

John 1:19-34 "Unworthy to Touch His Sandal Strap?"

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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 pray. Father, we give you thanks and praise that you do not weigh our merits but pardon our offenses. We ask once again that the Holy Spirit would move gently amongst us and bring your words home to us home to us, both your words of warning and your words of hope. And we ask this in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior. Amen. Please be seated.

So the Bible text that we just read from the Gospels, it has something which sounds like something only a very depressed person would ever say. I don't know how many of you—I mean, everybody struggles with depression sometimes. Some people struggle with it in a very serious way, have very long seasons of depression, and their depression is very deep. It's often the case that people who are depressed feel quite a bit of shame around it, especially if they're Christians. You know, because we Christians know the joy of the Lord is our strength and, you know, we should have victory in Jesus and all of these things. I'm not saying these to belittle these terms. I'm just saying that often, I think, for Christians, having long seasons of depression are very hard and people often feel shame with it. And so I don't know if you noticed when I was reading, but one of the things that John the Baptist said is the type of thing that people suffering depression say. And we're going to not look at depression so much, but we're going to look at that text and see if it—what it means and where it's coming from.

Was John telling us that we had to grovel? Was he—like, what was going on? So let's have a look. Turn in your Bibles with me to John chapter 1, beginning at verse 19. John chapter 1, beginning at verse 19.

[3 : 14] And just as you're turning there and finding it in your Bibles, I'm not going to tell you everything about the way the Gospel of John is structured. This ancient witness of Jesus, written by an eyewitness of Jesus, while most eyewitnesses were—where many eyewitnesses were still alive. So this is a sort of an ancient biography of Jesus. And how John wrote it is, for the first 18 verses, it's sort of like what we would now call an executive summary. So I don't know how many of you have worked in the government or worked for bosses. Some of you probably occasionally have to do executive summaries. You know, maybe you get some big fat government report, and your boss, you know, the deputy minister, the assistant deputy minister, they have no time to read this. So what they'd like is a one-pager that sort of captures it all really succinctly. And so when you're reading John, the first 18 verses are this very high-level executive summary, not only of the Gospel, but of the whole Christian faith. So in fact, if you're ever talking to somebody and say, you know, like, would you like to have a bit of an executive summary of the whole Christian faith, why don't you read John chapter 1, 1 to 18 with me? We can read it together.

It says executive summary. We can unpack it together a little bit. And then after that executive summary, verse 19, we now enter into history. And here's how it goes. So from 19 on, we're now in history and John's historical account of what happened to Jesus. And by the way, one of the reasons that we know that this is an historical account of what happened to Jesus is not only the many historical references that he makes, we'll see right from the beginning, but we know that John understood the difference between metaphor and analogy and all of that type of stuff and writing history because he also wrote the book of Revelation. And if you didn't write the book of Revelation, maybe you could look at it and say, oh, this is just sort of like, you know, metaphor and analogy. No, no, no. I mean, there obviously are metaphors in it. We can't think without metaphor. But John's writing a history and this is how it begins. Verse 19. And this is the testimony of John the Baptist when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, who are you? Who are you?

Now, just a couple of things. We're going to pause here just to help get the whole text sort of settled in our mind. First of all is John the Baptist is in fact a figure of ancient history. The significant ancient historian Josephus wrote quite a bit about the person of John the Baptist. So there's outside of the gospels records of what John was like. And the fact of the matter is that these external historians say that John the Baptist caused a huge stir, a great excitement amongst many of the Jewish people, that he did in fact do some of the things which are talked about in this text. And people flocked from all over to go hear his preaching. They in fact did wonder whether he was in fact the Messiah, or if not the Messiah, the first prophet that Israel had had for 400 years. So John the Baptist is a person of history. And the second thing here is some of you might have heard this phrase, the Jews. And it's going to be repeated several times in the text. And maybe you've read the Gospel of John, and it's a bit of a troubling phrase.

Because in our modern ears, it sounds anti-Semitic. But it's not anti-Semitic. It's actually a complementary word, not an anti-Semitic word. What you're going to see as you read the rest of the Gospel of John, and even you're going to see it in about 10 or 15 minutes, is, I mean, not only is John himself, the writer of this, Jewish, and John the Baptist is Jewish, and Jesus is Jewish, and the disciples are all Jewish, but it's very obvious that both John, the writer of this, and Jesus were Torah-keeping Jews who had a profound love and respect.

[7 : 16] In fact, Jesus says that there's not a single word in the Torah that will never, in fact, will never be binding. So he had a very high view of the Torah. So what's going on here? When you see the word the Jews, you can take two different senses from it when you read it. First of all, it's always referring to the leaders, but it's also a bit of a warning symbol. You see, from John's point of view, and from Jesus' point of view, out of all of the religions and out of all of the spiritualities in the world, the Jewish faith and the Jewish religion was the pinnacle.

There is no better religion than the Jewish religion. There is no better one than that. And yet the Jews is capturing not only this, its excellency, but also this profound mystery, that religion and spirituality can be used in such a way that it keeps people away from the triune God, rather than opening them up to the triune God. And that's how this symbol is working.

So in a sense, if John the apostle was able to be here this morning, he'd say, yeah, no, no, no, no. Like, if the absolute best religion that the planet had ever seen can also be used by its leaders and practitioners to keep God at an arm's distance, or to try to tame God, then what hope does Islam, or Buddhism, or Hinduism, or the curated spiritualities of our day have to work?

If there's something about human beings that can take the best and use it as a way to inoculate, immunize yourself against God. And so that's how that symbol's to be used. It's referring to the leaders, and it's referring to a way of looking at the world that unconsciously seeks to immunize the people from actually encountering the triune God. And so that's what's going on. And so, as we're going to see in a moment, what's happening here, that it opens up by a group of experts coming from Jerusalem on a fact-finding mission to report back to the leaders of the Jewish people. We'll read verse 19 again.

And this is the testimony of John the Baptist when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who are you? And John the Baptist confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, I am not the Christ.

[9 : 41] I am not the Messiah. That's what he says. And then they say, verse 22, and they asked him, Okay, well, what then? Are you Elijah? And he said, I am not. And then he says, Are you the prophet? And he answered them, No. So they said to him, Who are you? We need to give an

answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself? And we'll just pause before we get to his answer.

So, some of you have worked in government, and some of you have worked for big corporations. Some of you might have worked for lobbying groups. So, you know, you could all chat over coffee about what it's like when some experts are sent off to do a fact-finding report. And my guess is that most of the time when they come back, it's not a one-pager. It's usually probably pretty thick like this, right? And so we have no idea what these experts are going to go back and say to the Sanhedrin, whether it's a thing like this. But what John, the writer, has done is sort of summarized the two fundamental questions that they have. Who is John? And why on earth is he doing what he's doing? He summarized all of their questions into these two basic areas, and he's given us a very succinct answer. And so they come basically saying, we'll see why they're asking him such these categories. Like, are you the Messiah? And then the prophet and Elijah, they're sort of other figures that are sort of expected to be there around the end of history when the Messiah comes. And in every case, John the Baptist just says, I am not any of those. And this is probably very frustrating because they probably only have three categories. You know, it's like when you talk to somebody. I remember I had a problem. There was some flooding in a road that I went down all the time, and I never saw that there was actually a bit of a dip like this. And the drains were all flooded after torrential rain. And I went through it, and it stalled my engine, ended up ruining my engine. And it was unbelievably frustrating talking to the people on the other end of the line, because they just have a series of categories to put my accident in or my problem in. And going through an area where there's a big puddle and having your engine fail, that's, there's no, they didn't have a category for it, and they didn't have other. So it's really, really, really, really frustrating. And the category they ended up picking wasn't, ended up, of course, being something which was very good for the insurance company, and not being very good for me. We've all probably had that. So they're probably pretty frustrated. They throw their hands up in the air, and they say, okay, like, what do you say about yourself? Now, what you're going to see in, in, but just, just so you, you know, John's Gospel out of the four ancient biographies of Jesus, Matthew, Mark, and Luke are very similar, and John is different. And most people, they tend to either like John the most or the least, because John's Gospel has a very sort of like riddle, elliptical type of style, and an indirect type of speaking, which captures a different facet of what Jesus was like. And John, obviously, the writer of this, must have really liked that way of speaking. And so it comes up in how he frames even people like John the Baptist's answer. So how does John the Baptist say, well, verse 23, he's not one of those three categories. He says, I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness. Make straight the way of the Lord, as the prophet Isaiah said. Now, just sort of pause here for a second. He's just the voice. That's all he says he is. I'm just the voice. In fact, I'm not even the voice at the center of power. I'm not even the voice of educated opinion. I'm not the voice of the nobility. I'm not the voice of the landed gentry, the business leaders. I'm not the voice of the intellectuals. I'm the voice in the wilderness. That's who I am. And his answer about what it is that he's voicing puts him in the same category of Muhammad and Buddha and helps us to understand the profound difference between Jesus and these other people. Now, what do I mean by that? Well, what John says is John the Baptist is just the one who points. And he says, this is the way over there.

[14 : 23] The way, it's over there. What is Muhammad? Muhammad is one who points to the way of submission to Allah. What is Buddha? Buddha is the one who points to the way towards enlightenment. Buddha would say, I am not the way to enlightenment. And Muhammad would say, I am not the way to Allah. I point to the way of Allah. In fact, many people don't know this, but Allah himself was worried about coming under the judgment of God. He did not have what Christians call a sense of security in his faith. Muhammad worried that he would fall under God's, Allah's wrath and judgment. And John the Baptist, now obviously the way of Allah and the way of Buddha and the way that John's pointing to, they're very, very different ways, but they all have as a similarity that they point. And Jesus is radically different. He doesn't say, I know the way. He says, I am the way. I am the way, the truth and the life. Very, very, very different in Jesus than these other types of religions. So, they're sort of stymied. They're probably just wishing that John the Baptist would give them a better answer. But they eventually move into their second part of their question, which is, why on earth are you doing what you're doing? And that we get at verse 24. We hear this, that now they had been sent from the Pharisees, which was a faction or a denomination within Judaism. So,

they asked him, okay, then why are you baptizing if you're neither the Christ nor Elijah nor the prophet? Now, here's the question behind this. This isn't, we can't listen to this with Christian ears. So, all of a sudden, let's say all of a sudden we just discovered that John O, the worship leader, was going around throughout the week baptizing people.

You know, we start to get words that, you know, John, you know, John O baptized five people this week. And then, you know, next week, John O baptized five people this week. And so, you know, in most Christian churches in an Anglican polity, we'd say, come on, dude, like, why are you baptizing people?

Like, that's not the way you do it. Like, it should be, you know, there should be a public gathering, you know, you should really be the presbyter, unless they're all dying. And if they're all dying, how come you met every week, five people on the edge of death, and you decided to baptize? And that would be a whole other question. So, it's not like that. It's not as if that these guys, that John the Baptist doesn't have the right credentials to do baptism. It's something far, this is, because that wouldn't really require a big, a big fact-finding mission. He's doing something and getting people to buy in something very weird. And what he's doing is that the Jewish people were fine with baptisms, because for the Jewish people at that time, if a pagan wanted to begin the path towards becoming a Jewish person, getting circumcised and everything like that, one of the steps of that would be for them to be baptized. So, a pagan, a worshipper of Aphrodite, or a worshipper of Zeus, if they decide that they want to stop worshipping Zeus or Aphrodite, and move towards being Jewish and worshipping the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and Moses and David, one of those steps in that process would be for them to be baptized. But what John the Baptist is doing is baptizing Jewish people. As if their circumcision and Torah-keeping and Shabbat-keeping isn't enough, as if there's something that they have to enter into. And that's what's shocking. And it wouldn't be shocking if John the Baptist had managed to convince one lonely, depressed, mentally ill guy to get baptized. But, you know, Josephus and others saying there's hundreds, there's thousands of people flocking to John the Baptist to be baptized, as if their being Jewish isn't enough. And that's what's getting the religious officials all in a tither. And that's why they're trying to figure out, like, are you, like, why on earth are you doing this? So, let's ask that question again.

They asked in verse 25, then why are you baptizing if you are neither the prophet, neither the Christ nor Elijah nor the prophet? And John the Baptist answered them, I baptize with water, but among you stands one you do not know, even he who comes after me.

[19 : 08] And here's the kicker. Like, if I was to have sermon, the reason I don't have sermon points this week is that the sermon points would just be three phrases in the text. And this would be the first point.

The strap of whose sandals I sandal, I am not worthy to untie. Now, this is the sort of thing that people who are deeply ashamed say. You've probably met people who've, something's really happened, they're deeply ashamed, they can't look you in the eye, they look at the ground, their hands are shaking, and they'll say things about who they are that, I am such a bad person, I'm not even worthy to untie. Like, that's how unworthy I am. It's something which people who are suffering from deep depression say. It's something that people struggling with deep guilt say. And it's the absolute opposite of what all people who worship, like the way Canadians think about spirituality and religion, they would say that this is terrible, and that if there's religion or spirituality which has any worth whatsoever, it would teach people not to say that about themselves.

In fact, people would look at that and say, George, is this, I mean, this is where the text touches on a lot of our fears about God, our natural fears about God. People would say, George, George, just think about it for a second. Falling down on your hands and knees to untie somebody's dirty sandals, that's done to humiliate people, isn't it? Like, if you were to put this phrase in a movie, if you asked Hollywood, in fact, you see things like this in Hollywood all the time, you'll see the cruel warlord, the cruel mafia boss, the cruel criminal, the cruel abusive husband, who demands they come in all sweaty and all dirty, and they demand as a sign of their power and putting people in place that they get down on their hands and knees and untie my sandals. They do something like that. It's what a cruel person says to another to humiliate them. So, you know, is this text telling us that we have to grovel? Is this text saying that we have to really, really just think we're terrible, terrible people?

And, in fact, you could just hear the Tim Hortons worker or the Starbucks or, you know, the some other coffeehouse person saying, if they heard this text, saying to you, George, I already feel

crappy.

Why on earth would I want to adopt anything like this that's just going to make me feel even more crappy? So what's going on? Well, the gospel text that was part of this ancient text of Advent that we've been reading ends with verse 28, but we're going to read verse 28 in the next bit, which helps us to understand.

[22 : 46] It's actually going to help us to understand why if you understand the next few words, you will understand why it's a step towards health to be able to say that I am not worthy to untie your sandals.

It's actually a step towards health. It's actually a step towards joy to say that. So let's look. Verse 28. These things took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John the Baptist was baptizing. Verse 29. The next day, John the Baptist saw Jesus coming toward him. Now, just before I read that next little bit, and some of you can see it up on the screen, one of the things which is very interesting about John's gospel is that the first couple of days are plotted this day, the next day, the next day, the next day. It'll end with Jesus turning water into wine at the miracle in Cana of Galilee. And so what's probably happened, if you're trying to put this on a bit of a timeline, you know what happened when? 42 days earlier or whatever, John the Baptist met Jesus and he baptized Jesus in the river Jordan. And John the Baptist and Jesus were cousins.

John the Baptist would have known that Jesus was a profoundly good man. And there's this encounter where John the Baptist can't understand why a guy who is as good as Jesus would actually get baptized. But John the Baptist baptizes Jesus like 42 days earlier, 41 days earlier. And then Jesus is led into the wilderness past where John the Baptist is to be tempted by the devil for 40 days.

And so what we just saw in the last bit that we read, Jesus is in his 40th day in the wilderness, being tempted by the devil. And now we're the day after, and Jesus is coming back from the wilderness, back into where people are, and this is the first day. Okay? And so verse 29 again, the next day, John the Baptist sees Jesus coming toward him and said, And just imagine, Jesus has spent 40 days in the wilderness. He's dusty. He's frail and weak looking.

[25 : 06] His eyes, you could see a little bit of a hollow of his eyes because he desperately needs to spend the next little while eating food to fatten himself up, as much as any poor person back in those days could ever be said to be fat, but at least to be filled out a tiny bit. He's all dusty. And John the Baptist sees Jesus coming and he points at him and says, Guys, that's what the significance of behold is, Guys, behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. That's who that person is. That person is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

This is he of whom I said, After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me. Now, this is a very amazing statement. And you'll notice if I had a second point in my sermon, it would just be this phrase, Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. That would be my second point. Like, how can I beat that? How can I say, Jesus, you know, John, maybe you should just word it. Just listen to me word it, John, and I'm going to really nail it after you gave it your best shot. No, how can I improve on, Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

And it says sin, not sins. It talks about the fact that there is a state that I am in where sin has touched every single thing within me that is me. Sometimes just very, the tiniest little bit, the quarter turn of the screw, the eighth turn of the screw, and sometimes completely and utterly being unloosed in me. And it also implies the actual things that I do that are wrong and the things I should do that I didn't do. And those are sins as well. And he takes away, when it says takes away the sin of the world, it means he takes away it. This is an amazing thing, is that Jesus is this sinless, pure, innocent lamb who will have, die as a sacrifice. And he, the sinless, innocent one will die on my behalf. And the result of that is total forgiveness. Total forgiveness.

It is forgiveness to the very depths of whoever I am. It's the forgiveness for the heights of who I am. It is forgiveness for the length and breadth of who I am. It is forgiveness for the things which are most obvious about George. It is forgiveness about the nooks and crannies and cracks of George. It is total forgiveness with nothing left out. A type of total forgiveness that only God, the Son of God, could actually accomplish. Back earlier when I said, you know, that John the Baptist says, I am the voice of the one in the wilderness calling prepare the way of the Lord. That's actually an early text showing that John the Baptist, the early Christians knew that Jesus was God. Because prepare the way of the Lord, which we see as John the Baptist doing that for Jesus, and the Lord there is

Yahweh. It's the God of Israel. And the same one who is the God of Israel is the one who's provided this lamb, this person who's by his life and by his death provides for those who trust and believe in him total, complete, exhaustive forgiveness. That's this remarkable claim which is being made about it.

And why is it, you see, this is now we can begin to see something about the significance of John the Baptist saying before the death and resurrection of Jesus that I'm not worthy to even touch. I'm not worthy to even touch Jesus's sandal. He's just come back unwashed, sweaty, 40 days in the Judean wilderness.

[29 : 13] And I'm not even worthy to get on my knees and touch his sandal. Well, I mean, if you wanted to summarize what this is all about is that John the Baptist acknowledges that only the lamb of God is worthy to take one who is as unworthy as I am and make me worthy because of the total forgiveness which is offered. You know, one of the things which is very significant, that people think that this is a text all about groveling. It's not about groveling. It's about a type of soul-searching humility as to whether or not you really believe God can be God and you're not.

Because if you don't really believe that God is God and you're not, you'll never want to acknowledge that you're not worthy before God. That's just, you want to nuance that, you want to spin doctor that, you want to disassemble and cloak about that, you don't want to have any type of a just straight, bald statement. But here's one of the things about this text, while if you're just patient, if you get over your offense about this text, I'm not worthy to even untie his sandals.

How is it, you know, one of the things which is very unique about the Gospel of John, it's the only Gospel where Jesus doesn't institute the Lord's Supper. The only one. Matthew, Mark, and Luke all have, just before Jesus's crucifixion, Jesus instituting the last supper. None of those other Gospels mention this state in quite a such force about unworthiness to even touch the sandals of Jesus.

So what has John put in place in all of the things that happened in that final night with his disciples, before Jesus goes to the garden, and before he's captured and he's going to be crucified the next day?

What is it that Jesus does? Not just for the disciples, but for all in the room. He takes off his outer clothes.

[31 : 17] He gets down on his hands and knees. He takes off their sandals and he washes their feet. He washes their feet.

You see, there's no darkness and despair and shame of sin that is so deep that Jesus has not gone deeper and paid for it and has gone deeper to wash your feet and lift you up and make you clean. And don't you, you know, one of the things I notice about our age is our age struggles, Canadians struggle with the whole topic of forgiveness. You can see it because it's it's like a metronome about learning to forgive yourself and learning to forgive yourself and learning to forgive yourself. And we Canadians increasingly struggle with feelings of guilt and feelings of shame and separation and breakdown of relationships and not being able to fix ourselves.

And the best advice that Canadians can give is learning how to forgive yourself. But this is exactly what Canadians live. If you're struggling with that type of guilt or shame, this is exactly what you need to hear, is that God has provided one who takes away total forgiveness.

Total forgiveness. And what I'm called to is not to learn to forgive myself, but to be able to, in a sense, as I look at the the havoc I create in my life at different times, as I think back to the things which I have done that are wrong and where I need to have a place where I can stand and a place where I can have hope and a place where I can have the strength and the courage and the humility and and the penitence to acknowledge for the wrong that I have done and all of that, there is no other place that I can stand other than to say to myself, Jesus is the Lamb of God who took away the sin of the world.

[33 : 19] He took my sin away. There is no other. And it gets more glorious, just in closing, it gets more glorious. Look, look, because, you know, it gets more glorious. Look, look how it continues on. We'll read that again. Verse 29.

Behold, the next day John the Baptist sees Jesus coming toward him and said, Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. And then John the Baptist says, This is he of whom I said, After me comes a man who ranks before me because he was before me. In other words, he's God. He's reaching towards that. Verse 31. I myself did not know him. He knew him, but he didn't know that he was the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. He knew that he was Jesus from Nazareth, his cousin, but he didn't know that he was the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the

world. I did not know him, but for this purpose, I understand from God, I came baptizing with water. And now I realize he came that he might be revealed to Israel. He knew he was coming to reveal the Messiah, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. He just didn't know it was going to be Jesus. How did he learn that? Verse 32. And John bore witness, John the Baptist, I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove and remained on him. I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water, that is God, said to me, He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain. Now hear this. This is the third point. This is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.

And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God. If I had a third point, he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit, how can I improve on that?

By the way, you know in the Apostles' Creed, I believe, how does it go in the Creed? It goes, oh, I guess it's in the Nicene Creed that talks about one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. It's not in the Apostles' Creed. One baptism for the forgiveness of sins. It's referring to this text. It's not referring to the ritual. It's referring to this. And here's what's so wonderful. Baptism, almost all religions and spiritualities have some ceremonies around washing and often with water.

[35 : 44] There's a deep sense that there's some need for cleaning and water bringing new life. And so there's often ceremonies around this. And what John the Baptist is saying is that not only is Jesus the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, but what he can do for you is something that will go right into you. It doesn't just something that stops at your skin or maybe just stops with a few types of ideas in your head. It's that when you come to him and he receives you, what he does comes on top of you and it comes into every nook and cranny of your mind and of your brain and of your affections and of your heart and of your will and of your longings and of your yearnings and of your fears and your anxieties and your shame and your guilt. And it comes into every single bit of within you of who you are. All of the heights of you and the depths of you and the breadth of you and the width of you and the shallowness of you and every single bit. Only Jesus can have the Holy Spirit bring the benefit of the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world and come and permeate and and change every single thing within you. And that's what Jesus does.

What the Lamb accomplished for you in total forgiveness comes inside you when you ask him to do it. Just want to close with, you don't know this about me, but there's for quite a few years as I work on my sermon. This text in John the Baptist has formed three things that I pray about myself and I share them with you because it might be helpful for you. I maybe should have had those written down as points.

And the first one is this, I ask God as I'm looking at the text that he would grow within me a humble, trusting, walking knowing that apart from the grace that comes for Christ, I am not worthy to touch the sandal of Jesus. That's what I pray. Before I talk any time, I pray that. I pray it throughout the week. And the second thing I do is I pray, I ask the Father, and this is maybe a very important thing for all, I mean all of these I think are important prayers. It's not just for me speaking, but for leading and other types of ministry and for things in life. I, you know, because you see, here's the thing. Here's the wonderful thing about the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

I can speak. I can speak. I can make words and the words go out of my mouth and they go and they go on the internet and they go out. But if it isn't, unless the Holy Spirit brings them home, it's just chaff.

It's just chaff. And so I pray that the Lord would grow in me a humble, trusting, walking knowing that apart from the baptism of the Holy Spirit, my words are but chaff. And I say, Father, may your Holy Spirit bring these words of mine home in a way that benefits the people and brings you glory. And the third thing is just this. What is the purpose of my life? I ask the Father that he would grow within me a humble, trusting, walking knowing that day by day, moment by moment, I would be willing, whether it's a leader of the gay community that I talk to in a coffee shop, whether it's a high school student or university student or professor, whether it's a businessman, somebody who thinks Trudeau is the best thing since sliced bread, somebody who thinks that Paulie Ev is, somebody who loves Trump, somebody who, what is it that I can do at every time and should do at every time? Is it he, that I can point to Jesus and say, behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. I pray that God will use me to do that. I pray that he will use our congregation for that. I invite you to stand. Please stand. Bow our heads in prayer.

[40 : 09] Father, we give you thanks and praise that you challenge us in a very graphic type of way to understand who we are as fallen, finite human beings that obviously have excellencies and greatness, but obviously do some things which are very atrocious and terrible. And so, Father, we

give you thanks and praise that your word brings this truth home to us in a very graphic and challenging way. And we give you thanks and praise, Father, that you don't just, you don't call us to grovel or to a life of unending shame or guilt, but you bring this truth home to us so that we might know our need for the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world and the baptism of the Holy Spirit that he offers to bring that into us and home to us and have it be the new basic state of who we are. And so, Father, we ask that you would grow within us a humble, trusting, walking, knowing that apart from the grace that comes from the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world and the baptism of the Holy Spirit that comes from him, that we are unworthy to touch the sandals of Jesus, but that through him we are more than worthy. You have made us worthy. You have made us your children forever. And Father, we ask that you grow within us that confidence and trust to live out of it. And we ask these things in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior. Amen.