what happens. We're disordered with God and it means we end up being disordered with the creation. We're disordered around possessions and so it fuels raping the environment, it fuels rage against other nations and wars, it fuels class warfare, it fuels all these terrible things because our relationship with money and possessions is disordered and our relationship with God is disordered and it fuels this injustice that I have to prove that you are not my boss, God and when I end up acting that out, people are hurt and I am hurt as well.

The same thing with sexuality. The biblical truth is that we aren't just some random collection of atoms and we now have to define and identify ourselves by our own terms but God has designed us for a purpose that fits, that has integrity and that while the initial words of the gospel and the Bible seem to be very hard, if we just always remember that everything that is said is said because Jesus loves you so much he died for you on the cross.

He tasted death for you. He tasted judgment for you. He tasted God's wrath, just wrath for you. That you would be reordered as God designed you to be in a way that will bring him glory.

[22 : 13] So let's go back. I've spent almost the whole sermon just trying to get those three terms into you. Let's go back and see how what I've just been saying actually flows out of what the Bible says.

Look at how it's structured. Actually, excuse me, we don't have it up on the text. This is the advantage of having your own Bible. If you look at verse 32, the last verse of chapter 4 of Ephesians, I'll read it to you if you don't have your Bibles.

It says this, Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. And then you look at chapter 5, the very next word after it says, As God in Christ forgave you, therefore, therefore, be imitators of God.

Right? To be gripped with the idea that God in Christ forgave you. Remember, God in Christ forgave you, therefore, be imitators of God as beloved children and walk in love.

And walk in love. As Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

[23 : 27] on one level, you want to know the entire understanding of Christian moral teaching? Walk in love. Walk in love.

That's what Jesus says, the two great commandments, love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul, and love your neighbor as yourself. Walk in love. It's said quite a few places in the New Testament, walk in love. But notice here how what the Bible is talking about is not unconditional love.

I don't know if he invented the term, but the one who made the term of unconditional love very, very popular is a man by the name of Carl Rogers who invented a type of therapy called Rogerian therapy.

Now, I'm not saying this next thing because anything an atheist says is dumb and it's not that. Obviously, that would be a stupid thing for anybody to say.

But it's very interesting that Carl Rogers who invented this term of unconditional love as well as other aspects of his therapy is also the fellow who won the award by the American Humanist Association for the top atheist in 1964.

[24 : 42] And at the very, very heart of Rogers' endeavor was that he wanted to separate love from a sense of morals. That's what unconditional means.

He wants to separate out the idea of right and wrong, the idea of just and unjust. He wants to separate all of that so that all you have is unconditional love and unconditional positive regard.

But that is not a wise idea. It's very interesting. One of my favorite authors is a man, Reed, I've had a temporal, Reed Farrell Coleman.

And you might not remember it, but several times over the years I've quoted parts of his writings to you. He's an atheist and he's very, very, very articulate in his stories.

He often articulates aspects of atheism just so beautifully. Occasionally, I've quoted him to you. I just finished reading a novel of his. And it's an interesting thing because at the heart of the novel is that there's the opioid, I can't pronounce that word very well, the opioid, is that right?

[25 : 48] Vaguely right? Opioid addiction problem in this community where this fellow is a police chief. And somebody dies as a result of taking this chemical laced with something that kills them.

And he tries to figure it out and he ends up discovering that many of the, both some of the poor people, but many of the rich people, that their daughters or their sons, have become addicted to the opioid crisis.

And it's very interesting. Remember, the writer's an atheist, right? And the way he, what he does is that he does it very powerfully in the context of the narrative to show that many of the parents, what they did is, in a sense, they showed unconditional love to their daughter and son and ignored their addiction to the kids' great harm.

In fact, the young woman that launches the whole story, her parents gave her unconditional love and turned their eye and enabled her addiction, which led to her death by a drug overdose.

Remember, the author's an atheist. And as he's going to try to figure this out, he discovers the different parents who love their daughter or their son, but when they find out about the addiction, they take action.

[27 : 10] If you have a loved one and they're addicted to an opioid and you turn your eyes and just unconditionally love them and don't confront them so they will deal with their addiction, you are not loving your kid.

You are not loving your kid or your husband or your wife or your grandparents or your aunt and your uncle. You are not loving them. And it's very powerfully put in this novel by an atheist.

You see, the fact of the matter is it's not loving to ignore all sorts of things that are going on in somebody's life that are just bad.

You know, if a wife discovers that her husband is going to strip shows, she shouldn't unconditionally love him. She should kick him in the butt and say it's unacceptable.

Occasionally, I've had marriage counseling with somebody and at some point in time it starts to dawn on me that there's probably physical abuse going on in the marriage. And so I ask the direct question to the woman.

[28 : 14] Is this guy hitting you? Long, silent pause. Husband sinks lower in the seat. Finally, she says yes. I don't show the man unconditional love.

I say, you gotta stop hitting your wife. Beginning of the story, middle of the story, end of the story. Unacceptable. And I say to her, I will give you every help I can to make sure he doesn't do it and if you need to, you leave him because it's completely wrong.

And so what do we see here? You see, the thing is, is God's love to you is not unconditional. It is unfailing. And God's unfailing love, he is also unfailingly good.

He is also unfailingly just. He is unfailing. He is unfailingly merciful. He is unfailingly true. And none of these things are in conflict with each other.

And so it is. God doesn't look at us in our condition and say, I'm just gonna unconditionally love George while he goes to hell. I'm not gonna unconditionally love George while he gives me the finger and shakes his fist at me and does wrong things and is all massively screwed up about possessions and money and he's gonna get more screwed up.

[29 : 37] I'm just gonna unconditionally love him. No! Look at it again. Verse 32 of chapter 4, As God and Christ forgave you. 5.1 Therefore be imitators of God as beloved children walk in love as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

Unfailing love pays a price for the good of the other person. Clear eyed about what is right and wrong. Clear eyed about what is destroying their lives.

God's love is not unconditional. It is unfailing. It is pure. And it is completely and utterly at one with justice and mercy and the good and the true and the right.

And that's what we should aspire to. That's what we should aspire to. So in light of that, let's look at the rest of the text.

We'll go through it very quickly. Right? Verse 2 And walk in love as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. But sexual immorality pornea and all telling living your life with this deep attitude that God is not your boss and you have to grasp your own position and your own power not trusting God or not trusting other human beings to love you or covetousness a completely and utterly screwed up relationship with possessions with positions of authority and with money must not even be named among you as is proper among saints and saints here just means the ordinary average Christian.

[31 : 26] if you've given your life to Jesus you're a saint. Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking which are out of place but instead let there be thanksgiving. I don't have time to go into it don't understand this in class terms as if it's talking about refined people in Rockcliffe versus how the guy working the jackhammer talks this language refers to both.

Okay? This isn't Rockcliffe people I hope I'm not insulting if you live in Rockcliffe I don't mean that way but it's not class-based stuff. Okay? It's not class-based but I don't have time to go into it.

Verse 5 For you may be sure of this that everyone who is porneia or saying God you're not my boss or who is covetous that is disordered around possessions money and positions of authority that last problem that's the problem of idolatry.

They have no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. And by the way you might not know this but we used to be part of the Anglican Church of Canada our congregation is older than the Diocese of Ottawa and in 2008 this text is perfectly expressing why we believed we had to separate from the Diocese of Ottawa because the Diocese of Ottawa declared as a doctrine that there is a way of being sexually disordered that is in fact not sexually disordered but is blessed and is something that people should emulate and the Bible says it's the complete opposite.

It's the complete opposite. Verse 7 Therefore do not become partners with them and partner here means it doesn't mean that you shouldn't work with people like that it doesn't mean you shouldn't have neighbors like that it means a deep intimate sharing of purpose and direction with them.

[33 : 41] For at one time verse 8 you were darkness but now you are light in the Lord walk as children of light for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true.

In verse 10 and this is actually not as good a translation as it is it actually says not try to discern the Bible literally says and discern it implies that you can grow it implies that God is saying I'm giving you your Holy Spirit this is going to happen to you you are going to increase in discernment and discern what is pleasing to the Lord take no part did I oh the next part verse 11 sorry yeah verse 11 take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness but instead expose them for it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret verse 13 but when anything is exposed by the light it becomes visible anything that becomes visible is light therefore it says arise oh sleeper and rise from the dead and Christ will shine on you just a couple of things about this it's a very very compact language here one of the things that we understand is that light and darkness can't coexist and once again when the Bible is describing darkness it's describing the human condition and what happens is in a sense what the Bible is saying is that you have to understand that every human being is characterized by a type of darkness and all the darkness in the world will never create light this is another image of what salvation is that all the darkness in the world will never create light light has to enter darkness from somewhere other than darkness light is light itself and light enters darkness darkness will never create light and so he's giving here this this this simple picture image of what happens and what it means to be a Christian

George there is no there's nothing in me that is light that comes from me and the only light is that uncreated light of God and God the Son of God and of the Holy Spirit and that uncreated light enters the darkness and the darkness has not understood it it hasn't been able to comprehend it it hasn't been able to defeat it it hasn't been able to overcome it and all who allow the light to come in them are no longer darkness but are light and the light that I have as a Christian this isn't something I can boast in because the light doesn't come from me it comes from God as a gift of grace and the light that comes to me that's a gift of grace is something that I reflect but does not emerge from me and this language of exposing it's all very technical language if I had time you could try to unpack all of the different technical language but it's basically just saying this that what you do is you share with people their darkness not to depress them but the light bringing the light to them is telling them the gospel and the purpose of telling them the gospel is so they receive the gospel and become light that's what he's saying it's not a matter of us versus them it's not about the fact that

I'm so good and I've accomplished all these things and you just suck not like that at all you share the gospel in the hope that they receive it and they become light themselves and the really interesting thing it's just like a couple of chapters ago if you look what Paul does with these scripture texts here awake oh sleep and arise from the dead and Christ will shine on you it's a bit of a mash of part of Isaiah I can't remember if it's 29 or 26 and Isaiah 60 but the interesting thing is what Paul has done here is he's saying I'm summarizing most of Isaiah with these two quotes and the way the grammar works and it's because God knew what he was going to do with Jesus 600 years after Isaiah was written that he had Isaiah written that's what I'm saying God knew he was going to send Jesus in 600 years so he had Isaiah written and these two bits of quotes of Isaiah summarizing a big part of the whole message of Isaiah that's why he wrote that 600 years ago so people would start to understand and be prepared what it is that Jesus was going to do for you friends there is nothing special about me

I am just one beggar born in darkness who received the light who wants to share with you that there is light that can enter your darkness and make you light in such a way that you begin to become more light in your life right now but it is but a small and tiny beginning but the light will never leave you and will prepare you for an eternal weight of glory an eternal weight of glory where we are perfectly ordered by our loving creator and filled with him in light for all eternity with no end invite you to stand if you're here as a guest or you've been here for many many many many years and things just haven't clicked very very simple just say father there is a darkness in me that cannot be defeated my attempts to defeat it are darkness itself you have sent the true light into the world send

[40 : 17] Jesus the true light into my life that I might be yours that I might be light beginning today for all eternity and in your own words say that to God and he will say yes and for the rest of us there's other prayers we have to pray because we all know there's things within us which are disordered let's pray father we thank you that you saw our disorder you saw how we grasped at possessions and grasped at money and grasped at positions of authority how we grasp in the areas of sexuality how we grasp in terms of maintaining our integrity and our autonomy and our terms at the expense of others while waving our fist at you father you saw all those things and still you loved us and sent Jesus to die upon the cross for us the light uncreated light uncreated love eternal light eternal love entered our dark world and died in our place as an act of love that we when we receive the light might be yours forever might become light might become a child of light father grip us with the gospel and father as you help us to be more gripped by the gospel continue to help us to be filled by the holy spirit to walk in love and to walk in thankfulness for all that you have done father you know our deepest need this morning the deepest disorder of our lives right this morning you know the unique deepest disorder of each one who is here and we ask that you would come and bring your healing authoritative light to bear at each of our points of deepest disorder that you sovereignly know we invite you to do that we give you permission to do that we long for you to do that that we might be more like

Jesus and all God's people said Amen