

Acts 19:8-20:1 "Reasoning, Demons, and Christ"

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[0 : 0 0] 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 as we prepare to think about God's Word written. Let's pray. Father, your Word tells us that demons never miss church. And so, Father, I have no power in and of myself as a human being, but as one who is your adopted child, your child by adoption and grace, in the name of Jesus, if there are any demons or unclean spirits that are present here at this time, whether indwelling us or speaking to us or harassing us or laying claim to us. And Father, in the name of Jesus, may these demons be disinherited, removed, silenced, and bound. In the name of Jesus, may they be cast far from this place and from us, never to return. And Father, we ask that you do not leave us empty, but that the Holy Spirit would come with even greater power within each person who is here and fill this place. That, Father, it will be Jesus alone who holds us and ministers to us, and that it will be you alone who speak to us and that we listen. And we ask all these things in the name of

Jesus, your Son and our Savior. Amen. Please be seated. And for many of you, that is the weirdest prayer before sermon that you've ever heard in your entire life. And so I just want to say, today we're going to talk about demon possession. Now, if you're wondering why on earth I picked a topic like that, and some of you might think that that just shows I'm an uneducated hick, which is fine. We'll talk about that in a moment. One of the things which we do here at the church is that we try to preach the Bible the way it's written. And the Bible is written as books, usually, and so we preach through either very big chunks of the Bible or through books. And that means I don't think in advance, oh, what topics do I have like an itch to talk about? Oh, I want to talk about this. I want to talk about this. I want to talk about this. I want to... No, no, no, no. What we do is we just go from passage to passage in the Bible, and what the Bible talks about, we talk about and we think about. And in fact, if you're a seeker seeking to try to figure out what Christianity is all about, this is a good church to attend, because there's no fine print that, you know, you sort of get in the door and they say, oh, yeah, by the way, you have to believe this. No, no, no. We just, we talk about everything. We just want to be open to what God's Word says. And so since the Bible talks about evil spirits possessing a man, we are going to look at that. So if you have your Bible, and hopefully you do, please open it to Acts chapter 19, and let's have a look at this text together. And if you don't have a Bible, those sort of blue books over there are Bibles. You're welcome to get out of your seat and come and pick up a Bible for yourself. The text will be on the screen, but there's something about having your own Bible with you. I like you to be able to look around to see if I'm trying to do something. I want to reason with you from the Bible and to the Bible.

[4 : 2 2] And so we, I want us to be completely transparent to that. So let's look at the text. And the text begins, we're going to look at Acts chapter 19, beginning at verse 8, a little bit earlier than Monique read. And just sort of here, a bit of a nerdy moment. The way Acts chapter 19, 8 to the end of the chapter is sort of structured, it's structured in a very interesting way. So this is a bit of a nerdy

moment for you grammar type of nerds. And you know who you are, and probably your loved ones roll their eyes and say, yes, we know who they are. And the way it's structured is there's two short summary accounts of what Christians have been doing. And there's summary accounts of just generally what they've been doing. And then you have two stories following it. And the two stories now look at it from the point of view of people outside the Christian faith and how they respond to Christian success. And so part of it is in the world of spirits, and part of it is in the whole world of reason. And so that's the way this, so we have two short stories about what Christians do, what Paul was doing, and then two stories about how people responded to it who are outside the Christian faith. And so Paul's in Ephesus. It's now in what we would call Western Turkey. It's one of the most important cities in the Roman Empire, one of the largest cities as well. And Paul has been here, and here we go at verse 8. And Paul entered the synagogue and for three months spoke boldly, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God. That means about Jesus and what it means to have him as your Savior and your Lord. Verse 9, but when some became stubborn, and in the original language, stubborn is a very good word, but there's an older-fashioned phrase underneath it, which means they hardened their hearts. But when some hardened their hearts and continued in unbelief, speaking evil of the way before the congregation, Paul withdrew from them and took the disciples with him, reasoning daily in the hall of Tyrannus. This continued for two years so that all the residents of Asia, we now call that Western Turkey, heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks.

Now just sort of pause here. This is a bit of a summary statement. They're scattered throughout the book of Acts, if you look at it just from a literary point of view. And it's a very, very important thing. When it says there in verse 8, reasoning and persuading, that's the way Paul always dealt with people. And that's the way Christians should deal with people, by reason and persuasion. And reason isn't just being able to think very, very clearly. It's also, of course, being able to identify the truth of different matters. And so you identify the truth of different matters and subjects and things of importance, whether it be something in human experience or something in nature or something in history. And you identify the truth and you reason and you persuade. And that's how Christians are to be. I'm not saying Christians are always like that.

Far from it. Christians, to say somebody's a Christian isn't necessarily to compliment them. It isn't the same thing as saying they're a good person. There are many Christians who aren't good people. To say that somebody is a Christian means that they've given their life to Christ and are following Him as their Savior and Lord. They are, in a sense, they've come to Him as a sinner, broken and battered, and they've come to Him to have Him start to put them together.

But here's the point. In fact, you know, at the end of it, there's going to be sort of two big points for the whole sermon. And one of them is Christians never give up on reason and prayer.

[8 : 11] Never give up on reason and prayer. That's part of the way of, that's a fundamental way of being a Christian, is to be committed to reason and be committed to prayer. And so we see that.

And so what we see here is a very common thing. When reason, and it's a very human problem, we see it throughout history, we see it throughout the world today, and unfortunately some of us see it in our own lives, is that we can't beat the reasoning. So, and we don't want to surrender or give in.

So what do we do? Well, we call them names, and we insult them, and we yell, and we intimidate them. We do everything other than reasoning. And that's what we see here in a very, very mild way. But they're very successful. The reasoning and persuading about Jesus is starting to have a very big impact, not only in Ephesus, but all around. Now, what's the second thing that's successful? Well, the second thing is going to make some of you think, George, if this second thing is in the text, then Christians aren't reasoning. It's something else. Because if you believe any of these next little bits, it's a sign that you've cut your head off, you've stopped thinking, you've kissed your mind goodbye.

It just doesn't go with reason. Well, what do I mean? Let's have a look at it. It continues in verse 11, and the next summary statement, so to speak. Verse 11, And God was doing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul, so that even handkerchiefs or aprons, or another word to put it would be sweatbands, or you see somebody working maybe on their car or their garage, and they have something around, like something they put on themselves so they don't get dirty, and then you rub your hands on it to clean your hands maybe before you answer the phone. And so that type of article of clothing, verse 12 again, so that even handkerchiefs or aprons that had touched his skin, Paul's skin, were carried away to the sick, and their diseases left them, and the evil spirits came out

of them.

Evil spirits. So what it's saying is that God, not Paul, God does something by Paul's hand, and the thing that he does is as a result of Paul's prayers that people who are sick get healed, and people who have demons inside of them have the demons removed from them.

That's what the text is saying. Now, as I said, some of you will say you can't talk about reason and persuasion and truth if you also talk about something like this.

[10:47] Well, a couple of things. First of all, I'm going to double down on it. Those of you who know me know that that's what I'm going to do. What I'm reading, it looks very fancy in this book, of course, but it didn't start out as that.

It started out as a man who had been raised as a pagan by the name of Luke, who sometime was trained as a medical doctor, and sometime in his middle years became a follower of Christ. So he would have been somebody who would have worshipped Artemis or Zeus or some other god or goddess, and he comes to a faith in Christ and renounces all of that stuff and lives as a Christian, as a well-educated man, a man of the Roman world and the Roman Empire.

And he writes an eyewitness-based biography of the life of Jesus. We now call that the book of Luke. And after he wrote that eyewitness-based biography of Luke, he wrote what we now call the book of Acts, an eyewitness-based history of the first 30 years, approximately, of the Jesus movement.

And both books he wrote while many eyewitnesses were still alive. And I've talked about this a little bit, but one of the things which really shows that he has this profound concern for the truth and that it really is an eyewitness-based history when the eyewitnesses are still alive would be seen, I'm not going to comment on it later, but when you see later on in the chapter when it mentions Asiarchs and what's often hidden in the language translated into English is that when he goes to different cities, the different officials are called different things in those different cities depending on their status, whether they're a village or they're a Roman colony or they're the capital of a province.

[12:27] And every one of those places have different types of titles for people. And in every case, as we learn more and more about archaeology, we discover that Luke got it right 100% of the time.

Now that's completely and utterly an impossible thing to do unless he really was an eyewitness writing in those days and he was concerned with the truth. Just to give you an example, if we were to do something very simple, like say to you, all of a sudden you cannot use Google, there's nothing like, you know, those of you who are old enough remember encyclopedias, there's nothing like that, you just have to do it from talking to your buddies and I'd like you to write something from 40 years ago that talks about being in a small village in northern BC and then talks about being, let's say, in Burnaby and then talks about being in Roxborough in the island of Montreal and then talks about a little village across the road from Quebec City and then something in Halifax.

And when you talk about all these things from 40 years ago and when you make reference to the federal government, you get all of the government departments right and all of the names of the office holders correct and you can't use Google and you can't use any resource, you just have to write it.

Now, there might be one super nerd in the room who could do that but you know what? There wouldn't be. Nobody could do it. I mean, good grief, 40 years ago, you might talk about the mayor of Ottawa not worrying that 40 years ago was before Ottawa was amalgamated from 14 cities into one.

How are you going to get all that stuff right? Like, it's completely impossible but Luke gets it right. It's one of the things that shows that he's concerned about it being an eyewitness history that's accurate.

[14:11] I could go on and on about the ways that the more archaeology grows, the more we see the accuracy of the writer. So now we get to the fact that some people are going to have a great problem with the fact that this is a story that talks about evil spirits and the next story when we talk about how outsiders respond to this we're going to see that Luke doubles down on it.

And generally speaking, the average for Canadians, there's three types of responses to this idea of a spiritual world. One type of response are the atheists, the naturalists, the belief that there's only matter and energy and there's only matter in motion and there's only the scientific method.

Anything other than that is just complete nonsense and that's one big section of Canadians.

Another very big section of Canadians would say, yeah, of course we believe that there's demons and evil spirits and all that type of thing and we believe in talismans and amulets and rituals and all

those things.

We believe in all those things. We believe you can use crystals and channel and you can talk to the dead. There's another large group of Canadians who think that and then probably another group are sort of the ones who are a bit in between. They're not all the way with the atheists but they're sort of dabblers, they're sort of open, they're not sure if it's just sort of a little bit like a party trick or it's just a fun thing for conversation and they're open to the fact that, you know, there in a sense would be somebody like Joe Rogan who's open to the fact he rejects the atheist worldview and knows that there's mystery and oddness in the universe and they're open to that.

So, I'm going to speak to the second two types in a moment but I just want to say something to, if you're online or if you're here and you're part of that materialist, naturalist group, I want to say something very brief to you.

[15:57] First of all, I'm really glad you're either here or you're listening and I'd love it if you sent me a line. That would be really, really wonderful and I just want to, some people don't know this but I became a Christian when I was in grade 12 and I've shared before off and on in different ways however, the first, the next, let's say, almost 10 years of my life I had six or seven times when I almost walked away from the Christian faith and in almost every single one of those cases the primary thing about me losing my faith was the arguments from people who were what I would call naturalists or materialists who believe in the scientific method in reason that the world is just matter in motion in almost every case.

In fact, the very first time when I probably, one of the biggest times I almost gave up my faith was about seven or eight months after I became a Christian and it was specifically by a very, very well-informed critique from a naturalistic perspective.

I know this sounds a bit nerdy to a couple, some of you, I apologize. I'm sort of speaking more and maybe for some of you if you have friends like this it'll help you to speak. I just want to say one particular thing to people who are like that.

friends who are like this. Because you live in Canada you're not aware of this but there, you have a problem because you cannot actually account for the existence of the mind.

Hundreds of years of philosophy there has, there is no successful materialist account of the mind. I mean there's lots of attempts at it and there's a lot of desire for it to be plausible but they all fail.

[17:44] You see if you committed to the idea that all that exists is matter in motion the second you're committed to that you've excluded mind. You've just excluded it.

And you see to have a mind that means there has to be something outside of the flow of cause and effect that's not completely outside of it but is outside of it enough that it's not completely caused all the time and it can look at in a sense cause and effect.

It can reason and act in cause and effect. And if you believe in a universe where there's only matter in motion you cannot account for mind. You cannot. And ironically or tragically the second you account for mind for some type of a non cause and effect reality that is an essential part of human beings that allows you to reason the second you account for it you've opened the door to angels and to spirits.

It's unavoidable. Send me an email I'll buy you coffee we can talk about it but I'm going to say listen this is in fact how most human beings have normally thought and there's a huge problem with the materialist or the naturalist project can't even account for the existence of your own mind and so we're going to talk about demons and I'm going to talk about something about this the other problem with a spiritualist view of the world it's going to come clear in the next story so if you turn with me to verse 13 what we'll see here is how people outside the Christian faith seen the success of Christian exorcisms what they do and they live in a world where they accept that there are spirits and gods and goddesses and presences and all of that in the universe and that some of them are harmful and so here's what they do verse 13 then some of the itinerant

Jewish exorcists undertook to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits saying I adjure you by the Jesus whom Paul proclaims now what they're doing here is all the language of magic and spells and which Luke has captured accurately and so basically what they've done is they've thought they look at Paul doing these things and they don't listen to Paul saying that I'm nothing I'm a nobody I have no power I have no authority God's doing everything they don't look at that they sort of ignore that they look at what he's doing and they try to develop spells and rituals and powers in light of it they've tried to take it on to themselves and so they just they make as if they're making some type of a magical statement a cult statement and they use the

phrase I adjure you by the Jesus whom Paul proclaims but the result is verse 14 seven sons of the Jewish high priest named Sceva were doing this but the evil spirit notice not the man but the evil spirit answered them

[20 : 53] Jesus I know and Paul I recognize but who are you and then the story continues to double down on this idea of an extreme type of demonic possession verse 16 and the man in whom was the evil spirit leaped on them mastered all of them and overpowered them so that they fled out of the house naked and wounded their magic didn't work their occult practices didn't work and verse 17 and this became known to all the residents of Ephesus both Jews and pagans and fear fell upon them all in the name of the Lord Jesus was extolled now I'm spending longer on this part of the sermon than I will in the next I want to say a couple of things so the first thing about this is now I'm speaking to those who believe in a spiritual world those the Canadians that believe in this spiritual world they wear amulets and also those who sort of dabble in it they might do Ouija boards occasionally they might go to a seance they might get some crystals to do a little bit of channeling they do different things like this and so generally in that whole world view and it's remarkable how similar that language might change a little bit the rituals might change but there's basically a very common world view there where there's a belief that in this spiritual world there are dark darkness type of spirits and then there's light type spirits and then there's neutral spirits and that there are people they come to believe who have a special type of power in negotiating and accessing that world of spirit and so they know the rituals they know the names they know the amulets they know the talismans they know the shrines they know the sacrifices that are required to balance those types of spiritual forces which have an impact on human beings and that's just generally the way that people think about it and what's going to be a bit of a shock to you is that

Christians reject that complete model completely so what I'm going to tell you is how Christians view it and then why you should listen to that so here if you could put up the first point that would be very helpful if a spiritual presence funnels you anywhere other than Jesus it is an evil spirit neither good or neutral if a spiritual presence funnels you anywhere other than Jesus and by here I mean Jesus as revealed in the Bible it is an evil spirit neither good or neutral the Bible does not accept the distinction of those three types of types of spirits rejects it completely spirits that say they're good are evil spirits that are neutral are evil spirits that are evil are evil if you could put up the second point that would help to bring this out a bit clearer because Christians believe that there are angels that exist in fact the Christian if you read the Bible it's fair to say that there are angels in the room right now that there are angels in the room right now we just don't see them but they are present and here's the second point angels self-effacingly usher you to your grace-giving savior and his means of grace so in other words if a spiritual being says that they're the angel Michael and that you're to do this and you do that you do that it's almost definitely an evil spirit because angels if you read the Bible

I'm not going to go through the Bible text they don't point to themselves they point away from themselves to Jesus they point to Jesus as the one who will give you grace he is the one who will save you and it's by following his words and commands the means of grace that you will know your freedom and your wholeness and so any spiritual being that funnels you anywhere other than Jesus in fact is an evil spirit it only wants to harm you there's a very old blues song I've never been able to find it but it has a wonderful line don't give the devil a ride he only wants to drive don't give the devil a ride he only wants to drive and here's the third point if you could put it up the Lord Jesus never teaches you methods or spells or rituals or anything like that he never teaches you methods or spells he never commands talismans or amulets or shrines or some other type of physical object as having some type of power the story that we just read the handkerchiefs you need to read that as a type of ironic comment by Luke the seven professional exorcists could not accomplish what God does merely by a dirty rag it's a mocking statement about the supposed professionalism and power of the exorcists

God can use anything even a dirty rag even a dirty rag from Jonathan he can use from Renee that's how powerful our God is that's how big he is that's how weak human power is so the Lord Jesus never teaches you methods or spells he never commands talismans or amulets what does he do he calls you to union with himself he calls you to abide in him and as you abide in him to pray for yourselves and others in other words out of that abiding to pray for yourself and others that's what he always calls you to in a sense he always calls you to a version of what I did when I began the service with that odd prayer of exorcism over this place that's what Jesus does now why should you

believe this why if you are from a native or Hindu or Buddhist background or if you were raised by Wiccans or you were raised by good modern secular Canadians and you dabble in things like crystals or the odd seance or some other type of odd psychic fair type of thing like why you could say okay well George just because Jesus says this doesn't mean anything to me I just think he's wrong and why should you listen to Jesus and if you say that that's a very good question it's a very good comment all I can say is this if you could put up the fourth point by the way the fourth and fifth points are the big points of my sermon the gospel is the good news and I'm quoting I can't remember the name of the song brother my song is love and know and I've slightly adapted a line in that song from the 1600s I think it's actually a very old song and it is the gospel is the good news of love to the loveless shown that loved and lovely you might be that's the good news and I'm saying a little bit more than that you see here's the thing did you know that within 10 years of

[28 : 21] Luke talking about Paul in this story Paul will die a gruesome torturous death within 10 years of this story Paul will have died a gruesome painful death at the hands of the Roman authorities and he could have avoided that gruesome death if all he did was deny one fact his death was not because he was a political revolutionary he wasn't some type of religious fanatic he only had to deny one fact and if he had denied that one fact he would live what was the one fact the one fact was that Jesus rose from the dead if you just said no no I'm just kidding you see what's not of any type of debate amongst anybody in the ancient world is that Jesus died a death of crucifixion there's no debate about that what is of no debate is that the fact that the tomb was empty and that the body was never found there's no debate about that the debate is why is why is the tomb empty and

Paul is one of these people of historic witness who said the reason the tomb is empty is because I saw the risen Jesus I talked with him I saw him on more than one occasion and the grave is empty and the body is gone because he is risen and he went to a gruesome death because he would not deny that fact now here's the thing which is very important you see is the fact the matter of the death of Jesus upon the cross is not just some weird type of Christian talking point it is first and foremost the most profound news in the world it is the news that God showed love to you and me who are loveless why so that you will be loved by him and become lovely that's why he set aside his glory and divine prerogatives that's why he became a human being that's why he lived a fully human life that's why he died on the cross that's why he tasted all there is to taste of death that's why he rose from the dead that's why the gospel goes out that's why there's an invitation to come to him because he wants you who are loveless to know that you are loved by him and experience his love and grow in the loveliness that comes from being rooted in his love and here's the important thing when

Jesus died upon the cross and experienced all there triumph over sin and it's a triumph over shame and it's a triumph over all hostile spiritual powers amen and when you believe into him and he enters into you and there's a union with Christ that is the true defeat of all hostile spiritual powers in your being and if Jesus really did rise from the dead you should believe what he says you should believe what he says and all I am doing is saying what Jesus says there is no neutral spirits there are no good spirits there are only evil spirits because if you're coming in contact with an angel an angel is self effacing and will point you to know Christ know Christ be in him abide in him pray out of him for yourself and for others and that's why this next part is in the

Bible if you just look at me it's a bit some people think it's like a weird thing about book burning look at verse 19 also many of those who were now believers came confessing and divulging their practices in other words they had been Christians but they didn't realize that they couldn't be a Christian and also practice talking to the dead and using spells and having amulets and having talismans they didn't realize that there was a contradiction between those two things and now it becomes very clear to them and so they come their practices verse 19 and a number of those who had practiced occult arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all and they counted the value of them and found it came to 50,000 pieces of silver to give you an idea of what that is in Canadian dollars if you take the average wage of 160 Canadians and multiply it that's the value of what was destroyed 160 the average wage of 160

Canadians so the word of the Lord continued to increase and why so why do they burn it why do they not say wow let's just think of all the missionaries we could support think of all the poor we no no no because the things are dangerous for you so they should only be destroyed I'm just going to

give you a word of admonition brothers and sisters if you have a Ouija board at home burn it if you have a talisman or an amulet to protect you from the evil eye or from evil spirits destroy it with a sledgehammer and throw it in the garbage if you have some type of shrine that you think will protect your house smash it with a sledgehammer and throw it in the garbage if you're going to psychic fairs or you have something from a psychic fair or if you have a friend who's a witch or a wiccan or a warlock and they've given you something to help burn it throw it out don't give it away flee to Christ you know from last night on to even the way when I was driving here this morning

[33 : 58] I had a big battle and the big battle was I can't say these things to atheists and to people involved in the occult and have it be on YouTube so thank you for praying for me because I've said it because the people need to know we need to be unembarrassed and unashamed of these things it's the truth just very briefly the last story and the last story is a profound challenge to Canadians and if you could put up the fifth point that would be very helpful and I'm going to say the fourth and fifth point again and here's the first big point is to understand that the gospel is this profound news that love to the loveless shown that loved and lovely you might be the other big point is never give up on reasoning and never give up on praying you might be tempted to insult people to mock people you might be tempted to want to bring up some movement where you can shout a slogan and shout people down in Canada we are very familiar with demonstrations that have no arguments whatsoever all they do is yell the most mindless foolish thing over and over again with anger that's the world we live in and never surrender to that never give up on reasoning never give up on praying folks so what's the next spirit

I'm just going to talk about it very briefly basically what happens is Paul makes a decision it's about time to go but before after he's made the decision it's time to go before that happens let's look at verse 23 about that time there arose no little disturbance concerning the way that's a way describing christianity for a man named demetrius a silversmith who made silver shrines of artemis brought no little business in other words made piles of ka-ching ka-ching ka-ching no little business to not only himself but others so he gathers verse 25 those together with the workmen in similar trades and said men you know that from this business we have our wealth and you see verse 26 and hear that note this Paul has persuaded and turned a great many people away and so you know if you does he then go on so he says so

I think we should bring down from Athens and bring up from Alexandria some of our leading intellectuals we should have some public lectures we should begin a teaching campaign to refute Paul's arguments no first of all we get a summary of his argument look at verse 26 saying that gods made with hands are not gods and then the rest of it's going to go on not because he wants to bring in lecturers great is our team Artemis of the Ephesians great is Artemis of the Ephesians and they just yell and scream and cause a big riot and all that goes on but just here very briefly I don't have the courage to do this and I don't have Paul's winsomeness he must have a winsomeness do we have the courage like isn't that a summary of the world's most brilliant argument against idols and against amulets and talismans okay really like just help me you think that that little piece of metal that some dude or some woman made somehow was going to have a power over an evil spirit like really help me think that through a little bit really you're really into native spirituality you think that that thing that you just made with your own hands is somehow

God or like just help me think that could you help me to understand that do we have the courage to say to our Buddhist or our Hindu neighbor about their shrine just help me think this through some human being made that with their hands so how is it you think that anything you made with your hands is actually like God can you explain that to me or one of the coffee shops I frequent had an advertisement just for women I wasn't invited not invited but it's about how to become the creatrix of your own of being a goddess really okay let's just so you think of a few things and do a few chants and you just sort of invent out of your own head and explain to me how that makes how that's going to accomplish you becoming a goddess just just curious well most of us as Canadians don't have the courage to say those things

I just said it on YouTube we'll see if it has any impact I don't know but it's a brilliant argument isn't it it's a very ancient Jewish argument it's a brilliant argument and it's an argument that people realize you see here's the thing about the gospel if you could put up the fourth point again that's this is what's really important that the gospel is the good news of love to the loveless shown that loved and lovely you might be that's the fundamental news see Jesus died on the cross that all of Jesus tasted death and all there is to taste of death and all of Jesus rose from the dead and when he calls you

and me to himself and union into him he takes all of me there's no depth of me that he does not take there's no nook and cranny that he does not take there's no part of my history or my future that he does not take there's nothing about me that makes me me that he does not take into himself and that he does not redeem and that he does not call to be

[39 : 51] Lord and this would be something quite frightening if it wasn't something that comes out of the voice of love himself dying so that you might know God's love into the very depths and nooks and crannies of who you are and so that in obedience with him and living out of this profound gift of what Christ has done for you that as you listen to him and as you obey him and as you move into deeper union with him he makes you lovely he gives you a beauty and a coherence and a loveliness that is what your heart deeply longs for that is the him for all of me and so if that's the case all of him and all of his love for all of me that I might be loved and grow into loveliness then it makes sense that I begin to learn to reason and that I have a life of prayer and that

I reject anything that might be of an idol or of a demon and I commit to reason and I commit to prayer because reasoning and prayer respects the dignity of other human beings it respects the dignity of their minds reason and prayer are ultimately God based hopefulness that respects the integrity and the fact that the goal is that the one we are talking to will know that they are loved and become lovely that's why we share the gospel we don't start riots if you could put up the final point so never give up on reasoning never give up on praying brothers and sisters lies are always your enemy the truth is always your friend lies might seem very comfortable but they only hurt you the truth might seem profoundly uncomfortable but at the end of the day the truth is your friend never give up on reasoning never give up on praying as you abide in

Christ I invite you to stand bow our heads in prayer father your word has said has brought us into some very challenging areas father we confess that there's lots of times we would rather have the lies that are popular for our political or religious tribe and that we would rather listen to those lies and we rather listen to lies about others and father you know how deeply we are attracted to things like that and so father we ask that we give you thanks and praise that once a week we can gather together with other Christians in your presence so we can we can feed on him spiritually and we thank you father that you call us back to Christ you call us back time and time again to that and that you call us father to the great virtue the great quest the great task of reasoning and praying and we ask father that you help us to forswear to forsake all of those name calling and all of the lies and all of the hatred that goes on and that you help us to be people who desire to know the truth to walk in the truth to reason humbly but clearly and to pray father with passion and with hope and some of us father are better at reasoning and some of us are better at praying and we thank you that we can all be together in the body of

Christ and so father we ask that you do that wonderful work in our lives and we ask these things in the name of Jesus and all God's people said Amen