

# Receiving Jesus

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Date: 04 October 2020

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[ 0 : 00 ] Father, we thank you for Jesus. We thank you that he is alive. We thank you that he will come again. We thank you, Father, that we don't just meet in the presence of each other, but that we meet in the presence, Father, of you, that in the presence of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit, that angels and archangels and all the company of heaven, in a sense, are present and look in with us.

And we ask that the Holy Spirit would help us to so receive your word, that we might respond to your word in a worthy manner, and with the angels and archangels and all the company of heaven, and to join with you in this ceaseless and eternal praise.

So, Father, bring your word home to us in a deep way, that we might honor and glorify you, not only with our lips, but with our lives. And we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Please be seated.

Quite a few years ago now, probably 14 or 15 years ago now, but I still remember it very, very well. We were living out in the country on a rural road, and one morning when Louise and I woke up, we discovered that somebody had broken into our house while we were sleeping overnight and had, in a sense, ransacked part of the house looking for alcohol and money and who knows what.

I guess they're also looking for drugs, which they wouldn't find in our house. And we discovered it sort of in an odd way. My daughter, my oldest daughter, happened to be up first, and she came in, and I guess she just thought things were odd.

[ 1 : 35 ] But then Louise got up shortly after her, and she asked her, Louise asked Victoria if she'd done this. Because, you see, every single drawer in the kitchen was opened, and every cupboard door was opened.

And there were other things just moved. And so it's like a really freaky type of thing. I don't know if any of you have ever had it. It's really odd to think that you slept safely and soundly, or thinking it was safe and sound, while two strangers had come into the house.

They somehow, we didn't wake up as the garage door opened. The other doors were locked, but the door from the garage into the house wasn't locked. Because you normally think you'd wake up if you hear the garage door open, but we didn't.

The dog didn't bark either. But that's a whole other story. Like, why do dogs bark at squirrels, but not human intruders? If you figured the answer to that out, you can write a book on the subject, okay?

But anyway, because that's our dog. Let me tell you, a squirrel comes by. We knew, the whole house knew, if that squirrel... Sorry. It sounded terrible. We also had a dog once.

[ 2 : 40 ] I mean, it was just like that bark. And one time we were visiting somebody in the country, and there were two horses on the front yard, and the dog didn't bark. Anyway, never mind about the weirdness of dogs.

So, anyway, it's just a weird thing to wake up and realize that somebody had broken into your house, taken change and some alcohol and other type of stuff, and wandered away.

And the reason we all know that it's terrible, probably you've had some similar types of stories, is that we don't just let anybody into our house. Like, we like to control who's in our house, and that's just viewed as a reasonable type of thing.

In fact, I noticed today in the news that there's beginning to be a bit of a debate as to whether police should have the right or the power to be able to go into our houses to see if we're obeying lockdown processes.

There's a bit of a debate. Like, what exactly gives the police the right to come into a house? I don't want to lose you on a rabbit trail about that, but, I mean, it's an interesting question, because we control and want to control, and it's seen as reasonable to control who you allow to come into your

house.

[ 3 : 42 ] And part of that is because, in a sense, the house is an extension of yourself. And all of us intuitively understand that we want to control who we let into our lives.

Who starts to enter into us is something that we think of. In fact, it's actually one of those things that we think of so much we don't even realize that we think about it.

We really notice it the most when we see a friend or a daughter or a son or letting somebody into their life that we think is creepy or a jerk or bad for them.

And then, because every single one of us have very strong opinions about who our loved ones should let into their lives. All of us do. And probably every single person here could say, yeah, yeah, let me tell you about my sister.

She let this guy into her life, and all of the family were thinking, don't let that guy into your life. He's just going to ruin you. Every single one of you probably had that type of experience. And some of you could probably share experiences where you let somebody into their life.

[ 4 : 46 ] I could. And the person, in fact, turned out to not love you, not care for you, not like you, but to be very manipulative, very distrustful, very destructful, very hurtful to you. So we all understand intuitively that we want to have some type of control over who we let into our lives.

In fact, one of the things about being human is that human beings let people into their lives. If you met somebody and it became, or if you heard about somebody that didn't let anybody into their life, you wouldn't think, my, that's an admirable person.

I wish I could be like that. You'd wonder what was broken in them, that they never let anybody into their lives. Because it's something inherently human about letting people into your lives, and to let nobody into your life, we would all understand as a sign of something broken, and maybe even something evil.

And the other thing about it is, is that not only that we, it's inevitable, it's part of being human that we let people in, it starts really early. This past Tuesday, I helped one of my daughters move, and because of the lockdown restrictions that have been going on for, it seems like, a hundred million years, but it's whatever, six or seven months.

We'd had very little contact with this family for lockdown reasons, but they were moving on a Tuesday, they needed help, and we're very glad to help. But she has a son who's seven or eight months old, and I've hardly seen him once.

[ 6 : 15 ] And we all know this experience, you go to a strange baby, and you pick him up, and they make strange. That little baby turns around, who is this weird man now holding me?

I thought that I could trick Jasper by holding him from the back, pointed towards his mom, so the mom, my daughter Elizabeth, could do something.

But Jasper was way too smart for that. He very quickly turned around, and there's no way he's letting this strange man into his life.

And he showed it by getting a very lovely shade of reddish pink as he screamed. And no amount of distraction on my part would change him one iota.

He is not letting this strange man into his life. So it's part of being human that we let people into our lives, and it starts very, very, very, very, very young and goes as long as we have any marbles.

[ 7 : 13 ] We want to control what it is. I mention all of this because we're going to be looking at a Bible text today that starts to get at something which for a Christian is precious, but for non-Christians is a bit creepy.

So we're going to be looking at Colossians 2, verses 1 to 7, but we're really primarily going to focus on verses 6 and 7. And for those of you who are a bit like book nerds and grammar nerds and geeks, this isn't true of every biblical book, but almost every scholar agrees that in the book of Colossians, chapter 2, verses 6 and 7, it's God wrote the summary of the entire book.

And so if you want to understand what Colossians is about, just read Colossians 2, verses 6 and 7 and memorize it and you have a sense of what the whole book is about. But it's also very important to the Christian life.

And look at what it says, if you could put it up, Andrew, Colossians 2, verses 6 and 7. Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

I'll read it again. And note the therefore. So the therefore, in a sense, is saying that everything that's gone on from chapter 1, verse 1 to chapter 2, verse 4, chapter 2, verse 5, he says, therefore, in

other words, it follows from all of the things that I've been saying, just, therefore, as you receive Christ Jesus the Lord, he's writing to Christians who have received Christ Jesus.

[ 8 : 48 ] They've received him into their lives. They've received him. That's the part that a lot of non-Christians just don't get. And in fact, as we think about it a little bit, a lot of non-Christians think it's actually a bit creepy.

Like you're letting this dead guy into your life? Like you're letting him in as Lord? Like really, a Lord? Like you? I thought you were a modern person. Like I thought, like, in fact, many of the people would think, like when you reveal that you've allowed Jesus and received him into your life as your Lord and Savior, they'll go away and they'll say to their friends, up until he said that, I thought he was normal.

And now I wonder if he is or she is. Because it's like, it doesn't seem, that's why I was going through this thing about it's in fact part of being human. If we understand that, first of all, it's actually human beings let people into their lives.

That's a human thing. So now all of a sudden you have to think, okay, one moment, that's true. We do let people into our lives and the fact not to let people into our lives is a sign of dysfunction and probably major, major, major, major lack of health.

Let's think, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith just as you were taught abounding in thanksgiving.

[ 10 : 06 ] But some of you will say, Lord, really? That just sounds wrong. Like, I can see how, George, you let Louise into your life as your wife and I can see how, you know, you let Victor or Andrew in as your friends and, you know, you let other people in.

Like, I can see that, but you're letting like him in as Lord, that just doesn't seem right. Well, just think about this a little bit more. we let people in in different ways depending on who they are.

If you think about it for a second, and in fact, if people, there's a whole, those of you who have been in counseling, those of you who need to go into counseling, no, and those of you who are counselors know that part of the thing that goes on in counseling is actually a matter of helping people navigate boundaries.

And another way to understand boundaries is an inappropriate letting in. So, for instance, if I was to take one of the young, you know, one-year-old or eight-month-old who might come to the church and I was to start to treat him or her as if it was my own baby, you would all be thinking, that's wrong.

In fact, actually, over the years of me being a minister, there's times I've had to have, when I have to have a conversation like this, first of all, I wish I could have somebody else do the conversation, not me, I'm just being honest, but I'll be sleepless for several days because people will come into the church and they treat other people's children in an inappropriate way and I have to have a conversation with them and I have to confess that almost every time I've had that conversation, they've left the church because they've been offended, but the fact of the matter is is that lots of people will say, that's not how you handle somebody else's little kid.

[ 12 : 00 ] If somebody else was to let my wife into their life in a way that only I should let her into my life, that's wrong. So we all understand that in fact there's an appropriate way to let somebody into life, there's a very appropriate way for me to welcome one of your grandchildren or one of your children, a little precious, little eight-month-old.

It's a different way for me to let my own grandson into my life. It's a different, you get the point. So that then means, if that's the fact, if we understand then that there's in fact a very appropriate way to let people into your life, then, well, some people might say, George, you're making my point because you want Jesus to come and be your Lord, but you see, here's what it is.

The first thing you have to understand is this. If Jesus is dead, are we ever stupid? And if we're not stupid, we're creepy.

Like, if Jesus is dead, and I tell you, as you receive Christ Jesus, the Lord, so walk in him. Like, if he's dead, we should all leave the room right now and go do something far more sane.

But, if he is alive, and that's the Christian claim. That's the historic Christian claim. It's the claim of the early four eyewitness biographies.

[ 13 : 24 ] It's the claim of a range of letters that were written by eyewitnesses who said that, in fact, in real life, in the real life, the real world, the world of wars and empires and kingdoms and sickness and death and money and love and betrayal and marriage and childbirth, in the same world, the real world, there was a man named Jesus, which nobody, other than some real unbelievable

crackpots, denied that there was a man named Jesus and that he lived.

And this man, Jesus, predicted in numerous occasions that he was going to die by crucifixion and that after his death by crucifixion, he was going to rise from the dead. And he can't actually, he couldn't get his friends to crucify him.

Only the Romans could do that. And if, in fact, it is the case, as the eyewitness evidence says, that Jesus, in fact, did predict that he was going to die upon the cross and that he, as he predicted on the third day that the grave, that the body, the tomb would be empty, that they would never find a body and that he had risen from the dead and that he appeared alive over many times in many different places in different contexts with singles, with doubles, with related people, with unrelated people to prove himself alive.

If, in fact, he still is alive, doesn't that vindicate who he said he was? And then, isn't, in fact, it very reasonable, and it's not going to be on your screen, I apologize for that.

Those of you who have your Bibles, it's still worth your while to either bring your Bible or click your Bible open. Colossians 1, verses 15 to 20. We'll probably say this text almost every week in the sermon because it's so foundational.

[15:06] Colossians 1, chapter 15 for 20. If, in fact, Jesus still is alive, if after predicting in the context of prophecies and of miracles, of all of these things, if he, in fact, has truly died and on the third day defeated death and that which causes death and is alive, then this, in fact, is reasonable to believe about him.

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. And as I shared a couple of weeks ago, the image of the invisible God, it means that God by his very nature cannot be seen.

An image has this dual meaning. It means something like nature. It means that everything that is in God is in this image. Everything in God is in this image. And that which is invisible, which is God, becomes visible in the image.

He is the image of the invisible God. In other words, he is God, the Son of God. There is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, three persons, one God. This is part of the building block of how we enter into understanding the true nature of God.

He is the image of the invisible God. He is the firstborn of all creation. In other words, there is a creator who has created all things. And Jesus isn't one of the things that he made, but he is begotten, begotten, not made.

[16:28] He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him, all things were created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities, four levels of angelic beings.

That's what he's referring to. Whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities, all things were created through him and for him. He is God. And he is before all things and in him all things hold together.

And this is part of the wonder of the biblical thing, the biblical message is the same God who creates all things is the same God who sustains all things. And the same God who sustains all things is the same God who holds all things together and gives them coherence and meaning. And the same God who gives coherence and meaning is the same God who is sovereign over all things and will bring it all to completion. And the same God who brings all things to completion is the same God for whom, in a sense, is the telos, is the purpose, is the origin, is the sense of meaning. And so it is not like you have to have one way of understanding creation and another way completely contradictory to how you understand how things came to be. You have another way of trying to understand meaning, and you have another way of trying to understand death, and you have another way of trying to understand how you survive death, and you have another way of trying to understand right and wrong, and none of these things actually fit with each other, which is really how most of you in Canada who are watching this function without realizing it.

[18:02] I hate to say it. Actually, I'm smiling, so on one level I feel uncomfortable. I smile sometimes when I'm nervous, but that's the case. And there's this wonderful message.

The same God who creates all things is the same God who sustains, is the same God who is present, the same God for whom it is, the same God who is sovereign, the same God who will bring it all into completion, this profound beauty of coherence.

And the same beauty of coherence is this picture, because there's already been this distinction between the God who's created all things, and yet there's this other God, but there's not two gods.

There's one God, and things are through him, and they're all together, and they're all one. It brings into... I was thinking about this this week. You know, I've talked about evolution off and on before. The big problem, one of the many, many big problems with evolutionary theory is that it argues backwards, but in a way that doesn't make sense. I mean, if you think about it, shouldn't it be most successful to succeed that we're all like an amoeba that just separates?

[ 19 : 14 ] Like, how on earth is it far better for the survival of the species to need a male and a female? Like, that's way harder. Like, that's way harder.

Like, those beings that just somehow or another, I don't know, just all of a sudden, a bit of me bleeps out. Like, that bleep that bleeps out of me, all of a sudden, both of us bleep back up to our full size.

Like, that's way more successful at surviving than having to have, like, another person, and I don't know, like, you find them, you meet them, you like each other, things happen, it all works.

Like, it doesn't make any sense. And if everything that has come to be is just a result of the survival of the fittest and pure chance, how do you account for the fact that it is part of the very nature of human beings to let other human beings into their lives?

Like, how does that fit? How does that fit? That part of being human, that even from a very, very, very young age is learning how to let other, is letting other people into your lives.

[ 20 : 22 ] If you have a baby that never lets anybody into their life, that just seems to be completely unresponsive, the parents will take the baby to the doctor because they're worried about something wrong with the baby.

Because the baby should smile. There should be some type of, at a very young age, of the baby letting the mother in particular, but other loved ones into the life.

But you see, if you understand, if in fact it is the case that Jesus claimed to be God, to have come from God and to be God, and proved it by his life of love, he didn't prove it by conquering nations, he didn't prove it by being the strongest, he didn't prove it by winning the Olympics, he didn't prove it by being smarter than everybody, he proved it by love.

He proved it by the love of the wisdom of his teaching, he proved it by the love that he showed towards the weak and the powerless and the despised and those who didn't count for anything, he showed it by his miracles of healing and his miracles of compassion, and he showed it by his teaching and by his presence, and he showed it ultimately by dying upon the cross, not because of anything he'd done wrong, but he dies, he says for himself, that he dies because he loves.

Sorry people like you and me. Broken, imperfect people like you and me. And his resurrection is a vindication of who he is and his claims.

[ 22 : 08 ] And that means that we're not just an accident, but we were created, and we weren't just created by a solitary God who was lonely, so he created some other creatures so he could love them.

But that from all eternity, the Father was revealing himself to the Son, and the Son was revealing himself to the Father. And from all eternity, the Father was receiving the Son, and the Son was receiving the Father.

And the Holy Spirit is yet another person in that act of the revealing and receiving and the very vehicle by which the love and the knowledge and the goodness and the truth and the justice and the beauty of God, the Father, was communicated to the Son.

And it's all beautiful. Because you know, the heart of beauty is relationship, isn't it? Like, let's be honest. You go to a wedding, and the guy and the gal, they're never going to be models.

Unless they're the before picture. Right? And then there's the after picture. I'm not saying everybody's like that, but we've been to it. But you see, you see, this is a very traditional wedding.

[ 23 : 18 ] You see the guy at the front, never going to be a model. You see the woman, never going to be a model. And you see the look on her face, and you see the look on his face, and you think, that's beautiful.

That's spellbinding. That's gorgeous. And then you see them walk down the aisle, and you see them together, and you see the exchanging the vows.

And that's beautiful. Isn't that really at the heart of a lot of beauty? Is that type of relationship? You see two really good friends, and you think, that's beautiful.

I mean, there's other senses of beauty as well, but you see, at the very, very heart of reality, is this sense that the father loves the son, the son loves the father.

There's the opening, the giving, and the receiving, and there's the beauty. And if you start to begin to understand that, look at this text again.

[ 24 : 23 ] Sorry, I lost my place. Therefore, as you receive Christ Jesus, the Lord, so walk in him. See, that's who you receive.

That's who you receive. And in fact, actually, if you think about it for a second, because many of you might say, I don't know if I need somebody like Jesus in my life.

Like, I'm doing really good, George. You know, like the job, going well. You know, the house, going well. The relationship's going well. You know, for Ottawa Senators fans, the Leafs didn't win the Stanley Cup.

Hockey's going well. Sorry, that was, I just had to throw that in, just for a moment. That's, sorry for Leafs fans. Nothing, you know, we let, we're very open-minded. Anybody can come to this church. Bruins fans, Canadians fans, Leafs fans, Canucks fans.

You know, we let anybody in. Okay, we're not united around hockey. Anyway, but I've lost my train of thought with that terrible, terrible put down of Leafs fans. I mean, anyway, sorry, I was going to make another terrible joke.

[ 25 : 27 ] I have to control myself sometimes. But, you, you, you, you see, if, if in fact, what you have is Jesus, and Jesus, you're not just letting Jesus, and you're letting God, the Son of God, come into your life.

And if we all understand, at the heart of all letting in, at the heart of all letting other people into our lives, is, is, it's an aspect of love. love. It's an aspect of love.

If you see a, a young child, that's not your own, but comes to the church, or it's your neighbor, and, and you let that child into your life in an appropriate way, that's an act of love, isn't it? It's all connected to love.

Well, doesn't it make sense that you would let, not love itself into your life, but love himself into your life? And doesn't it make sense that you would like, that you would let love himself, to be your Lord? Like, how could that be a wrong decision? Given that to be fully human means, partially to learn, in appropriate ways, to let other people into your lives.

[ 26 : 43 ] Some of us need a lot of people in our lives, some of us need very few, but everybody needs some. And doesn't it make sense, let love himself into your life? Especially if you realize that the way, that he vindicates his claims, is by a sacrificial death upon the cross.

An act of love, whereby he takes into himself, and the Bible text is used other images, it will use other images in the rest of the book, that all of the things that were needed, for there to be reconciliation, is done by him.

He is the price that has to be paid for reconciliation, he is the perfect penitent, and he does all of this, dine upon the cross, to reconcile you to the creator, and sustainer, and end, and sovereign over all things.

He does all that has to be done, that you cannot do yourself, so you can be reconciled to love himself. And so there's this profound truth, which is being us reminded.

A couple of weeks ago, I sang this song, and it turned out that hardly anybody knew it, Tell Me the Old, Old Story, but one of the reasons I chose that, is because I've been really thinking a lot about, you know, one of the reasons that we need to come to church, on Sunday morning, whether it's online, to our online friends, the online congregation, whether it's at 8, whether it's at 10, the reason it's so important, to have spiritual friendships, the reason it's so important, to be in small groups, is that we all have amnesia.

[ 28 : 06 ] That wonderful, that hymn said, you know, it's as if before, we've even left the church, we've forgotten all the things, we heard in church. Where after we've read our devotions, and we remember about Jesus, and it seems like three minutes later, we've forgotten all about it, because we are so prone to amnesia, and we need to be reminded, of these profound truths, and to be gripped by them once again, so we can carry on, and so we can live.

And there's this wonderful, wonderful, wonderful thing. When you receive Jesus, when you receive Jesus, you can only receive him, as all of the promises of God, and all, every type, every promise of God, has found its purpose, and fulfillment in him.

He is the one who dies, on the cross for you, to save you. He is your redeemer, and not only of all the promises, that he is God himself, and you can only let him, into your life, as the way he is. He can only come in, as the end of the longings, and yearnings of your life, he can only come in, as the

fulfillment, of all the promises, that God has made.

He can only come in, as the one who can reconcile, your tears, to God, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. He is the only one, who can come in, and come in as God, and Lord. He can only come in like that, to have, to have him come into your life, and not be those things, is to be deluded.

Not to actually have him come in, because, just, you can only receive him, as he is. And here's this profound truth, which we need to be reminded of, time and time again. Some of us, have been terribly broken, by alcohol and drugs.

[ 29 : 36 ] Some of us have been broken, time and time and time again, by mental health issues. Some of us have been broken, terribly, by financial, and career setbacks, and relationship setbacks.

And there's this wonderful truth, in the gospel, that it doesn't matter, if you have a child, or somebody else, who's profoundly mentally, or physically handicapped, when they receive Jesus, the God of the universe, indwells them, and will never let them go.

And you might have a friend, who struggles with depression, or struggles with alcoholism, or struggles with drugs, and when they give their lives, to Jesus, the God of the universe, indwells them forever.

He also comes in, and dwells billionaires, by the way. I don't know if there are, any trillionaires yet. Maybe next week.

Listen to the text again. Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus, the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. If this was translated, by an old Irish person, it would read, as you's, received Christ Jesus, the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him, established in the truth, just as you's, were taught.

[ 31 : 07 ] If it was written, in the south, and you had somebody, from Alabama, or Mississippi, translated in that, it would be translated as, y'all, received Christ Jesus, the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him, and established in faith, just as y'all, were taught.

If you go back and read verses one to five, I'm not going to do that right now, but if you go back, and look about being knit together in love, and encouragement, and understanding, in this world, and in our flesh, we have a profound problem, because there's a, there's the individualistic, we worry about the, you know, the individual being an individual, and we worry about that, because we have these ideas of tribes, or clans, or families, that can crush the individual, and most of the, the mythology that we have in our culture, is all around the triumph of the, over the, of the individual, over the, the collective, and, and, and that's, I mean, there's some things obviously in there, which are true, because you can have tribes, or clans, or families, or organizations, that crush the individual, but, but at the same time, I mean, here's the whole thing, it's, it's the mystery of love, you know, in, in love, you give yourself to something, that's bigger than yourself, there has to be, in some type of a family, or a collective, but there still has to be the personal, and, and in the Bible, it's not that you're called to be an individualistic, or tribal, and it's not that you're called to something private, you're called to something, which is deeply personal, and also to something, which is deeply communal, and you're called to something, which is deeply public, and that part of what it means, to, to know Jesus as Lord, and to have Christ indwell within you, is to, you start to try to, to lose some of the fears, and some of the hangups, and gain some of the strengths, that there can be a type, hopefully under, by the grace of God, a type of mending, whereby you enter into this reality, right, because I'm saying this is plural, my kids have to give their lives to Jesus themselves, I can't do it for them, and so there has to be this, there's the personal relationship with Christ, but we don't just know Christ, as individuals, we know him together, you see, that's why we know him better, when we gather, we know him better, in the context of a good small group, we know him better, in the context, of deep friendships, with Christ at the center, there is this sense, that it has to be always deeply personal, but at the same time, deeply communal, and, and this is frightening, to much of Canada, but it also has to be, not private, but public, you see, that's the significance, of the word walk, look at it, therefore, as you receive Christ Jesus, the Lord, so walk, in him, it's a very biblical image, you know, in a sense, one way to figure out, what you do with your life, is just to follow you, as you walk along, I woke up this morning, 12 minutes late, because for some reason, I was, my alarm went off, and I slept through it, my wife said, she was waiting to see, how many times, it would go off, before I finally woke up, and if you were to follow me, my day began by, creakly, getting out of my bed, creaky,

Lee, I don't know if I can say that right, and staggering over, to turn off the alarm, and then to the bathroom, and then to make coffee, and you don't need to know, all the rest of the details, but you could follow me, through the day, I walk, through the day, even when I'm sitting, I walk to sit, and that's a type of walking, and then you do other things, and what does it say here, as you receive Christ Jesus, the Lord, so walk, in him, your day is done, in him, and how you walk, isn't private, but public, so in Christ, it's deeply personal, but deeply communal, and it's not private, but public, you know, there's a woman, who used to be part of the church, and, or, we've all know different stories, of people, who've had to take, I mean, part of being public, I'm trying to think of how to, to give this, as a good, as a story, to try to illustrate it, there's all sorts of things, about following Jesus, that just a matter of wisdom, and difference, and stuff like that, but sometimes being public, means you take stands,

I know one Christian, who, he was, the building supervisor, for lots of apartment buildings, and, the owners of the buildings, the corporate, the owner, corporate group, said that they had to change, all the locks, and then they had to give bills, to all of the tenants, for, for changing the locks, and the, the building manager said, well, that's illegal, we have to pay for it, we don't, can't make, the tenants pay the bill, and the, landlord said, yeah, well, we know that's the law, but we know that most people, don't know the law, so it saves us a lot of money, if we do this, and if somebody calls up, and complains, you just very quietly, say they don't have to pay, anyway, the guy quit over it, he said, I can't do it, I can't do it, right, sometimes, our walk with Christ, will mean taking a public stand, because our walk, isn't private, it's public, but I need to draw this to a close, and here's what I want to, here's a couple of things, how do you receive Christ, and, and what are the next steps,

[ 36 : 34 ] I've shared this imagery before, but it's a, it's a very good image, there's in Revelation chapter three, there's the image, of course, of Jesus standing at the door to knock, the prayer of every Christian parent, is that the child, will never know a time, when they don't love Jesus, that's the, that's the prayer of a child, of a Christian parent, for their child, that's why by the way, you don't say, I think I'm going to read, books in praise of witchcraft, and atheism, to my little kids, until they're 14, and then, when they're starting to be old enough, to decide for themselves, I'll tell them about Jesus, no, you read them Bible stories, you pray for them, you bring them to Sunday school, you do all that stuff, so that there's, the hope is that there'll never be a time, they don't know Jesus, so this analogy, doesn't work very well, for those among us, who gave their lives, so early, that they can't remember a time, that they haven't trusted Jesus, as Savior and Lord, but for the rest of us, that that doesn't clarify, it's a very, very interesting image, Jesus standing at the door, of the door of our heart, knocking, in a sense saying, could I come in, and one of the things, you have to acknowledge, is you need him to come into your life, that you're letting love himself, into your life, but you also have to acknowledge, and count the cost, of the fact, he's only going to come in as Lord, he doesn't come in as advisor, friend, enabler, he's only going to come in as Lord, he's only going to come in, as the end of your longings, or your yearnings, and the Christian life begins, when you open the door, and you say to Jesus,

Jesus, I really need you to come in, and I invite you in, not only do I invite you in, but I give you permission, to be yourself, in all of who I am, and that's how the Christian life begins, there's a lot of people, who go to church for many years, very, very good people, far better than me, far nicer, far kinder, far more tolerant, far more everything better than me, but basically, and far more self-giving, and generous, and all of those types of things, but basically, their relationship with Christ, is looking at his feet, underneath the door, or it's a big old fashioned keyhole, and they look through the keyhole, and they get little glimpses of Jesus, and they talk to him, on the other side of the door, and maybe even pour out their heart, and problems to them, and they live their lives, maybe vastly better than me, probably vastly better than me, but he's always on the other side of the door, the Christian life begins, when you open the door, and not just open the door, but you say, Jesus, will you come into my life, please, I invite you in, and I give you permission, come in as savior, come in as who you are, come in with no holds barred, and if you've never done that, then, and you're an image person, use that image right now, and do it right now, like don't wait for the end of the sermon, ignore everything else I have to say, just do it right now, and then tell others that you've done it, and he comes in, no one's so broken, no one's so good, no one's so evil, no one is so anything, that doesn't need him, and he won't come in, just the final thing, and you'll notice that the sermon series,

I'll just read this text again, therefore as you receive Christ Jesus, the Lord so walk in him, rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving, you'll notice that the sermon series, is called means of grace, and part of the thing is, there's a reason for it, for those of you once again, who are word nerds, rooted in him, built up in him, established in the faith, are all in the original language, what's known as the divine passive, so it isn't saying, okay George, build yourself up, root yourself, establish yourself, it's saying that actually, in this profound mystery, you're passive, and God does it, that's not me, okay, that you're passive, and God does it, I mean that's a bit of a mystery, but it's all a matter of, receiving Christ, you can only have him, come into your life as grace, and everything about your development, is going to be grace, it's all something that he does for you, he roots you, it's an imagery of the garden, he builds you up, it's an imagery of construction, he establishes you, that's an imagery of relationships, you know you hope for your kids, that they get well established, that they get a job, that they get established, in relationships, and in houses, and careers, and jobs, that's an image of relationships, and he does that, and so you have this profound thing, you let Jesus into your life, and you learn how to walk, and how is it that you walk, as you walk, he's going to root you, he's going to build you up, he's going to establish you, in the faith, which implies that there's context, just as you were taught, which is implying the Bible, and the result is abounding, and thanksgiving, so here's the thing, it's going to be more, we're going to look at a couple, of false paths, that people take, in the rest of chapter two, but all of chapter three, and four, is primarily about the means of grace, and at the heart, of the means of grace, which is very different, than spiritual disciplines, it's the posture, whereby you put yourself, in a place, that God does the work, an image, an image would be,

Elijah and the prophets of Baal, I'm not an expert in camping, far from it, but I think, if I want to start a fire, I don't pour gallons of water, over the wood, like I think, that's just generally, not wise, you look for dry wood, not wet wood, if you go back, and we'll look at that story, when we get into chapter three, but what did Elijah do, he put himself, in a place for God, to do all the work, and he does it by obedience, by trust, so even though, he knows, better than any of us, he used dry wood, to make a fire, not wet wood, he pours the water, on the wood, and pours the water, on the wood, and pours the water, on the wood, because God told him to, and the fire comes from God, and that's the heart, of the means of grace, the fire, comes, from God, let's stand, we're going to pray, a prayer together, in closing, if Andrew has it up there, and this is from, morning and evening prayer, it was a prayer, written in 1549, so Christians have been, praying this for a long time, and you'll notice, that part of the prayer, is the means of grace, it's a really good way, to understand Colossians,

I invite you to pray, this prayer with me, Almighty God, Father of all mercies, we then unworthy servants, do give you most humble, and hearty thanks, for all your goodness, and loving kindness, to us, and to all people, we bless you, for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings, of this life, but above all, for your inestimable love, in the redemption, of the world, by our Lord Jesus Christ, for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory, and we beseech you, give us that due sense, of all your mercies, that our hearts, may be unfeignedly thankful, and that we show forth, your praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up ourselves, to your service, and by walking before you, in holiness, and righteousness, all our days, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, to whom with you, and the Holy Spirit, be all honor, and glory, world without end.

[ 43 : 58 ] Amen. Father, pour the Holy Spirit upon us, with might and power, and deep conviction, and help us, to not have amnesia, really quick, but to be gripped, by the gospel, learning to live, as your disciples, bringing you glory.

In Jesus name we pray. Amen.