

Acts 17:1-15 "Be Open Minded!"

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[0 : 00] Hi, my name is George Sinclair. I'm the lead pastor of Church of the Messiah. It is wonderful that you would like to check out some of the sermons done by Church of the Messiah, either by myself or some of the others. Listen, just a couple of things. First of all, would you pray for us that we will open God's Word well to His glory and for the good of people like yourself?

The second thing is, if you aren't connected to a church and if you are a Christian, we really, I would really like to encourage you to find a good local church where they believe the Bible, they preach the gospel, and if you have some trouble finding that, send us an email. We will do what we can to help connect you with a good local church wherever you are. And if you're a non-Christian checking us out, we're really, really, really glad you're doing that. Don't hesitate to send us questions. It helps me, actually, to know, as I'm preaching, how to deal with the types of things that you're really struggling with. So God bless.

Let's just bow our heads in prayer for a moment. Father, we ask that your Holy Spirit would fall with gentle power upon us. Father, it's at moments like this that we can confess to you that we are far better at seeing specks in other people's eyes than logs in our own eyes. And we confess before you at times like this that we are actually quite skilled at flattering ourselves too much to detect or hate our own sin. So Father, we ask for the gentle but powerful work of your Holy Spirit to bring your words and the gospel of Jesus Christ deep into our hearts, that we might be released from the bands of those sins which cripple us and ruin our lives and the lives of others, and that we might walk in the wholeness and freedom that comes from knowing Jesus and becoming more like him. And we ask this in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior. Amen. Please be seated.

So two Saturdays ago, I had the great privilege of speaking at the youth retreat. And I think in the morning I talked about the Bible, how to read the Bible for yourself, how to develop a Bible reading habit. And after lunch, always a great time to speak right after lunch, I spoke on sort of how to pray and develop a prayer life or be a more prayerful person. And one of the things I talked about during that time was the whole Acts model of prayer. Most of you might remember this, you know, adoration, confession, thanksgiving, supplication. And I talked a little bit about all of them.

But in particular, when I was talking about confession, I wanted to warn them about something that happens. And by the way, I'm sure all of us are vastly too spiritual mature to have anything like this ever happen to us. But one of the things that can develop with people is that God can, the devil can be very, very happy to make you very convicted about a particular sin. And so when it come times to, you know, confess your sin, whoa, right away you go to the really obvious one and you pray about it and pray about it and pray about it and anxious about it. And the devil actually is quite happy with that because it makes you blind to a whole pile of other sins that if you were to ask your best friends or your parents honestly to talk to you about, they'd instantly say, oh, they're spending all their time talking about that. Well, yeah, yeah, they should talk about that, but they should be also thinking about this, this, this, this, and this. It's just one of those things.

[3 : 48] You know, the example that I gave with them is that, you know, I'm talking to teenagers that often a lot of the confessions around the sin of lust. And I don't want you leaving away saying, oh, by the way, Reverend George, Pastor George, so we don't have to pray against lust anymore. No, I don't want you to say that. But I mean, it's, it may, you might never pray about greed.

But your whole desire of your heart is to be an Audi driving, fully devoted servant of mammon. And you never once pray against her. You have problems with anger or anything else. Anyway, the point of this is that the Bible today is going to talk about a sin, which is probably one of the most besetting sins of Canadians, including Canadian Christians. But it's something that probably very few of us ever confess. And it's going to contrast this sin in an absolutely shocking way with a virtue that we wouldn't normally put together with that sin. So let's have a look. We're in Acts chapter 17.

We're going to be looking at verses 1 to 15. And the way, if you're using this, it's on page 98. And the way it's sort of, in sort of the flow of the book, right, the book of Acts is an eyewitness-based history of the 30 or so early years of the Jesus movement, and written by a sometimes eyewitness, but written when many eyewitnesses were still alive to correct things. And what we've just seen is a whole big story. We've looked at that last week of Paul in the city of Philippi, the first encounter of Christianity with Europeans. That's what Acts 16 is talking about, the big story in Philippi. And we now have these two really short linked stories before we get into a longer section about Athens. And so that's where we are. And so let's read. Acts chapter 17, verse 1. And it's really good if you bring your own Bibles, by the way. It's just really helpful if you make notes, questions, underlying things. Anyway, just want to encourage you to bring your own Bibles. And it goes like this.

Now, when they had passed through Amphipolis, I'm probably not pronouncing that correctly. Now, when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. And just sort of want to pause there just for a second.

[6 : 16] One of the things that cracks me up all of the time about action movies, and I'm a sucker for action movies, right? But it cracks me up. The action hero falls out of the car that's going at 50 kilometers or 50 miles an hour, rolls around a little bit, gets up and jumps up as if nothing's happened to him.

He doesn't have a concussion. He has no scrapes. He doesn't have any bruised ribs or broken bones. Or he falls, you know, like five stories from a building into some boxes and gets up. Or he's stabbed or anything like that. And maybe sometimes just for dramatic, they limp a little bit for about two minutes. But before you know it, they're right back as if nothing's happened to them.

I don't know how many of you here have ever had bruised or broken ribs. Let me tell you, if you have bruised or broken ribs, my son-in-law has some right now. You can't hardly even breathe for five weeks, right? So one of the things we have sometimes, a problem we have when reading the Bible, is that we sort of think as if these guys are superheroes or they're action stars. They're not. So one of the things in the original language, right? They pass through Amphipolis and Apollonia. And it's an important thing to help us. You see, if we think if they're all stars or heroes, we can't relate to them. But what has just happened to them immediately before this? The implication is that they don't go to share Jesus in either of those cities. They go for a 150-kilometer walk, 150-kilometer walk before they get to where they're going. But what's just happened before? They've been severely beaten with rods. Severely beaten with rods. So bad that amongst other things, they have open wounds that have to be treated. And on top of that, after being severely beaten by rods, they were thrown into the stalks. And they would have been in the stalks for at least 12 or 13 hours.

[8 : 09] And so that probably means they have raw skin from where the wood was rubbing against their legs. And on top of that, they have a shame issue. Because the text says that before they were beaten, they were stripped of their clothes and beaten. I mean, just think for a moment. If you were in a public place and you were stripped naked, just that, without being beaten, there'd be a shame issue, an embarrassment issue that would be with you for a while.

And that's how they're walking 150 kilometers after all of that. It was probably more of a shuffle than a jaunt. And I'm just, you know, they don't tell you why they don't do any ministry in these places. I just think they need some time to heal. I think they've just been so badly beaten up.

Even though they've seen a miracle and God worked in many ways, they just need some time to heal. Deal with the shame. Deal with the pain. But they come to Thessalonica and they haven't given up on ministry because if you look at the end of verse 1, they went to the synagogue of the Jews and then it continues in verse 2. And Paul went in, as was his custom, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the scriptures. That would be what our Jewish friends call the Tanakh or the Torah and we call the Old Testament. So for three days he reasoned with them from the scriptures explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Christ or the Messiah to suffer and to rise from the dead and saying, this Jesus whom I proclaim to you is the Christ. And some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a great many of the devout Greeks, they are in a Greek city, and not a few of the leading women. Now just pause here. Like any good style writer, he could have said, and a great many of the devout Greeks and a great many of the leading women, but it's better if you can just move the phrases around a little bit, it creates more interest. So not a few is another way of saying a great many. So there's a lot of people like this that become

Christians. So what's going on here is this. It's what he's done. And so what we here have here is we have a bit of an outline about how Paul would have approached speaking to people who had a respect for the Bible. That's what it's talking about there. We get a bit of a summary of how he goes about talking to people who have a basic respect for the Bible. In our culture, that's fewer and fewer people. Actually, just this week, but it's not zero. By the way, just this week, I had two things happen to me in a Starbucks that I visited. Oh, I don't normally say the name of the place. But anyway, there you go. I slipped. And in one case, I was reading a big, big fat, like I read this big academic commentary that's like this fat, hardcover. And because I'm trying to get a handle on the original language and all that type of stuff, the cultural background. So I'm reading this big, fat book like this open on my table. And I have a Bible beside me. And there's a woman beside me reading. And when she gets up, she says in a very friendly way, she says, I bet that what I'm reading is way more interesting than what you're reading. And I said, well, just the commentary, right? She doesn't see the Bible, just this huge, big, fat book. And I said to her, well, you are absolutely correct. But somebody was praying for me at this moment. What I'm reading helps me to understand the most wonderful and wise book ever written. And I hold up my Bible. And as soon as she sees the Bible, if it had been videotaped, the most sour look imaginable came over her face. And rather than being friendly, she said, well, I hope you have a good day. And I said, well, I hope you have a good day too. Actually, just a couple of days later, I was in that same place. And a man came up to me because he saw me with my Bible on my desk. I was working on the sermon. And he said, anyway, basically, long and the short of it was he had a nominal Christian background. He started dating a woman who he said is very religious. And he's trying to figure things out. And he wanted to talk to me. We had a talk. Point is, there are fewer and fewer people in our culture who have a basic respect for the Bible, some from Christian backgrounds, and actually, surprisingly, in our culture, increasingly people who've been influenced by Jordan Peterson. I know his name is mud in large circles. But there is no question that many, many people have started to have a new interest and fascination with the Bible because of Jordan [13:00] Peterson's talking. So what we have here is a basic structure outline about how Peter went about talking to people with a respect for the Bible. The next story, we're going to see how he talks to people who are completely and utterly pagan. No Christian memory whatsoever. No Christian knowledge or history whatsoever. And what we'd see is he does two very, very interesting things. He basically, and he's probably toggling back and forth between them. He helps them to understand the Bible, the Tanakh, better. And then he connects it to the conception, birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. And he's toggling back and forward to show how this Jesus of history is what explains and fulfills what you see when you read the Tanakh, the Old Testament, the Torah, properly or better.

If you could put up the first point, Claire, that would be helpful. Everything from the big story of the Old Testament to its tiniest details are fulfilled in the birth, life, work, and person of Jesus of Nazareth. That's what he's doing. Now, some of you might say, well, George, that's, you know, all interesting. But, you know, all educated people in Canada know that everything in the New Testament's wrong and it's not historical. And that's a very plausible thing for Canadians to say. It's a very common thing for Canadians to say. And it's actually just completely and utterly misinformed. It's not true. So here's a thing which I haven't talked about very much, but it's, you can go back and you can check commentaries on this. So one of the things which is very remarkable about the, about the Book of Acts is that not only has he claimed to be writing history, but that when it comes to getting minute details correct, he gets them correct all the time. What I mean is this. I've, I'm, I like going to the lower mainland of BC. I like going to Vancouver. I know that when I go there, I could never buy a house there or live there, but I like going there. But I'm like a lot of people from Ottawa. I just talk about Vancouver, okay? Now, people from there say, no, no, that's actually not Vancouver. That's Burnaby. Or, no, that's not Vancouver. That's Coquitlam. No, no, that's not Vancouver. That's Richmond, right? They, they correct me because I've got the, I've got the city all wrong.

Same thing when I went to Chicago, you know, and I, I don't realize that Chicago, what I think of as Chicago is actually a whole pile of small cities. I know one of the times I was there, I didn't realize Wheaton's a tiny city within this. I would have thought it was Chicago. Anyway, you get the point. I get, I would get it all wrong. But, and, and, you know, another thing, like if you're reading American police detective type novels, I'll often get things wrong. You'll even see people aren't getting wrong

because there's a difference between the state police, the local police, you know, between sheriffs. [15:57] Like there's a whole pile of different language. Well, here's the thing. In English, you can't get it. But at the, the level of the original language, every time Luke talks about a new city, he gets it right.

The officials in, in, um, the officials in, uh, in this particular city, in Thessalonica, aren't called the same as the officials in Philippi because they're different types of cities. And he gets it right all the time. All those little tiny details. It's a characteristic of somebody writing careful history. And you might say, well, you know, it wouldn't be good if we could check the history with letters. Well, actually we have letters. They end up being now in what we call the New Testament.

A few months after this is all over, Paul writes two letters to Thessalonica. We actually have things to, the point is this. What Paul does is say, there's these things that really happened in history. I'm going to tell you about the real things that happened about Jesus, his conception, his birth, his life, his person, what he accomplished on the cross, his final words, his resurrection, his ascension. And as I talk about this, I'm also going to open up all these different parts of what you call the Old Testament.

I'm going to show you that he actually helps you to understand it. You can put the two things together. That's what he does. And it's very, very interesting. So it all sounds good. Well, no. This being Paul, trouble emerges. You get this constant pattern of people being, giving their lives to Christ and people getting furious and irate and violent. Look what happens immediately after this in verse 5.

[17:54] But the Jews were jealous. And what it means here is obviously some Jews, since some Jews became Christians. But the Jews were jealous. And another, you can also translate that word as envious.

And taking some of the wicked men of the rabble, they formed a mob and set the city in an uproar and attacked the house of Jason, seeking to bring them out to the crowd. Jason's probably a man who's Greek by his name, become a Christian, and maybe that's where Paul and Silas are staying. Now, here's the thing. It's because of jealousy or envy. It can be translated either way. And if you did a Venn diagram, there's a big overlap between the two types of things. And it's because of that that they go after Paul and Silas. If you could put up the point here, that would be very helpful, the second point. Oh, sorry, don't put it up yet. Sorry, don't. That's a different point. I'm going to talk about this a little bit more. But envy is sorrow or unhappiness or pain or anger at the good that somebody else has. That's what envy is. And the characteristic of envy. So, you know, I could see a pastor with a bigger church and I can be filled with envy about it. You could see somebody whose marriage seems to be better and you could be filled with envy. You could see somebody who's single and you're married and you're filled with envy. And it goes the other way around. You can see people who have a job and you wish that you had that job and you're filled with envy. In other words, you see the good that you think they have and it fills you with unhappiness. It's painful to you. And it's not just that it's painful to you, but at its heart, you want that other, you want that person who has that thing that you wish you had, you want it to fail.

[20:16] So maybe you're, you know, I'm caught with envy for a pastor in another church, which is bigger, and I hear he's having trouble. And rather than saying, oh, that's really too bad. Only the devil's happy. I inwardly feel a spark of happiness. You know, maybe you look at that other couple and their relationship is really good and then you hear they're having trouble. And rather than feeling sad about that, you feel a little bit of happiness about it. A lot of what drives the politics in this country are marked by envy. Many people who would have voted for Republican in verse 2020 are filled with envy that Biden and Harris won the election. And many people in 2024 who are Democrats are filled with envy that Trump and Vance won the election. Many people in Canada are filled with envy because it's Trudeau. And it'll all be reversed. It's a human problem. It's not a political problem.

Don't take anything I say here as having anything to do with portraying a particular political party. It's a human problem. You know, one of the things, I was reading some works on the Crusades a few years ago, and one of the comments about it was that when we moderns look at the Crusades, we're sort of, we have a hard time understanding. I mean, there's lots of stuff about the Crusades that were bad.

I'm not, but one of the things we have a hard time understanding is how it is that so many of these knights could so desperately want to be godly and also be so violent.

But I suggest to you that if they were to look at us, they'd say, why is it that so many Canadian Christians desperately want to be godly and are so filled with envy? You see, it's a sin that we see in others, but it's very, very hard to see in ourselves. I mean, I would like to suggest to you that maybe nobody in the room in this last week has confessed the sin of envy. I'm going to talk about it more in a moment when I look at its contrast. But let's just look at, oh yeah, just before we move on. Oh, sorry. What is it that they say about the crowd?

They brought, I lost my place there for a second. They've gotten Jason. They drag him. They're all mad. They want to get at Paul and Silas. And in verse 6, and when they could not find them, they dragged Jason down, dragged Jason and some of the brothers before the city authorities, shouting, these men who have turned the world upside down have come here also. And Jason has received them, and they are all acting against the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus.

[23 : 08] And the people and the city authorities were disturbed when they heard these things. And when they had taken money as security from Jason and the rest, they let them go. So there's a riot around this particular thing. They've picked on one particular thing that Paul has said about Jesus, that he's a king. This is a charge of treason. It's very, very serious. It's a capital offense in that part of the world. And some of you might say, well, George, there's some truth to that, isn't it? Like, don't Christians say that Jesus is the king? Isn't that a treasonous thing?

Very short point. If you could put up a second point, that would be helpful. Here's the thing to understand about it. And I say this because, of course, many of us serve in government. Jesus is the king of kings and lord of lords of every tribe and nation. Charles III is just a king.

Charles III is just a king. Now, you know, it's interesting. This is sort of lost on people. I believe this is still the case, that when you pledge allegiance, if you want, you can pledge the allegiance on the Bible. Not required in Canada, but you can do it. And interestingly, enough, a lot of people think that you're doing this, and partially it is this, that if you're going to pledge allegiance, swear allegiance, you're doing it on the Bible so you'll be telling the truth. But it's also doing something very important, is it's actually relativizing the oath, because you're acknowledging a higher authority. It's because I follow the king of kings and lord of lords of every tribe and nations that I will seek to serve Charles III well. And as long as Charles III does not require of me things that only the king of kings can require of me, I will serve him well. But if the king of, if the state demands that I kill innocent people, I will defer. I will say no.

That is against what the king of kings and lord of lords will say. If they command to oppress the poor, we have to say no. I could go on and on and on. So it's not that it's treasonous. That's what they could say. But the bottom line is, what happened, it caused such a kerfuffle that part of the thing was that if Jason wanted to get his money back, Paul and Silas, seen as troublemakers and traitorous, they had to flee, and that's what happens next. And it's going to lead us to this contrast to envy, which is actually quite a shocking contrast. Let's look what happens in verse 10. The brothers immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea, and when they arrived, they went into the Jewish synagogue. Now, these Jewish people were more noble than those in Thessalonica. They received the word with all eagerness, examining the scriptures daily to see if these things were so. Now, just pause. Here's a problem sometimes with the English Standard Version, which is what I'm using, is sometimes it's too literal. So noble is the right word. But what does noble mean? And in this particular case, it's not saying, oh, we have to be like the upper class, you know, like we have to sort of speak like Charles or something like that. No, it's not saying that. What it's saying in this particular case is that the particular virtue that they're praising here is that they're open-minded. So to read the verse again, it would be to make it less literal, but to communicate the truth more accurately. Now, these Jews were more open-minded than those in Thessalonica. They received the word with all eagerness and examining the scriptures daily to see if these things were so. Many of them, therefore, verse 12, believed, with not a few, once again many, Greek women of high standing, as well as men. So here's the odd contrast between envy and open-mindedness. In fact, you don't have to put it up, but, you know, one of the really big points for this entire sermon is going to be that to know Christ Jesus and to grow in Christ Jesus, you need to put all your envy to death and choose to grow in open-mindedness. That's going to be the big point of the whole sermon, that to know Christ Jesus and to grow in Christ-likeness, you need, I need to put all my envy to death and choose to grow in open-mindedness.

[27 : 58] Now, these are two things that don't generally go together when people think, first of all, most people don't, they just don't go together, but it's profoundly wise and insightful. If you could put up the third point, Claire, that would be good. Envy is both a common, is, sorry, envy is a common, deadly vice that robs you of joy and makes you experience the truth as offensive and painful.

Envy asks questions and open-minded people ask questions, but they're radically different.

And anybody on the other side of those questions know that they're radically different. It's at least two of the Gospels, I forgot to write down the reference, in two of the Gospels, it says, it says, why is it that the Jewish leaders at the time wanted to crucify Jesus? It was out of envy.

They went from envy to wanting to kill him. And so when you ask questions out of envy, when you're asking questions out of experiencing the truth as painful, the questions aren't really trying to figure out what's going on. They are a form of attack. And people might say, I'm just asking questions. You're not just asking questions. I'm not just asking questions.

We all know when we're on the other side of it that there's something going on with certain types of questions that reveal a vice within us, a vice that can keep us from Christ or can keep us from becoming Christ-like. That's why it's considered a deadly thing. It's when you experience, you want to see them. And here's the other thing about envy. And you can actually see it. So let's say, you know, in that particular place, what probably happened is that the speakers, the people who are the rulers of the synagogue, they preached every week. How many people have seen Ferris Bueller's Day Off?

[30 : 22] A couple of you. So you know this school scene at the very, very beginning where they have a guy, it's Ben Stein, I think, with the most unbelievably boring voice talking about the most unbelievably boring topic. And everybody hates it. So that's probably how they were teaching. And all of a sudden, they see all these other people getting excited about Jesus and getting excited about reading the Bible. And rather than them saying, gosh, I wish I could teach the Bible like that, goes, oh yeah, I understand that. I agree with that. Whoa, that's fantastic.

They don't want, it isn't that they try to learn how to teach like that or even teach the same things. They just want it shut down. You see, that's what envy does. It's sort of, so when you envy that person with that position that you wish you had, you're just happy if they lose it. You're just happy, you're happy if the whole church falls apart, the whole marriage falls apart. Like, you're actually sort of happy about that. It's not as if you want to get like that. You see, envy is the perversion, the opposite of two things which are really important for human beings to flourish, which is appreciation and aspiration. So I'm, by the way, just so you know, this has been a hard sermon for me this week because I have envy issues, which I wasn't recognizing, which I had to confess. And I'm not going to share with you what they are. That's between God and me. I am definitely not saying to you folks, you guys got envy problems. If I do, I have three fingers pointing back at me, okay? But why was I telling you that? Oh yeah, Louise and I were at this thing for church planters in Whistler, BC a couple of weeks ago. And one of the guys who spoke at it was a guy by the name of Larry Throness. And I mentioned it because go Google him, read his book, read his stuff, go to his webpage.

He's solid gold. And I'm watching him speak and listening to him speak. And I'm thinking to myself, if I could only be one-tenth as good at that as him, I would be so happy. Just one-tenth.

He's fantastic. You see, that's what you need for human flourishing. You know, if I could only preach one-tenth as well as Tim Keller, boy, Jesus can come and take me home right now. I'll be happy, right? And so that's aspiration, right? And the thing about aspiration and appreciation is that it's not a zero-sum game. Like, you know, other people can teach like that. Other people can tell the truth like that. Other people can learn to paint like that. Other people can have relationships like that. Other organizations can thrive. It's no threat to me. I don't have to see them wanting to all fail and all be failed. Wouldn't it be better if we just all got better? That's aspiration.

[33 : 06] That's appreciation. And envy is, I just want that person to fail. I just want it to stop. I don't even care if nobody gets to enjoy it, if it just comes to an end. You see, and that's why envy closes the mind. So here, if you could put up the next thing about what is the open-minded, and that's, if you put up the fourth point, that would be very helpful. The object of opening the mind, as of opening the mouth, is to shut it again on something solid. And I should say G.K. Chesterton, because I'm not smart enough to figure that stuff out for myself. The object of opening the mind, as of opening the mouth, is to shut it again on something solid. You see, you open your mouth to drink and to eat. My body needs fluid, and my body needs food. If I'm going to live, I'm going to thrive.

And you know what? Our mind needs truth. Our mind needs beauty. Our mind needs excellence, if it wants to grow. That's what our minds need. Truth, beauty, excellence to grow.

And so we have this really odd situation where the Bible is teaching us that we need to put envy to death and grow in open-mindedness. And I bet if there were a whole pile of people outside the Christian faith listening to this, they'd say, George, that's like the weirdest thing for a conservative Christian like you to say. When we think of Christians who are Bible-believing and conservative, we don't usually think of them as being open-minded. Now, let's be honest. Some of that is prejudice, but a lot of it's accurate. A lot of the times what characterizes Christian groups is not open-mindedness. It's fear of truth, fear of beauty, fear of excellence.

And we fear these things because on one level we secretly envy them. And we'd rather just see the whole topic go away and that other, that whole irksome source just fail.

Just fail. But no, the big point of this text is going to be that to know Christ Jesus and to grow in Christ's likeness, you need to put all your envy to death and choose to grow in open-mindedness.

[35 : 32] Choose to grow in that. To put one to death and try to embrace open-mindedness with the other hand. That's what this text is teaching us. And then you see the question, open-minded questions are very different. You know, questions that are coming from, you know, like if I just wanted this Larry thrown us to fail, I could say, oh yeah, but you know, what about this? And what about this? And what about this? And you can even see from my face because that's what's going on. And even if we have really good people skills and we can cover our face underneath the mask, it's what about this? And what about this? And what about this? Rather than, my gosh, like how would you handle this? Or how would you handle this? Or wow, can you give me some help on this? I'd like to grow in this. Completely different questions. And the big message of the text is to know Christ Jesus and to grow in Christ likeness. You need, I need to put all your envy to death and choose to grow in open-mindedness.

Now, it's not just a moral rule. Just in closing, there's something about all of this. It's not just some moral rules. So I'm not, listen, here's the thing which is so wonderful about the Christian faith is that it's not just that the Bible tells me I got to do something, but the Holy Spirit comes to help me do that. And I have a person, Jesus, who will walk with me that will help me to do that. But not only that, it's like every Sunday when we gather and celebrate the Lord's Supper, we're learning about a different truth, a different story to form our lives and to stand on and to start to see the world by and to start to be able to look within and see ourselves.

So just think in two ways about this story. Just think about the fact that they say three things. The first thing is that they say these Christians, they're coming and they're turning the whole world upside down. And we Christians should embrace that. We should say, come to us, we're hoping to turn the whole world upside down. Why? Well, because the world right now is upside down and the only way to put it right is turn an upside down world upside down, which is another way of saying make it right.

That should be what we, we should embrace that. Yes, that's us. Help me to be one who turns the world upside down. How's it upside down? I've said this lots of times. It's an important thing to say over and over and over and over again. The wisdom of the world is that kings send out young men to die for their glory.

We remembered that last week. Now it was a just war. I'm not, I'm not saying anything about that. It was a just war, but it's a very common thing. Just an unjust wars that kings send young men out to die for their glory. Jesus is the king who died for ordinary people, for his glory, a radically different glory.

[38 : 21] The book of John says the glory of God is most fully revealed when Jesus is hanging on the cross. Muhammad started 83 wars.

Jesus died on a cross. That's a very different story. It's an upside down story. And even if you think about it, it's an upside down story to understand how in envy you, you see somebody with a particular good and you just want them to come down. But what's the story of the gospel that we're going to celebrate in a few moments at the Lord's Supper? We're going to celebrate that God, the son of God set aside his glory and splendor and divine prerogatives and seen our sorrow. Humbled himself, taking into himself human nature and dying on a cross so that our sorrow would be turned to joy. Our lovelessness would be turned to being, to knowing the love of God.

It's a complete opposite of envy. If you could put up the fifth point clear, that would be very helpful. Filled with envy, you want to knock others down, down, down, down. Jesus Christ humbled himself,

came down and humbled himself to death upon a cross. Love to the loveless shown that you might loved and lovely be. It's an upside down world. In a world with envy, it's upside down. And that's the gospel. We're formed by a different story. And we walk with one who lived that story and wants us to live that story. And the Holy Spirit wrote that story down and wants us to know it and will help us to try to live it. Because you and I need help. If you could put up the final point, that's the big point of the sermon. To know Christ Jesus and to grow in Christlikeness, you need to put all your envy to death and choose to grow in open-mindedness. Is there an amen? Well, there's a couple of amens. There you go. I know I caught you by surprise. All of a sudden, I'm talking like I'm a Southern Baptist, not an Anglican. Caught you all by surprise. Let's stand. We're going to pray and close. Father, you know how many of us struggle with envy. And you know how it bends us out of shape. And you know how we are blind to it. How maybe we can see it in others. We can't see it in ourselves very easily. And Father, but you see it. And Jesus died knowing that we struggle with it. Actually, Father, Jesus died knowing that we don't struggle with it. We live out of it. So Father, we ask that you help us to go from living out of it, blind and driven by it, making us have closed minds about things, and that your Holy Spirit, your words, start to convict us of the envy in our lives. That we might put it to death. And we ask, Father, that you grow within us a desire to be open-minded, to have a mind like a mouth that opens so that it might receive the nourishment of truth from your word and truth in the world and beauty and excellence. And that we might open our mouth to chew on that and be filled and formed by that and to be filled and formed by the bread and the wine, your blood given in your body broken all because you did not envy but humbled yourself so that in Christ, loved and lovely we would be. So Father, we ask that you would so fill us with that story that we have the confidence to die to all envy and to grow in open-mindedness and the freedom that comes from knowing Jesus and having an open mind, open to the beauty and wonder and truth and glory and excellence that is around us. And we ask all these things in the name of Jesus and all God's people said, Amen.

[42 : 28] Amen.