

JESUS ON BEING UNWORTHY

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[0 : 00] Father, every single person here probably needs to say sorry to somebody, and every single person here needs to forgive somebody.

Father, we confess before you that we flatter ourselves too much to understand the true state of our soul and the true state of our mind and our heart and our will.

So, Father, we ask that your word has challenged us around forgiveness and other matters. We ask, Father, that your Holy Spirit would gently but deeply fall upon us. Fall upon us, Father.

And as your Holy Spirit falls upon us, help us, Father, to realize the true state of our souls and our affections, who we need to forgive. And, Father, we ask that your Holy Spirit would help us to forgive.

Father, we thank you that we can come to you in prayer, that we can call out to you for the freedom of forgiveness. So, Father, we call out for such freedom that we might forgive.

[1 : 01] We call out and ask you to pour out your Holy Spirit upon us as we hear your word. And all this we ask in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior. Amen. Please be seated.

Thank you. Thank you. So, if you're a guest here, you might not know this about me, but Louise and myself, we've been blessed with nine children.

And our kids are all, we only have three left at home. And so this, what I'm about to tell you, hasn't happened to us in quite a while. But it used to be the case.

I think it mainly happened when it was just Louise with the kids in a grocery store or someplace, that some complete and utter stranger would come up to Louise and give her a lecture on birth control. I'm not making this up. It was a regular occurrence. In fact, actually, there was a fellow in the congregation who, when it was announced that we were expecting our ninth child, he was a very gruff and outspoken guy.

[2 : 04] He's now with the Lord. And he told me, he said, George, don't you know about birth control? Like, what are you doing having nine kids on your salary? And I didn't say anything. I just turned the other cheek.

Then our child was born, and it was a boy. And the man who had said this to me, his name was Tom. And we named our son Tom. And now we named our son Tom not because it was Tom who'd said this to me, but, in fact, Tom, or Thomas, had been, like, on the list for every one of our boys. And it just, we ended up choosing another name. But we'd always liked the name, and we finally just went with Thomas, Thomas Elijah. And, but the man who told me off when he heard that we'd named our son Tom, he thought it was the funniest thing in the world that I had showed him what I thought of his rebuke by naming my son after him.

And I never told him that it had nothing to do with his name, that if, you know, he'd been called, you know, Bilbo, we wouldn't have called our son Bilbo. Well, Bilbo's sort of a neat name, but we wouldn't have called Tommy Bilbo.

Anyway, so it happens inside the church, but outside of the church especially. I mean, I think that was the only time anybody in the church ever gave, you know, was, like, bold enough to come and straight out say, have you heard about birth control and you should be practicing it, you're having too many kids.

[3 : 26] But it would happen to my wife quite often. A short lecture from a complete and utter stranger. Now, one of the things that people complain about religious people is that religious people, spiritual people, are intrusive, busybodies who look for opportunities to intrude in your life and tell you off.

In fact, actually, one of the things that for many people that they would make as a distinction between being religious, like a Christian or a Muslim, and being spiritual is that they would say to

themselves at least, that religious people are intrusive, busybodies, intruding in stuff that is not their business, but spiritual people don't.

Although I'm guessing that many of the people who spoke to us about birth control were probably spiritual, not religious. As often would happen in the Glebe, not exactly a home of fervent Christianity. And, sorry, I'm not putting anybody down from the Glebe.

Louise and I have lived in the Glebe at different times over the years. So is it, in fact, the case that the Bible encourages us to be busybodies? Some of you who might remember what I just read a few moments ago when it talks about rebuking might say, Aha, that is why Christians are such intrusive, busybodies.

Jesus tells them to be intrusive, busybodies. Well, is that the case? Well, let's have a look and see what it is that Jesus actually tells us and what he tells us to do and what he doesn't tell us to do.

[5 : 00] So if you have your Bibles, please turn to Luke chapter 17. Luke 17. And we'll begin reading at the first verse. We're going to look at all 19 verses, obviously some parts of it a little bit in more depth than others.

And as you're turning to Luke chapter 17, what we do at this church is we preach through books of the Bible. So if you're wondering what we're going to talk about next week, you can just read verses 20 to the end of the chapter and we just go through the Bible.

And so the Gospel of Luke was written before the year 70, probably in the mid-60s. And it was written by a pagan who had become a follower of Jesus.

And this pagan who had become a follower of Jesus was a very well-educated man. And he did piles and piles of research with eyewitnesses.

And he compiled this true history, this true biography of Jesus. And, you know, it doesn't look like we're reading something that was written, let's say, in the year 67 or 68, because it's, you know, in my case it all looks fancy.

[6 : 03] But that's actually what we're reading when we're reading this. And so Luke claims that he has done the research and this is something that Jesus actually said and actually did.

It's how we know about Jesus. So what is it that Jesus said about being a busybody? Was he encouraging us to be busybodies? Luke 17, verse 1. And he said to his disciples, so Jesus is speaking to his followers at this particular case, temptation to sin, temptations to sin are sure to come.

Just sort of pause here for a second. This should be very, very humbling. It's very, very definite in the English, but in the original language it's even more definite. That if anybody thinks that as a follower of Jesus a time will come when they neither sin nor are even tempted to sin, they're not listening to Jesus.

Until we die or until Jesus comes and we see him face to face, every follower of Jesus, like every other person on the planet, will regularly have to struggle with temptations.

I tell some guys who are my age, you know, that there's certain things that they might not be as tempted to as when they were 22, and it's not necessarily because of godliness, it's just because of age.

[7 : 18] And that there's other things they're going to be tempted by, often maybe that they're blind about. So this is a very, on one level, it's sort of a sobering passage, and it's an interesting thing as we're going to start looking about what Jesus says about being busybodies.

He begins by just telling us, if you think you will ever have a time in your life when you aren't tempted and aren't struggling with things, you don't understand your heart.

You don't understand your heart. George, he's saying to me, I don't understand my heart if I ever start to think that. Let's read verse one again. And Jesus said to his disciples, temptations to sin are sure to come, but woe to the one through whom they come.

It would be better for him or her if a millstone were hung around their neck and they were cast into the sea than that they should cause one of these little ones to sin.

Sort of another sort of a very sobering thing. It would be better to have a gruesome, a gruesome, horrific death than be the one who leads other people into sin.

[8 : 26] Now, here comes to the part sort of more that we're going to spend more time on. Pay attention, verse three. Pay attention to yourselves. If your brother sins, rebuke him. And if he repents, forgive him.

And if he sins against you seven times in the day, in other words, if he sins against you time and time and time again during that same day, and every time after he's done the same thing or she's done the same thing, they turn to you and say, I repent, Jesus says, you must forgive that person. So, it's sort of a very, very stark type of text. And what I'm going to do is, Andrew, if you could put the first point up and then we'll sort of look into the text and see what's going on here.

What I decided to do today in terms of summaries is to write four short prayers for you. I mean, I think, generally speaking, one of the things I can help people with most is just help them to learn how to pray.

And one of the most important things we can do is to learn from Jesus, learn from the word, what it is that we are to pray for. And so I'm trying to, each of these parts as we go through Luke 17, I've written a short prayer that tries to capture the point and turns it into something that we can both understand and also that we can pray for ourselves.

[9 : 51] And so, here's the first thing, and I'll unpack it, why it's a worthwhile thing for many of us to pray. Dear God, please grow in me a deep and humble trust in you and free me up to speak to the wrongdoer of the wrong they did to me and to forgive them.

And as you know, I try as often as possible to put points so that it's me praying so that if you write it down to meditate upon it and to maybe try to pray it, it's, it's, you're saying me.

And, and here's, this is I think what Jesus is trying to get at in this text. He's wanting us to turn to God and say, please grow in me a deep and humble trust in you and free me up to speak to the wrongdoer of the wrong they did to me and to forgive them.

Now, you see, the very first thing about this text is it's, if you look at the verses three and four, it's not talking about us being busy bodies and it's not talking about us being easily offended, you know, by, you know, if we have nine children, we're not sinning against that person in Loblaws or the natural food store or something like that.

We're not sinning against them, right? And, and look at it in verse three and four. Look at them together. Pay attention to yourselves. If your brother sins, rebuke him. Now, it sounds as if it can just be anything. And if he repents, forgive him.

[11 : 11] But just the mere fact that if he repents, forgive him, implies that they've sinned against you. It's not just sin in general. It's not that you're to go around to the grocery stores and the coffee shops looking for people doing bad things and then attacking them and telling them they're doing something bad because you don't, you don't forgive them if they've done something bad against another person.

You forgive them if they've done something wrong against you. And Jesus makes it clear in verse four. And if he sins against you seven times in the day and turns to you seven times saying, I repent, you must forgive him.

So the first thing is that this text is very, very clearly saying, George, don't be a busy body. Don't be intrusive in people's lives. Don't go around like you're the morality police and the spirituality police jumping on people when they fall short of your standards.

That's not what Jesus is telling us, telling me to do at all. He's telling me two things and there is a very, very wise teaching of Jesus. And for some of us here in this room, especially some of us who've been really beaten down in life, we need to hear that Jesus is encouraging us to have the strength and the freedom to come to him to be built up and have the strength and the freedom to rebuke somebody who's wronged us because some of us have a deep trouble, have a deep problem with that.

And for others of us here, our deep problem is that we're far too quick to attack. And Jesus is challenging that as well, as I'll show you.

[12 : 43] He's challenging that as well. So the first thing is, look at it again, verses three and four. Pay attention to yourselves. If your brother sins, rebuke him. And if he repents, forgive him.

And if he sins against you seven times in the day and turns to you seven times saying, I repent, you must forgive him. Here's the big thing which makes it so different than attacking a person is that we rebuke in the hope of repentance.

We rebuke in the hope of repentance. In fact, you can really take it from the text. If you don't hope for repentance, don't rebuke.

If you don't hope that the person will repent, you might worry that they won't. You might be pretty convinced inside of you that they're not going to. That's one thing.

But you need to try to frame the rebuke and everything about the encounter in the hope and in the prayer that after the person has been rebuked, they will want to repent.

[13 : 46] And if you don't have that hope, then all you're doing is attacking. And the Bible is not giving us any encouragement for a moral and spiritual and theological attack against another person.

And the other thing that we see in this text is that the Bible is unbelievably wise because not only is it telling me that I am to rebuke in the hope of repentance, the text is also telling me to be culturally sensitive and wise.

You say, George, how on earth is this text telling me to be culturally sensitive and wise? I've only been to Israel once, I was able, I was blessed, I was able to go to Jerusalem in 2008 and on the, and it was in the airport which is in Tel Aviv and I'm going to Jerusalem which is where my hotel is and there's a group of us all together and we arrange a bus that's going to take us from the airport in Tel Aviv into Jerusalem and on the bus are two men and let me tell you, from my white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant, Canadian perspective, they yelled and screamed at each other for the entire ride.

I mean, their voices were raised, they were doing this at each other, they were unbelievably energetic and if you came into my house and my wife and myself were talking to each other like that, you would think we desperately needed marriage counseling.

But Israeli Jews don't talk to each other the way white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant, Canadians talk to each other. So here's the thing which is so wise about the Bible. The Bible says I am to rebuke in the hope of repentance and then it's silent because it creates space for cultural, ethnic, racial differences in how you do that.

[15 : 47] Isn't the Bible really wise? Like Paul could have, Jesus could have said more things, Jesus was in a Jewish culture, he could have said a whole pile of other things about how to do this but he doesn't and the implication is that we have to learn, this is a radical thing for a lot of conservative Christians, we have to be culturally sensitive and wise.

Jesus is telling us to do that. I mean, in a sense it would mean that if I was to go to Israel as a missionary, I would have to learn how to rebuke appropriate in Israel.

If I was to go to Kenya, if I was to go to China, I would have to learn and in a sense if a missionary came from another place to here, they would have to learn that and we can't just baptize our own culture in terms of how to do it because there's different ways.

I mean, I'll just give you two pieces of advice. I'm very bad at rebuking, by the way, it's one of my weaknesses, but I'll give you just two little pieces of advice that I try to practice and the two pieces of advice is always clarify before you rebuke because otherwise a lot of times you're rebuking for something that didn't happen that somebody else did that you misunderstood and really in an embarrassing way, you tell a person off for doing something and then they remind you that you told them six months earlier to do that and then you got mad at them, right?

That's really embarrassing, so clarify. And the second thing, just from cultural perspective of Canada is always go after the action or the behavior, not the person.

[17 : 20] Don't go after intent. Intent is hard to understand. Don't accuse of intent as often as possible, but go after the behavior and not go after the intent or the person.

And from a Canadian cultural perspective, that's how rebukes are more likely to be effective if the goal is repentance. If you don't care about repentance, tell them that they're a mean, evil, stupid, foolish person and they only mean, stupid, foolish, ignorant, evil things.

And that sure leads lots of people to repent, let me tell you. It really works every time. You know, it just creates a fight, right? Or flight, avoidance.

And so that's, you know, but you know, you read some things from the Middle Ages and Calvin and the Roman Catholics, they called each other all sorts of names. It was a culturally different time.

See, that's why the Bible is so wise. One of the many reasons why I believe the Bible is the word of God is because of what's not in it.

And here the Bible is very wise. It gives very, very wise advice, rebuke in the hope of repentance and that leaves us to figure out culturally how we do that for our culture, our time, in our context.

[18 : 38] And see, that's why I put the point this week is, dear God, please grow in me a deep and humble trust in you and free me up. That's for those of us who have a hard time doing it.

Free me up to speak to the wrongdoer of the wrong they did to me and to forgive them. I'm not going to say much about forgiveness right now other than to tell you, I'm going to say two things. The first thing is this week in my blog, it's in your bulletins. I've written, I think, 14 theses around forgiveness. Hopefully that will help some of you to understand a little bit what forgiveness is and what it isn't.

I also preached a couple of sermons on it. I think last spring I preached one on choose forgiveness or the spiritual discipline of forgiveness. So I'm going to say, I just encourage you to look at that. But here's the other thing, that for a follower of Jesus, this all has a specific type of cast.

Because the way the gospel of Luke is written is that in Luke chapter 9, Jesus tells his disciples, I'm going to Jerusalem, I'm going to be betrayed, I'm going to die, I'm going to rise again. And everything now from the book of Luke, from 9 on to 9, when he gets crucified, it's all about Jesus going to Jerusalem to die.

[19 : 45] And you see, here's the thing, I try to describe that our mission is to make disciples of Jesus gripped by the gospel who live for his glory. And what happens in the cross? You see, for Jesus, it's not as if he says this morality thing and this wisdom type of thing and is completely and utterly divorced from him going to the cross.

what happens in the cross? In the cross, God reveals and rebukes sin. In fact, one of the things that happens as we grow in the Christian life is that we don't really understand the depth of our sin until we follow Jesus and realize just how, in a sense, bad and deadly and pervasive sin is that Jesus had to die.

He had to leave heaven to die upon the cross for us. It's a direct confrontation, revealing and rebuking of sin and it's also a profound act of forgiveness.

And that's what happens in the cross. Jesus is going to Jerusalem to die. He's going to Jerusalem to die not for himself but for you and me and for all the people who are listening.

And on the cross, he will deal with sin. He reveals that sin exists. He deals with it and it's a profound act of forgiveness. And so it is that as we're gripped with what Jesus did for us on the cross, there's the possibility for us to start to be freed up and to understand that there is a time in our lives where we have to confront the wrong that was done to us.

[21 : 21] But mindful of the cross, we are to confront in such a way that there is a hope of forgiveness, that they will repent and that we will forgive them.

And as I say in the little thesis, sometimes we need to pray for decades to forgive a person, but the journey and the road to forgive is always worth it. And that's why the prayer that Jesus, I think, is calling us to pray is, dear God, please grow in me a deep and humble trust in you and free me up to speak to the wrongdoer of the wrong they did to me and to forgive him.

But some of you might say, George, well, that sounds sort of interesting, but I think, I don't know if you're really quite understanding the words of Jesus.

I mean, you know, one of the things, George, I think about religious and spiritual people is that it's really ultimately all about power. And, you know, even if they forgive a person, it's really a way of trying to get power over them.

Them being busy bodies is all about power. And, George, wasn't there a thing that comes immediately after that that talks about how if you have faith, you can move, you know, sycamore trees and mulberry trees.

[22 : 31] And isn't that all about Jesus just telling us to have power? Like, aren't you sort of misunderstanding and misreading the text? Don't you really think that Christians are still just one form of trying to get a type of cultural power over other people and that Jesus is encouraging this by talking about having the faith to move these objects?

Like, George, don't you think that's what's going on? Well, let's look. What is it that Jesus says immediately after that? I don't think he contradicts himself at all. In fact, I think what happens is that the natural human religion and natural human spirituality is about power.

And because, and even Christians, affected just as much as everybody else by natural human religion and natural human spirituality, that when we read the text, we bring the natural, the fleshly, to interpret the words of Jesus rather than letting the words of Jesus come to the heart of who we are.

Look at verses five and six. The apostle said to the Lord, increase our faith. Maybe after he told them they had to forgive, he said, I'm going to need a lot more faith if I can forgive.

Let me tell you. Increase our faith. And the Lord said, if you had faith like a grain of mustard seed. In Jewish times, it was proverbial for very, very, very tiny.

[23 : 49] If you had faith like a grain of mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, it's a tree that, in the original language, it's a tree that would grow to about 20 feet and it was known for having a very large root system.

So if you had faith like a grain of mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, be uprooted and planted in the sea and it would obey you. So is this text just talking to us about a type of spiritual power?

more. Is this text a rebuke of our congregation because we don't have a building of our own? And if we had more faith, we have a building.

Is this text telling us we're all sinners? Well, it does tell us we're sinners, but not in that particular way. I'm going to put it up. If you could put up the next point here in terms of how it's going to work as a prayer. And by the way, if you're worrying this is going to be an 80-minute sermon, the longest point was the first one and it'll get shorter.

But here's, I think, what Jesus is asking us to do. Dear God, please grow in me a humble, trusting walking. And I say walking, the Bible uses the image of walking as a way to understand how we live our 24-7 day.

[25 : 05] How do we live our 365 days a year 24-7? Well, we walk from spot to spot to spot to spot. And I'm trying to capture that biblical idea in terms of a prayer, in terms of just how we live our lives, how we go to Starbucks, how we buy our groceries, how we do at work, how we are with our family and our friends, how we are with our leisure.

It's walking. We go from one thing to another. And I think the text is encouraging us to pray, Dear God, please grow in me a humble, trusting, walking, knowing of the greatness and glory and grace of the person and work of Jesus Messiah.

I think that's a great prayer that you could pray every day. I could pray every day for the rest of my life. Dear God, please grow in me a humble, trusting, walking, knowing of the greatness and glory and grace of the person and work of Jesus Messiah.

Some of you might say, George, how on earth do you get that from the text? Well, the problem is, remember I said how natural human religion and natural human spirituality does turn it into all being about power?

Faith always has an object. Faith isn't an emotion. Faith isn't a type of self-talk. Faith has an object.

[26 : 27] We have faith in something or someone. So when we turn it into about power, we turn it into something that if I have the right type of willpower, the right type of emotion, the right type of ritual, the right type of church connection, the right team of people praying, if I get these things right, I will accomplish this.

We rarely are so publicly bold to say that because we start to check ourselves and say, no, no, no, no, no, that's sin, but in our hearts, murmuring, the voice murmuring into our ears is I get my willpower or my emotion and I get this and I get my techniques and I get the right principles and I get this straight and I get to do this powerful thing.

But Jesus, he's standing there. And it's so cool. Judas is standing there, the man who's going to betray him. Jesus knows that he's going to Jerusalem to die, giving you away the story if you haven't read the story, but every one of his disciples is not going to have faith in him when the time comes when he's arrested.

They all abandon him and leave him. And he knows that Judas is going to betray him. And he knows that he's going to Jerusalem to die on the cross to reconcile people to God.

And he knows that he's doing this because God has been faithful to his word and God promised a mighty deliverer and God promised redemption. And Jesus has done his entire life on earth as God, the son of God and also the son of Mary.

[28 : 21] And he's done it in obedience to the father. And he knows the father is faithful. And he's asking the disciples to have faith in him. And if we take this prayer and try to pray about how we can do great things, very subtly our focus becomes on willpower or emotion in ourselves or our techniques or our membership because evangelicals do things better or Anglicans do things better, Roman Catholics do things better, Pentecostals do things better or Charismatics do something better.

And he's asking us to focus on Jesus. He's asking them to have faith in him. And then if in a sense they have that faith in him, in the context of this ever deepening personal relationship with him, requests emerge.

And those requests that emerge come from a very, very tiny little bit of faith within them. But Jesus can do, God can do amazing things. You know, it's all about Jesus is calling them to trust in him. And the increasing of the faith, the adding to the faith is adding faith to faith to faith to faith, a deepening in trust, not adding willpower, emotion, technique, mind control, church allegiance, or any other type of thing, proper ancestors.

Not adding anything like that, but just a deepening into a walk with him. And that's why I say that Jesus is calling us to call out to him and pray, Dear God, please grow in me a humble, trusting, walking, knowing of the greatness and glory and grace of the person and work of Jesus, Messiah. [30 : 20] But then some of you might say, George, that's, here's the thing, here's the problem I have with Jesus is teaching. Because, you know, I've been looking around at the Bible while you're talking, I'm still listening, but I'm also looking around.

But, George, in a few moments, Jesus is going to tell us to call my, he's going to tell me to call myself unworthy. And, George, let me just tell you, I have enough people stepping on me and making me feel unworthy.

You know, I have people who make catty comments about how I dress or my weight or, you know, I have, I go on Facebook and it just seems like everybody else is way, they have, you know, they have kids, I'd like to have kids, or I have kids and my kids are just like so-so.

I mean, I never tell my kids that because I love them and they're mine. But everybody else's kids seem to become rocket scientists, Olympic athletes, you know, popular, you know, all that type of stuff.

And I already feel unworthy. Like, how on earth does Jesus think I'm going to accomplish anything if I have to say to him that I'm unworthy? If I have to try to feel unworthy? Like, do I just sort of, George, think that Jesus is greater and greater and greater and therefore I am, you know, more worm-like and terrible and bad?

[31 : 33] And is that how it works, George? If that's how it works, like, I don't want to do that because there's enough thing. You know, that's the thing about religion. It keeps telling me I have to grovel. In fact, George, you have a perfect thing right here.

Religion is all about balancing groveling and power. Moving mulberry trees and sane and unworthy. Grovel and power.

Grovel and power. Grovel and power. I don't like the dance. I'd rather just have a drink and watch the football game. And that's how a lot of people understand and hear the words. Well, what does Jesus say? Let's look. Verse 7.

So remember, he just said, be uprooted and planted in the sea that will obey you. Verse 7. Well, any one of you who has a servant, and I'm just going to pause here. And the word servant, some of you have heard this before, that the word in Greek, and I don't usually like using Greek words, but the word in Greek is doulos.

And the problem is that doulos means something different. And some of your English versions say slave, some say servant. And the problem is that there's no English word that captures doulos.

[32 : 35] When you use the word slave, you think of what happened to that. You know, if you haven't seen the movie, it's a very powerful movie, 12 years a slave. Very powerful movie. And so you see the word slave, our minds instantly go to something like 12 years a slave.

But you see the word servant, our minds, at least if you're of my age, you instantly think of the Fresh Prince of Bel-Air, where the only competent, reasonable person in the entire household was the servant. Right?

And the Bible, and so in our culture, we think of, you know, people with, you know, who are just servants who are really the only competent, sane person in the household, actually does anything. So we either think of servant or we think of slave in it.

Doulos means something very, very different. Because in the ancient world, I mean, a doulos could end up, like if you go in the book of, if you go in the book of Acts, you'll see that there's a meeting of a person who's the treasurer of an entire country, and he would have been a doulos.

So it means that you belong to somebody, and you can't control yourself. You are, in a sense, are under orders, and you belong to them.

[33 : 43] But it doesn't necessarily, it doesn't mean the degradation of slavery the way we think of it, and it doesn't mean the type of snarkiness that we think of with servant, but it does convey the idea of belonging to another and under their authority and command.

Like maybe a better analogy would be if they're in the soldier, they're private. Don't think general, think private. Okay? Maybe corporal or something, but even then that doesn't get quite right, because in a sense a colonel is under a general as well.

So it's just, I'm going to use the word *doulos* in the point in a moment. But let's, sorry, verse 7. Will any of you, any one of you who has a *doulos*, plowing or keeping sheep, say to him when he has come in from the field, come at once and recline at table?

Will he not rather say to him, prepare supper for me and dress properly, and serve me while I eat and drink, and afterward you will eat and drink? Does he thank the servant because he did what he was commanded?

See, all of these things, it's rhetorical. He's expecting you to agree. No, you wouldn't come in and serve the servant. The servant serves you. That's how the world works. You know? Would the servant ask the word thank because the servant's done their duty?

[34 : 50] No, the servant wouldn't particularly expect thanks. It's not encouraging us to be rude to staff at Starbucks or Target while it still exists in Canada. It's just talking, trying to understand this is the way the world works.

And then in verse 10, so you also, when you have done all that you were commanded, say, we are unworthy servants. We have only done, or we are unworthy *doulos*.

We have only done what was our duty. So here's the prayer, and then I'll just briefly explain it. Dear God, by grace, I am your *doulos*. Please grow in me a deep, obedient, and humble trust in you as my master who commands me.

See, here's what the text is talking about.

We sort of come at it from a wrong type of way. If I was to tell you that, you know, one of the single women here, that in 10 years' time, you're going to be, there's going to be a man who structures your life that helps to determine when you come home and how much money you spend on clothes and all of that type of stuff.

[36 : 22] If I just said there'll be a man like that, people might, women might feel very deeply resented about. Same thing for if I said to a man about a woman doing that. But I can tell you right now that for 33 years, I've not made my own decisions about a whole pile of things, and I've had someone tell me what I'm going to have for supper and contribute to where we're going for holidays and all sorts of things, and that's been a real blessing for me to be married to Louise for 33 years.

You see, the problem is that we often mistake the problem of authority with the problem of authority is ultimately a problem of intimacy and of love and of trust.

And so many of us have been in organizations like churches or corporations where there is no trust, where they don't care about, they only care about the bottom line, they don't care about the employees.

And many of us maybe have been in marriages that have broken down or have been very abusive and haven't broken down, and so we tend to interpret the entire world through the lens of rights and stuff like that.

But Jesus here, even though when he's using the slave, you see, this is why the slave and servant thing doesn't really work. There could be real affection between the *doulos* and the master. And it's not, we have to think in terms of intimacy and trust.

[37 : 41] You see, once again, remember, Jesus is telling us about this. And who is the man who's telling us? What is the gospel? The gospel is that Jesus is the second person of the Trinity.

And the Father says to the second person of the Trinity that the only way that human beings can be reconciled to me, they cannot do it themselves. They are spiritually dead.

And only I can do something. Only we can do something because they cannot save themselves.

And the nature of sin and the nature of our rebellion is such that the Father says to his son, you need to become human.

You need to set aside your glory and divine prerogatives and your power and set all of that stuff aside. And all you leave is your very nature and you're going to be born.

I know you created the planets. I know you hold all things in existence. And I know that your hands that have formed the planets and the stars and the galaxies, that I'm asking you to have a little tiny

baby's hand that can't even reach your mother's nose.

[38 : 50] But I'm asking you to set aside all your glory and power and divine prerogatives, your splendor and remaining God to be born and take into yourself human nature and to be born, to be in a womb and to be born and to walk amongst the created order.

And then to continue to humble yourself until death upon the cross. And as you die upon the cross, you die not for your own sins, but you will actually bear and taste upon your very person the sin and the rebellion of these human beings who are crucifying you.

And that is the means by which my power to save will enter into the created order so that all who put their trust in you can be reconciled to me.

And that's the person who's telling us this. That's the one who's telling us this. See, as the gospel grips us, there is this possibility that we will have new desires and new ways of understanding these challenges.

And so it's not that Jesus is telling us not to have any type of self-esteem, but he's telling us in a sense not to keep our eyes on ourselves while we're trying to navigate these things.

[40 : 11] You know, many people of us, I find myself sometimes walking around as if the weight of this church rests on me or the weight of some other organization rests on me. And it is such a gracious moment in heaven.

Maybe I'll find out that just as that is seeming to bear me down as I'm walking along like this, and maybe I will find in heaven that the reason that this thought comes into my head is because one of you or somebody else has been praying for me that very, very second.

And it's as if sometimes, and may it come more and more and more, it's as if God speaks to me and says, George, you do not carry the weight of your family. You do not carry the weight of your marriage. You do not carry the weight of the church.

You do not carry the weight of evangelism. You do not carry that weight. My son, Jesus, he carries that weight and he carries you. It's my work, not yours.

And it's my work, and as part of my work, you're my servant. I carry that weight. Jesus carried the weight of the sins of the world on his shoulders and his person.

[41 : 12] He carries you. You're his doulos. You see, this text is inviting us to understand that God is big and I am small, and that's a really good thing. And you know how it is, like, if you come to our office and you park in the back and you want to get out, the walls are very close.

And the way you understand how you get through something which is very close, if you spend all your time looking at yourself or looking at the walls, you'll hit the walls. You look between all those things and away from yourself at the end, and then you go through it.

And that's what Jesus is telling us about here is we keep our eyes on the master. We keep our eyes on God. And we listen to his direction.

Just as if you're trying to navigate a parking spot and the walls are really bad, and you have a person at the end and they're going like this and they're going like that, and you keep your eyes on them and you get through it. That's what Jesus is telling us about.

That's why we are to pray, dear God, by grace, I am your doulos. By grace, I am your doulos. You are the master. It is your work to save.

[42 : 16] It is your work to carry the church. It is your work to carry the churches in the city. It's your work to carry Anik. It's your work to carry my children and their spouses and their future spouses and my grandchildren.

It's your work. I am your doulos. By grace, thank you, Jesus. I do not have to carry that. I do not have to carry that. Neither do you. By grace, I am your doulos.

Please grow in me a deep, obedient, and humble trust in you as my master who commands me.

Just one final thing. Some of you might say, George, that's all right for you.

You have these religious affections. You have these religious emotions. I'm just an ordinary person. I find this strange. You know, sometimes when I'm at work and people at work talk about this and that, and I wish I could have that type of faith.

I wish I could have those types of things. But I just don't have those emotions. Can you tell me how to get those emotions? I can't tell you how to get emotions. I'm not talking about willpower. All I can do is time and time and time and time again tell you about Jesus and the cross.

[43 : 18] And that says, you hear about Jesus and the cross. And it grips you. You hear about what he does for us. That maybe we have the courage to pray this prayer.

And for some of us, when we pray any one of these three prayers in the next one that I'm going to give you, for some of us, it's the invitation at the same time for Jesus to plant faith in us and then to grow it.

But for all of us, even for those who have now put our faith and trust in Jesus, remember Jesus has told us we should ask him to grow our faith. That's why all of these prayers are in terms of growing. So just one final text.

We're going to read the final parable. But before we do, I'm going to give you the point. I'm going to read verses 11 to 19 in closing. But Andrew, if you could put up the final prayer to help us understand this final story.

Dear God, please grow in me a deep, humble, thankful trust in Jesus, who has healed my deepest wound and saved me by his death upon the cross. Dear God, please grow in me a deep, humble, thankful trust in Jesus, who has healed my deepest wound and saved me by his death upon the cross.

[44 : 26] Every miracle of healing in the gospel points to the fact that on the cross, Jesus deals with our deepest wound, a wound which is fatal, which has made us dead.

And that God heals the wound, brings life, that we can be his child. And that's why the healing miracles in the gospel are so important, because it points to this profound, deep wound, the deepest wound we have, which is our separation from the living creator of all things, the true creator and sustainer and end of the whole created order.

And we are alienated from him. And on the cross, Jesus brings life and heals the wound at the same time. And that's what salvation is. And we see it here in this story.

Verse 11, on the way to Jerusalem, Jesus was passing along between Samaria and Galilee. And some scholars have problems with that because Jesus is not a type A driven individual who wants to get from where he is to Jerusalem in the shortest possible time.

People be set aside. I almost said a bad word. And Jesus doesn't take the direct fast route that ignores people.

[45 : 44] He takes the compassionate route, which means he takes all these detours to deal with people. It's not a problem in the text, just not understanding Jesus.

Verse 11, on the way to Jerusalem, he was passing between Samaria and Galilee. And as he entered a village, he was met by 10 lepers who stood at a distance. And in all cultures, I mean, lepers, they would be missing limbs.

They would be quite disfigured. They would be social outcasts, unclean. And so they're keeping their distance. They call out to Jesus. We have no idea. They've probably heard he does miracles. They don't know. It's not really clear what on earth they think he's going to do. But what do they do when they see him? They say, Jesus, master, have mercy on us. And Jesus, when he sees them, says, go and show yourselves to the priests.

And, you know, the Bible doesn't tell us what goes through their mind. But maybe they're mindful of the story of Naaman the Syrian, from Syria in the Old Testament, where part of Naaman's healing was to go to do something.

[46 : 48] And so they just say, OK, well, we'll go. All their faith was was just to go, to follow this word of what Jesus told them to do and to go. And as they went, they were cleansed.

Now, what this means here is it means they were healed. And I don't know what that means entirely. You know, one of the things about it is that health is natural. And because health is natural, we don't usually feel health.

We feel pain. And I don't know if it means that as they were walking around along and they're walking there and they're walking like this and all of a sudden, without them realizing it, their fingers have grown back out.

But they don't realize it because it's natural to have fingers. And they're walking along and maybe their toes, which have been missed, all of a sudden are back. And then maybe as they're walking like this, one of them happens to look and says, Joseph has toes.

And then they looked and they realized they pointed with a finger. And they didn't used to have a finger. And they realized they've been healed in a most dramatic way.

[47 : 59] And the text goes on. And then one of them, verse 15, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, goes back to Jesus, praising God with a loud voice.

This isn't a time to go to a priest. It's time to go to God. Not time to go to church. Time to go to God. And he fell on his face at Jesus.

He prostrated at Jesus' feet, giving him thanks. And he was a Samaritan, which means he didn't believe the right things. He was all confused about the Bible, all confused about God. And he wasn't part of the people of promise by the flesh.

Then Jesus said, we're not 10 clans. We're the nine. Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner? You know what's so wonderful about that word foreigner? It says stranger. I mean, a few folks, some of you are here and you think you're foreign, and it's foreign and strange to talk about having this faith and trust in Jesus.

All I can do is tell you that when Jesus looks at you, he looks and he speaks to this man with the eyes of love, and he calls him foreigner. And it's so neat. The man's at Jesus' feet. He's praising God.

[49 : 04] Jesus has obviously accepted him. In a moment, he's going to tell him that not only was he physically healed, but he was spiritually saved. And the word foreigner is the word that in the temple would be a big word.

If you are a foreigner, you cannot go any closer into the temple. We are keeping you away from God. And Jesus used that word to say that the man was saved.

No one is too foreign or too strange or too broken or too absent of religious affections or religious willpowers that Jesus cannot save you and welcome you as his own.

And he said to him, rise, go your way. Your faith has saved you. And so we are invited to pray, dear God, please grow in me a deep, humble, thankful trust in Jesus, who has healed my deepest wound and saved me by his death upon the cross.

Please stand. Just bow our heads in prayer. Father, for some of us, as we pray these prayers, we don't know if we have had faith in you, but we want you to give us that faith.

[50 : 26] We want you to give us that faith and we want you to grow it in us, Father. Grow it in us. For all of us here, Father, it's the cry of our heart, even for those of us who have had faith in Jesus for many years, that you would grow that faith in us, that you might grow a humble, yearning, longing, walking, knowing, trust in us.

Grow a trust in us and a longing and a yearning and a resting and an availability and a thankfulness in you, for Jesus, the Messiah, for what you've done upon the cross for us and who you are, for your love for us.

Father, grow that within us. And this we ask, grow that within us. Make us disciples gripped by the gospel who live for your glory. And all this we ask in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior. Amen.