

The Strong and the Weak

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 11 November 2018

Preacher: Rev. George Sinclair

[0 : 0 0] Father, we give you thanks and praise that you have never stopped being king of the whole earth. You are the same God who shaped all the planets and the galaxies with your hand, and you have never let the planets and the galaxies go.

You are the same God who shapes and turns history and turns people's lives in the direction that you have already chosen.

Father, we thank you so much for Jesus. We thank you that he has redeemed us. We thank you that through faith in him, we do not call out to an unknown God, but that we can call to you, you, our Father in heaven, who is still the Lord of this place.

So, Father, we call out to you as your children, and we ask that your Holy Spirit would fall, and we ask that as the Holy Spirit falls, that we would know Jesus, and that your word would speak to us deep in our heart.

And we ask all these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Please be seated. If I seem a little bit less energetic than usual, I'm jet-lagged.

[1 : 1 7] I was in British Columbia all week, and my internal clock is completely and utterly discombobulated. Hopefully, my brain won't be completely and utterly discombobulated as I talk this morning, as we open the word.

If you have your Bibles, turn in them to Esther 5. I know the text will be up there in the screen as well, for those of you who don't have Bibles, but it's just a really great thing to have a Bible with you, and get familiar with your book, or however it is that you read the Bible, and sometimes be able to make notes in it as different things speak to you.

I know you can do that electronically as well. So, we're going to be looking at Esther 5. And, you know, this is a very...

One of the things that keeps us from being a Christian, or gets in the way of us being a Christian, is we're aware of the fact that often it'll mean that we have to be a bit weaker, and nobody likes to be weak.

And this text sort of speaks into that in a very, very interesting way in the context of a story. So, let's just plunge in. If you're just trying to remember where we are in this story, it's a story set in Persia, ancient Persia, when King Xerxes was the king, the emperor of the Persian Empire, the greatest empire in the world at that time.

[2 : 4 1] And it's all about how a plan has now developed from this fellow by the name of Haman to kill all of the Jews in the empire, like everyone, whether you're young or whether you're old, male or female, to kill every Jewish person and to steal and plunder their property.

And the king has given permission for this. And even as the events in this story transpire, the wheels, so to speak, of the state, the bureaucracy, the military, the police, the judiciary, and even the citizens as individuals are starting to prepare for this great day, about ten, ten and a half months hence, when every Jew will be killed.

And central to this whole story have been two Jewish people. One of them is a man by the name of Mordecai, whom I've said week after week, I know it gets a bit boring for some of you, who's lived as a Persian.

He's lived as some combination between being a pagan and being a Zoroastrian. He has a name that says, I worship Marduk, the god of Babylon. And he has raised an adopted daughter by the name of Esther.

That's her Persian name. She had a Jewish name, but he tells her to use her Persian name, which is she's named after the goddess Ishtar. And Esther, through a series of circumstances, has become one of King Xerxes' queens.

[4 : 10] But she has lived like a Persian, looks like a Persian, eats like a Persian, worships like a Persian. Nobody knows that she's Jewish. And so we see in the story as it unfolds this conversion moment for Mordecai, where he's just brought to that point where he returns to the Lord of Israel who cares for his covenant people.

And he says, I am a Jew. I am one who's going to live under the Lord's hand and under his covenant. But Esther hasn't done that. And after this decree is made to use the power of the state to kill every Jewish person, what we looked at last week is that Mordecai outs his adopted daughter, Esther.

He outs her. And he outs her because he's come to confront her and say, you know, through an intermediary that you need to go in and speak to the king and appeal for your people.

And Esther gives Mordecai a very, very, very, very, very, very reasonable reason as to why she shouldn't do something like that. Because basically she has a very high likelihood of being put to death because there's a rule, which is also, by the way, reported in other secular historians or pagan historians, I should say, that if you come into the king's inner sanctum to speak to him and he hasn't invited you, unless when he sees you, you come in.

And if he doesn't give you, extend his royal scepter to give you permission, the only other option is to have you killed. And Esther says, it's pretty foolish of you, really, Mordecai, to ask me to go and appear before the king.

[5 : 54] I haven't seen him in 30 days. Who knows how long it'll be. And so there's this, the whole story turns in this last interchange of what we just looked at last week, where Mordecai, his faith in the Lord's providence comes out.

He says, listen, the Lord is going to deliver his people because that's what he's promised he does. And don't think that you can hide while Mordecai goes through his, Haman goes through his plan and that you won't come under this judgment and you won't die and suffer.

But here's the thing. I know that the Lord is going to deliver. And maybe the Lord has put you in this position for such a time as this, that you are the one here right now to take this message to the king.

And if you don't, you'll perish. And as we looked at a little bit last week, it's the language of a type of eternal perishing within the context of the Hebrew.

And you'll fall under God's judgment. So this is like a conversion moment for Esther as to whether she's going to trust the Lord or trust herself.

[7 : 13] And Mordecai's words pierce her heart. And she becomes a reluctant convert. She doesn't start saying yes and jumping up and down because she's all pumped.

She says, I will spend the next day, three days fasting without food or water. And I will reveal who I am to my young women.

And I will ask them to join me in fasting and prayer for three days to the Lord. And I ask you, Mordecai, if you would gather all of the Jewish people that you know and you would ask them to fast and to pray for me for three days.

And at the end of the three days, I will go unto the king. And if I perish, I perish. I mean, when you say, if I perish, I perish, that's not a sign that you're just, that you're filled with the joy of the Lord.

It's not despairing. It's not cynical. It's very realistic. And it's very, very courageous. And really, for those, everything that happens in the rest of the book of Esther has to be understood from that perspective that the Lord has going to deliver his people, whether Esther is the one who is there for such a time as this, and whether her faith and obedience to the Lord will lead her to end up being, to perishing, because she might die in this whole process.

[8 : 41] And so that's where we begin this story today. It's verse one. On the third day, Esther put on her royal robes and stood in the inner court of the king's palace in front of the king's quarters while the king was sitting on his royal throne inside the throne room opposite the entrance to the palace.

And just pause. One of the things which is hard for some people as this sermon series has been going on is because I'm sort of bringing out things in the story which make it obvious that the way you've normally heard the story talked about isn't right.

Like, I know after I shared where Esther gets introduced and the fact that she's a compromised person who doesn't live like a Jew, who goes under the name of the goddess of Ishtar, and the way she becomes queen, literally the way she becomes queen, is her sexual performance with the emperor and her conversation with him makes him choose her, which doesn't usually get talked about in Sunday school.

And here in this story, it's often said that what Esther does is she makes herself beautiful to appear before the king. And that's wrong. The text has made clear that she's just spent the last three days fasting without food or water.

One of the things which I'm prey to is I can get so busy with work that I don't drink fluids. I go from one thing to another to another to another and I don't drink enough fluids.

[10 : 28] And I'll be home and I'll say to my wife, you know, I finally get home and I say to Louise, I say, gosh, I'm really feeling just tired and draggy. And, you know, and then like I'm dumb, right?

So it doesn't dawn on me at first that I'm dehydrated. And then I sort of think to myself, maybe I'm just dehydrated. And before I know it, like I've had three glasses or four glasses of something and half an hour later, the world looks better.

I have energy. I'm not tired. I was just dehydrated. And that's just after an afternoon. I'm not a doctor. I did a little bit of looking on the Internet to see what happens if you go three days without food and water.

But at the end of three days without water, you can still live. By the way, the text isn't recommending you do this. And whether it was a full 72 hours or a little bit less, the text is a bit silent on it, but she's gone a while without food and without water.

And after this length of time without water, her brain would feel tired and heavy. She wouldn't have energy. It's very possible that her joints would be aching because regular fluid's important for your joints to be able to work well.

[11 : 41] And the body's ability to control its temperature would be way out of whack. And she might be going through periods where she's literally shivering with cold.

And then within a few moments, she could be heavily sweating. And if one of us was brought into the hospital because we'd gone three days without fluid, they wouldn't say, okay, now you're in the exact right state of affairs to go do an important interview.

They'd say, we're putting you in the hospital. We're not letting you out. We're going to give you intravenous. We're going to pump some fluids into you and we're going to fix you. That's what they'd say.

And so she would look either sweaty or clammy. She would be maybe shivering, sweating and shivering. And she might be walking with pain.

And her lack of energy would be apparent. So now it isn't as if she goes in. It says here she puts on her royal robe and that many people will just jump to the thing that she spent her time working on her makeup.

[12 : 49] But this is, the whole thing is a very, very interesting thing in this story, you see. And it's a puzzling story, right? Because the fact of the matter is, let's be honest. If one of you came up to me and said, George, I have a really, really, really important meeting in three, you know, next week or in three days, like on Wednesday, George, or Thursday, I have this really, really, really important interview that I have to go through.

What should I do? And I have to confess, I probably wouldn't tell you to fast for three days and take no water and pray. I'd probably, I'd tell you you should pray, but I'd probably say, you know what you can do is you can visualize success.

You know, send me a copy of your words, your speech, and we can make it punchy. You've got to work on your elevator talk. You know, those first 30 seconds or 90 seconds, it's key.

You want to say something at the beginning that's going to really grab the person, hook them and bring them in. And in other words, basically what I would be telling them is I would be telling them all of the different ways.

And, you know, maybe I'd be saying, of course, you know, you're going to, you know, don't come to me for fashion advice, which is obvious. Some of you ask me occasionally why it is that I always wear a clergy shirt at church.

[13 : 58] I don't wear it throughout the week. It's very simple. I am such a non-clothes person that if I actually tried to not dress in a clergy shirt and pants, you'd start to say, he's wearing the same pants like every week.

And look at the socks with the sandals. And the socks don't match his shirt or his tie or whatever it's supposed to match. I wouldn't even know what it's supposed to match. Like, I'm the opposite of a clothes person.

I can wear black, like, dress, it's like a uniform. I'm allowed to wear it every week and nobody comments on it, which is one of the reasons, the main reason why I do it. I can just get by like this every week.

I don't have to think about my clothes. So I would say to you, don't come to me about advice about clothes. You know, go to Victor or, you know, or some other person, and they'll tell you how to be well put together so you look spectacular for your meeting.

And, but you know, what I'd be doing is all of my advice would be how to get strong. That's what we'd all do. All of our advice would be how to get strong, how to get pumped, how to visualize your success, work on your talk, you know, work all of these types of, pray and work and work and work.

[15 : 07] And you come to a text like this and it's a very, very, very counterintuitive text is that she makes herself weak. And when she stands to come into the king's presence to see whether she's going to live and die, maybe she's had some fluid now, but she won't have had enough to have been rehydrated.

And she's put on her royal robes to show that she's the queen. And I'm sure she did her hair and whatever makeup her would have been back then. But she comes in a weak, in a weakened state. Now, just to be clear, the Bible here isn't saying that there's something virtuous about weakness per se.

And it's not saying that you have to be weak to speak before the king. What you see here is something which is really counterintuitive to our flesh and to the world, but very, very, very, very, very important to understand.

She humbles herself not before the king, not before power of the world, not before the people who want to kill her people.

She's not humbling herself and making her weak before them. She becomes weak and humbles herself before her God that she can stand before the king.

[16 : 30] It's not saying that the world would be better if everybody was weaker. It's not saying anything other than the fact that this is a profound story of conversion.

And with her conversion, and she knows the power of the court and the power of the empire, and if she is going to trust in the Lord, she's going to have to trust in the Lord all of the way.

Unless the Lord does this, she is doomed. And she has this profound sense. The text never explains it. It may be as just the memory she's had of her upbringing and of the stories of God's deliverance, but the fact of the matter is it's going to have to be the Lord who will deliver his people, the Lord who will act in the midst of all these other things.

And the way that she is to do this is if she is going to be able to stand before the king and look him in the eye, if she is going to be able to stand before Haman, the one who wants to murder her and all her people, if she is to stand before her enemies and her kings, she needs to humble herself before the Lord so she may stand.

And that's what she does. And so we come to see how it is that the king is going to respond. Verse 2. Now remember, when she comes in, she's looking more frail.

[18 : 02] She's not walking with the usual spring in her step. She doesn't look well. But she's come and stood in the place where within the next few moments, the king will either ignore her, and that means the guards will come and take her away and kill her, or he will look at her and he will beckon her to come and she will live at least for that moment.

So in verse 2, and when the king saw Queen Esther standing in the court, she won favor in his sight and he held out to Esther the golden scepter that was in his hand.

Then Esther approached and touched the tip of the scepter. That's one of those little aspects of the story for those of you who have visual imaginations that just help you to understand what's happening.

It's a sign that she's acknowledged that he's letting her live. And she comes close to him. She touches the symbol of his authority as acknowledgement that she can be in his presence and that she can live.

And the king must have noticed how she looks. So he says to her, what is it, Queen Esther?

[19 : 29] What is your request? Shall be given you even half of my kingdom. Now just sort of pause here again. He doesn't mean this literally.

He's just having good manners. If she'd said, well actually, I'd like, I have a map of the kingdom. I've drawn a line right here. I'd like you to have, I'd like to have this half and you can have that half.

But you know, at the end of the day, it doesn't matter. You can have the other half and I'll have this half. If she'd said that, she'd be dead. It's just good manners. By the way, here's a really important thing.

When you read the Gospels, when you read something like, for God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son to the end that all who believe in him shall not perish but have eternal life, it's not good manners.

It's literal. It's literal. He really will stop you from perishing.

[20 : 32] He really will give you eternal life. But this is just good manners. And so, how is she going to respond? She says, and Esther said, verse 4, if it please the king, let the king and Haman come today to a feast that I have prepared for the king.

And pause again. Now, this would have puzzled the king because he would say to himself, she didn't risk her life just to ask to have some hummus and tabouli and lamb and goat and wine with me.

He wouldn't know what it is, but he'd know that there's something else going on. And it's really puzzling. The text never explains why it is that the queen asks not only to see the king but also the king and Haman.

Part of the reason that she asked for the meal is maybe clear to all of us if we just sort of picture what happens is that this isn't as if, this isn't like what it's like probably in most offices where if you can make it through all of the security guards and all of the, and the receptionists and the personal assistant, you eventually get into the office of the cabinet minister or the prime minister who's there by himself.

What happens in the inner court is the advisors of the king would be around and there's soldiers who are around and there's people with other type of business who'd made the proper appointments and they're all around.

[22 : 02] There'd be many people who are all around. And so it is sort of, if you sort of understand that that's what it looks like, it's not like our being able to go see the prime minister. It would sort of really be more like you get to see the prime minister of Canada but while he's there, half of his cabinet is there and half of his aides are there and his chief of staff is there and there's security guards and police there and it's a big crowd and you can well imagine that it's going to be a very intimidating thing to try to make your request to the prime minister in front of so many people.

It'd be very intimidating. And so you can understand why she asked for the meal but the puzzling thing is that she asked for Haman and the text doesn't tell you why she asked for Haman but she does.

So we can be free to differ. I mean, that's one of those things we can talk about over coffee. Why did she ask for Haman to be present? I think it's maybe for at least two reasons. Part of it is I think just the courage that God has given her even in her weakened state because I don't know how many of you have been profoundly wronged but I know that there are some of you here who have been profoundly wronged that maybe have been even beaten or treated very, very unjustly and this is a sign of great courage that when the time comes for her to actually speak about this that she will be able to look the man in the eye be in his presence unintimidated and unashamed and look him in the eye and reveal what he has done and call him out on his evil.

This is great courage. She has humbled herself before the Lord so that she might stand in front of the emperor of the empire and stand and speak clearly about the evil of his top advisor and confront him.

The other thing might be a little bit practical is that you could well imagine let's say you had a big request of the prime minister and you got him privately and you asked the prime minister to do something and then you leave and the first thing the prime minister does is go and talk to his advisors including the ones who are giving him all the bad advice and you're stuck out there.

[24 : 23] You can't come back into the king's presence without risking his death again and now all of a sudden you know and the prime minister might be sort of favorable when he sees you but he goes back and he talks to Gerald Butts and he talks to some of his key cabinet ministers and say don't that's crazy don't do that like get another queen like get over it you already have lots so just get another one like so maybe it is that she wants to be able to have it out with Haman and the king in private just the three of them but the text is silent but this is the surprising thing she wants a feast and she wants it with the king and she wants it with Haman so in verse 5 the king responds by saying bring Haman quickly so that we may do as Esther has asked so the king and Haman came to the feast that Esther had prepared and as they were drinking wine after the feast the king said to Esther what is your wish it shall be granted you and what is your request even to the half of my kingdom it shall be fulfilled then Esther answered and we expect her to say this terrible Haman wants to kill me you need to protect me

I'm Jewish he's evil you think that she's going to say that but she doesn't this is a very helpful feature of the story the thing that's so helpful about this story is because each one of us is fallible none of us is perfect and sometimes we screw up and sometimes when it comes right to the opportunity and the time to do it we lose a bit of our nerve but we don't complete I mean sometimes we completely lose our nerve but sometimes we just like we're in two minds and you want to but you can't and she stumbles here a little bit she has the opportunity but she doesn't just completely walk away from the opportunity but she wants an extra day to work on it and as we're going to see in a moment that waiting a day might have horrific consequences for a man that she loves deeply but when it comes time to do the ask see this is so helpful because this is like how we live isn't it this is how each of us lives not perfect lives that are straightforward in our obedience but with zigs and zags and times when we go home and afterwards and say to our friends and say to our God

I just Lord I'm really sorry I messed that one up you gave me this spectacular opportunity and you saved my life and I just didn't do it the way I should because that's what happens verse 7 then Esther answered my wish and my request is if I have found favor in the sight of the king and if it please the king to grant my wish and fulfill my request let the king and Haman come to the feast that I will prepare for them and tomorrow tomorrow I will do as the king has said now here's another thing which is so interesting about this story and you know it's one of the reasons that these stories are so important is you can have a doctrine I can tell you about a doctrine but it doesn't necessarily have any place in us but when we actually get the story the story helps us to feel and sort of visualize it and and the the person who writes this book doesn't now say and the Lord was angry with Esther for having screwed up doesn't say anything like that it's going to take a really really bad turn but the reader is to remember the Lord will deliver his people is Esther here for such a time as this and Esther's line if I perish

I perish she's willing to put herself available to the Lord even if it means she dies and her greater confidence isn't in her own success she has no particular confidence or view or that her greater confidence is that the Lord is the Lord and that the Lord will keep his promises and the Lord will deliver his people even when they are in exile in the empire of Persia he will keep his promises because he is still the Lord but verse 9 she doesn't have her opportunity and verse 9 it's really interesting Haman verse 9 he went out that day joyful and glad of heart the man who is plotting to kill every Jew in the empire leaves joyful and glad of heart but when Haman saw Mordecai in the king's gate that he neither rose nor trembled before him Haman was filled with wrath against Mordecai nevertheless Haman restrained himself and went home and he sought and brought his friends and his wife Zeresh and Haman recounted to them the splendor of his riches literally the glory of his riches the number of his sons and all of his daughters no the daughters are omitted sucks to be a daughter in this particular family the number of his sons and all the promotions with which the king had honored him and how he advanced him above the officials and the servants of the king then Haman said even Queen Esther let no one but me come with the king to the feast she prepared and tomorrow also

I am invited by her together with the king now look at this this next line is so so psychologically true you know it's interesting because in in our flesh and in the world and in our culture what gives us meaning to life what do we like many people will wreck their marriages so they can get promotions many people will wreck their marriages so they can have more money many people think that if they just had this certain number of children that their life would be completely and utterly meaningful or that they could just be married or but it we we can set our the bible isn't saying there's nothing wrong with children it's not saying it's sad to have not be able to have children it's not saying anything like that it's not saying it's bad to have money it's not saying it's bad to have a job but it's we we all know that some of these things can become like an idol to us where we get our meaning where we get our identity where we get our sense of worth where we we feel justified and that somehow or another if I could just have that amount of money if I could just have this promotion if I could just have this if I could just have that then somehow or another my life would be complete my life would be full and yet the fact of the matter is is that those things don't satisfy us and it's so perfectly captured here in verse 13 so he's just said he has he has this access to the king he has this access to the queen

[31 : 38] I have all this wealth I have this spectacular family I have all these promotions yet all this is worth nothing to me so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate now I'm going to make a small little political comment here I'm really sorry but I'm still going to do it maybe afterwards I think I shouldn't sometimes the way the discourse goes is by the way I have four daughters I I love my daughters I love my wife and I have nine granddaughters and I'm going to be happy if one of them is prime minister or something like that there's not a negative thing about any of that but sometimes the way the discourse goes is that you need to have a woman present because well you know women are nurturing women are peaceable you know women try to bring people together and you know we never think about it when we have talk like that it actually demeans women as if somehow all women are like that really every single one like they're not individuals and so it's really interesting so his wife says he just confessed all things and so what's the advice his wife gives him is it to be nurturing no verse 14 and his wife Zeresh and all his friends but Zeresh is the leader she says let a gallows 50 cubits high that's 75 feet be made and and in the morning tell the king to have Mordecai hanged upon it it's sort of neat eh like it's funny the we trade in stereotypes when it helps us but the Bible never trades in stereotypes in fact often part of the problem we have in reading the Bible is that the Bible is too realistic for us we wish it was religious we wish it was spiritual we wish it wasn't just so earthy and it's why it's the great tendency and problem for Bible teachers to want to make to downplay what Esther has done and make it look as if she's made herself beautiful or as if the reason she became queen was because she was so charming rather than the sheer blood and guts earthiness of the text but here we get the blood and guts earthiness of the text look at it again verse 14 let a gallows and the literal word as you see in some of your things is it just it literally means a stake okay and if you're wondering how it is that they could make something 75 feet tall in a day the actual language just means that the top of the stake has to be 75 feet high so if Mordecai is already in a house that's 50 65 feet high he just has to put a 10 foot stake on the top of it the point is that it's going to be very very public and prominent and the odds are that they're not going to hang him on it the odds are that what they're going to do is they're going to they're going to drop Mordecai on it so that he's impaled so that the whole city or that whole neighborhood can look up and see Mordecai impaled dying slowly and gruesomely for all to see that's his wife's advice and so she says let a gallows or a stake 50 cubits high be made and in the morning tell the king to have Mordecai hanged upon it then go joyfully with the king to the feast and this idea pleased Haman and he had the gallows made so just a couple of things about about this text sort of to to you know to bring it to collect why is something like this even in the Bible and

why is all of this bloodthirstiness and all this stuff why is it in the Bible well you know part of the reason it's in the Bible is because when we just have all of these stuff the spiritual talk and religious talk it ends up very easily becoming like hallmark cards or just platitudes and our own lives are full of pain and drama and tragedy and hard times and stuff like that and in a very very powerful way when we read texts like this it helps us to understand that the Bible is communicating truths to us that fit with how the world is it's real for how our lives are real and in that way it trains us when our lives are really having very very hard times it trains us to call out to the Lord because the Lord knows about this it's not foreign to him and it's not strange to him we live in a world where somebody can just take a dislike to us and because they take a dislike to us they tell lies about us and because they take a dislike to us they stop us from getting promotions or they get us in trouble with the police or they get us in trouble with our wives or our families or our husbands and we live in a world where that happens we live in a world where somebody can just be mean to us day after day after day some of us have grown up with parents like that some of us have had bosses like that some of us have been in a neighborhood with that and if all of the talk in the Bible is just all about love love love love love love good good good well that might motivate us a little bit but in the blood and guts of our world it just doesn't cut it and so when texts like this just communicate what life is like it helps us to see that this Bible the text doesn't talk about God delivering his people in the abstract but in a life and death situation with a real woman at a real time and so on one hand the reason texts like this are important is it prepares our hearts to pour out our hearts to the Lord but the other thing which is very very important about the text there's a really wonderful line in 2nd Corinthians where it says my grace is sufficient for you my power is made perfect or complete in weakness and texts like this show us this you see the fundamental human problem is the problem of it's identified right in the very beginning of the Bible in Genesis chapter 3 where Adam and Eve desire to be like God they want to be like God and because when they choose that they're no longer going to sort of just trust the God who really does exist and they're going to live with him is that the Lord saying amen no it's just planes flying over it's also him saying amen but the fundamental human problem is the human problem of our desire to be like God's to exalt ourselves against God to turn our back on God to be as great as God and that's in a sense the fundamental human problem it's something which is deeply ingrained in every human being and when we can do when we can sort of pretend that we're having all this power and all the success we're filled with pride and at the same time when we're not successful at this we can be filled with despondency and despair because we're still having our hearts sit on this and that's why you see it's so most of us think that if God was going to really deliver us the way that he's going to have to deliver us is by having

this profound act of powers if he can just overwhelm us because you see at the end of the day we only want to respect God if he can sort of show himself to be really really powerful and that his power is used in the way that we think it should be used because what we really want to do is to be like God but the fact of the matter is is that our fundamental problem is that we have to be pulled back from that it's as if everything that we are like is straining and bending this way and when we're successful we're proud and when we're not successful we feel despair and so for the Lord to save us in a sense he has to want all of that back because you see part of what the story of Jesus is is that Jesus becomes the man that we the person that we could never be he becomes the person that we could never be so that when we put our faith and trust in him we're not only acknowledging that what he did in a sense to turn away

God's judgment on us in a sense to deal with all the karma that we deserve to use modern language but at the same time he stands for us and by standing for us it means that we trust him to that the life that he lives will now stand for us and so the way the Bible describes Jesus' ministry is that he humbles himself he empties himself he humbles himself to be born of a virgin he humbles himself to live a normal human life he humbles himself to only receive the knowledge and the wisdom that he needs when his father chooses to give him he's dependent upon God giving him the wisdom or the knowledge because all of those things his power in a sense is veiled it's curtailed he humbles himself to save us he becomes weak to save us every breath he depends upon God to save us and he even continues to humble himself to the point of death upon the cross and his death upon the cross being a shameful death and tasting all there is to taste of death and it's all a descent it's all a humility and a humility which is completely and utterly dependent upon

God and so when it is is that when we put our faith and trust in Jesus not only to deal with our sin which is just one aspect of salvation but also to stand for us to be the one for us on one hand we can trust him he doesn't just go by whims he's not all about his power he's not all about him that he humbles himself out of love and obedience to God and out of love for us he humbles himself and his perfect life of humility is the antidote of our addiction to pride and our desire to be like God and so he can stand for us and at the same time if he humbled himself to save me then that starts to shape me to understand that I need to humble myself before him to live that it's not that the Lord calls me to be weak but the

[43 : 06] Lord calls me to come to him which is a sign of weakness in the world to humble myself before him which is a sign of insanity and weakness to the world but to humble myself before him knowing that he has called me to do things of courage and bravery today that I can only do in his strength when I humble myself before him he will give me the strength and the confidence to deal with the things I need to deal with today please stand let's bow our heads in prayer father we thank you that Jesus humbled himself to save us we thank you father that we thank you father that you just invite us to humble ourselves and turn from our pride and our sense of self-sufficiency to acknowledge our great need of you to provide the way by which we can be made right again with you and we thank you that you provided that in Jesus we thank you that he humbled himself that he humbled himself to save us and we ask father that this great truth of him humbling himself to save us that that might shape us that that might that that story might captivate our imagination that it might captivate the affections of our hearts that it might captivate how we plan and how we understand who we are and where our confidence comes from we ask father that our confidence in our identity might be in the one who saved us who died to save us who humbled himself to save us that that might be father the source of our identity the source of our hope the source of our joy and the source of the confidence that you give those who humble themselves before you help help us to do that by the power of your

Holy Spirit and father help us to see how it is that you are using us and shaping us and preparing us to bring you glory in our day-to-day lives and we ask all of this in the name of Jesus your son and our savior amen for to have an who are