Philippians 3:15-4:4 "Solid Ground in a Superficial World"

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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. Just bow our heads in prayer. Father, thank you so much that we can, that you are a God who speaks, that you speak to your people. And we ask, Father, that your Holy Spirit will move with gentle but deep power in our hearts, that we might recognize ourselves in your Word, that we might hear your profound and beautiful promises, and that we would claim these promises, hold them dear to our hearts.
We ask, Father, that your Holy Spirit will bring your Word into our hearts to form us for our good, for the good of this world, and for your great glory. And we ask this in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Saviour. Amen. Please be seated.
It hasn't happened in a couple of years, but I, when I have some of my younger grandchildren come to visit, and they haven't been to the church for, you know, for maybe a long time, and they come, and there's a set, if they haven't come, like in January or February. One of the things I like to ask me is if I would take them up on the stage, because they're very fascinated with the stage. They would find this stage today very, very, very fascinating, actually. And so one of the things they love to do is they'll come, and depending on their age, they'll take my hand, you know, I tell them I'm not allowed to run around and all of that. And, you know, I have this curtain here, but they'd love to walk through that door that way and that door this way and look behind. And they just find it so amazing that it looks so real. But they just take a step behind it, and it's just all surface. That's all it is. It's all surface, no depth. It's not real. I mean, it's a real stage, but it's not a real house. And they find that very fascinating. They get very excited about it. They want to, of course, run around and all that stuff. But here's the point about it. If you, one of the things that we struggle with in our society today is being consumed with what's superficial, all the surface of life. You know, when I think last week, [3:27] I mentioned that I periodically will have Instagram on my phone, but it doesn't last very long, because before you know it, I'll have wasted 40 minutes just scrolling through the things. And I have to take it off, because I don't have... Anyway, I just have to take it off. But as a society, we're very, very, very consumed with the latest, the most recent, the superficial. We don't think of it that way. We think every superficial thing is unbelievably important and don't realize that the next superficial thing, which is different, is just as unbelievably important, which means the first superficial thing wasn't important at all. And we completely forget that. And while on one hand, there's this powerful pressure in our society to get caught up in the superficial, to get caught up in the surface, there are, amongst many people in our society, a longing and a desire to find something which is solid, something which is real, something which isn't just surface and transient, something real. I can tell you right now, for those of you, those of us, who are just interested in the superficial, you will never like the Bible, like you never will. You'll find it completely and utterly

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unhelpful, because the Bible talks about things which are very substantial all of the time. And so, the text that we're going to look at today is a very wise and beautiful text for those of us who would like to move from being consumed with the superficial, the surface of things, and to begin to have a life and to be formed in a way that deals with things which are really solid and deep.

And like a lot of things in the Bible, it doesn't look like that at first. And it does a couple of things that make Canadians uncomfortable. But it could very well be, in fact, I'm going to suggest that unless we get uncomfortable, we're not going to actually be able to progress and actually find those things which are deep, not just surface. So, if you take your Bibles and open them, we're looking at Philippians chapter 3. We're preaching through the book of Philippians. This was originally a letter written by Paul in around the year 61 or 62, while he's under Roman imprisonment. And he's writing it to a small church of people who, I mean, they still be Jewish, but they're Jewish and now Christians and also pagans who are no longer pagans. See, because a Jewish person can become a Christian and remain Jewish, but you can't really be a pagan and become a Christian and remain pagan.
That's a whole other topic of conversation if you're curious about that. And he's writing this letter to them from jail, and this is how it goes. We're just preaching through verse 15.
Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if any of you think otherwise, God will reveal that to you also. Now, just, you know, because I go through the book, I always want to read things, even if I don't talk about them very much, just so you know I'm not playing fast and loose with the context. What he's just talked about is how Christians should know that they're not perfect, they haven't arrived, they have to keep growing and growing and growing and growing. And that's what he said, you should think this way too. Don't think, never think you're perfect.
Verse 16, only let us hold true to what we have attained. In other words, just keep pressing on. And then he gets to this thing which is a bit odd, verse 17, brothers and sisters, join in imitating me and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us.
[6:51] Which sounds a little bit narcissistic, but it isn't. And if I have time at the end, I'll mention why it's not, within the context, why it's not narcissistic. And now we get into the nub of the matter about being consumed with the superficial and the surface.

And for those of us who have a longing to not live our lives on the surface and superficial, but to get to things which are real and have substance, the first thing that Paul's going to do is break a rule, a Canadian rule about what you talk about.
And that rule about what Canadians aren't supposed to talk about is this. Every single one of you in this room are going to die. I mean, I'm not saying that there's a bomb outside, you're going to die the next second.
I'm not threatening you. I'm just saying, if you want to begin to have a serious life, a life dealing with things that are meaningful, you need to begin by understanding that you will all die.
Well, let's see, how does he put it? Verse 18, Now, there's all sorts of things about this.
[8:23] And you say, George, okay, this doesn't sound like a very promising way to begin talking about getting over superficial things and surface things and looking for things which are more substantial.

Well, it actually is. Begin like at verse, look at verse 19, their end is destruction. What Paul here is saying is, on one hand, there is a bit of a, there is a clear hint towards the Christian doctrine of hell, which I don't have time to talk about today.
But it also is saying something far more immediate. And one of the most, the most empirical truth there is about human beings, which is that all of your lives are moving to the end of your life, where your life will be destroyed, where you will die.
Death isn't something that you can take as much vitamin D as you want. You can have a perfect diet. You can exercise in the most rational, wise way. You can do all sorts of things like that. Most of it will just mean you have a better looking corpse.
than another person, but you will die. That's just true. In fact, if you think about it, how can you be wise if you don't ever think about that?
[9:33] And just before I go anything further with this list of the five things, right? Your enemies of the cross of Christ, your end is destruction, your God is your belly, your glory and your shame, your minds are set on earthly things.

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This is just a very basic truth, that the Bible, when it says very hard things about us, does it not to push us away, but to connect with us, realistically.
Because these are profoundly realistic and wise things to say, which I want to try to show you. Look at this thing, the thing here. We'll just jump. Their end is destruction, their God is their belly.
Well, what does it mean to say their God is their belly? What it's saying is that human beings very easily fall into being driven by their appetites. And we get driven by our appetites.
And when we are consumed by an appetite, when we let an appetite have more and more power over us, that thing which we want to satisfy our appetite becomes almost like a God to us.
[10:35] It becomes the thing that we organize around, that we think about all of the time, that we just desire very, very deeply. And if you think about it for a second, the more that human beings are controlled by their appetites, the more that human beings become like animals.

And here's the thing about animals. For an animal, there is no right and wrong. There is no heaven and hell. For an animal, there is only breakfast and supper.
For an animal, there is only breakfast and supper. And we all know people. And we all know that there's been times in our lives where we've been controlled by our appetites.
We know how easily it is to slip into this. Well, what about this other thing? Here, look again. Their end is destruction, verse 19. Their God is their belly, and they glory in their shame with minds set on earthly things.
I'm doing this one next because it helps us to understand the other phrases. What this is talking about, the word earthly things here. So one of the things we're going to be doing in September, we're going to go through the book of Ecclesiastes.
[11:48] And if you're familiar with the book of Ecclesiastes, it keeps going on and on about all things are vanity or all things are meaningless. But really, the phrase which we're going to look at in the fall, the Hebrew word is actually referring to vapor, to things being transient.

So if you want to understand what it means, just think of what it's like to walk outside in January in Ottawa when it's minus 20. And when you walk outside when it's minus 20, your breath leaves your mouth and you can see it.
Well, that's what the text is referring to in the book of Ecclesiastes. That's what life is like. When you breathe out and you can see your breath for but a second and then your breath disappears.
And earthly is a similar type of idea. It's the New Testament sort of analogous, closely related idea to the Old Testament word that's translated often as vanity or meaningless.
And that's the word earthly. It's referring to things which are completely and utterly transient. Now, so it says here that, what does it say here? It says our minds are set on earthly things, on transient things.
[12:59] And we might think that that's a little bit harsh. But just think about what we people, what Canadians set their minds on, what maybe some of us have set our minds on today before we came here.

If you talk to Canadians and look at how they live, what do they live for? What do they set their mind on day by day? Well, some people say all I can do is just get through my day by day.
That's my entire life. But some of them say I set my mind on the party that I'm going to go to next Friday. I set my mind on buying really, really nice clothes, nice purses, nice shoes, looking really good.
I set my mind on exercise so my body will look really good. I set my mind on money. I set my mind on power. I set my mind on fame. I set my mind on being able to create music or writing.
I set my mind on having a good job. I set my mind on having promotions. I set my mind on having a wife or a husband. I set my mind on having lots of sex. I set my mind on having children.
[13:58] I set my mind on pornography. I set my mind on having a family. I set my mind on my country. I set my mind on developing my mind and having a powerful intellect.

I set my mind on knowledge, on popularity, on applause, on personal transformation, and everything in that list is transient. Too bad the Bible doesn't talk about me.
It's just brilliantly described human beings. It's described the average Canadian, including lots of us, all of us, to differing degrees.
Our minds are set on things which are completely and utterly transient. I don't know. I've used the analogy before, but I don't know.

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About 18, 19, 20 years ago, I buried the man who, for many years, was one of the richest men in Ottawa. He became a Christian here, and I'd say things like this to him, and he would agree with me 100%, which is that the second after he died, if there was a street person who died at that exact same second, on the other side of death, they have the exact same bank account and financial resources, which is zero.
[15:16] As Flannery O'Connor said, you can't be any poorer than dead. So, in fact, how does it describe us again?

Their end is destruction. In other words, we're all going to die. We don't even want to think about it in Canada. You're not allowed to talk about it in Canada. Even in funerals, you don't really talk about it.
Good grief. You know? Their God is their belly, their appetites. They glory in their shame with minds set on earthly things. Well, what does it mean to say glory in your shame?
You know, one of the ways to help us to understand what it means and why it's true is when we come time to do communion, one of the things that we say in the communion service is we ask God to help us to feed on our hearts by faith in Christ.
Feed on him in, I'll say to you, you know, that the body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for you, preserve your body and soul unto everlasting life. Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died on you, for you.
[16:31] Feed on him in your hearts by faith with thanksgiving. When I go along here saying communion to you, that's what I say. I'll say it as I'm walking along. The body of our Lord Jesus Christ given for you.

Preserve your body and soul unto everlasting life. Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for you. Feed on him in your hearts by faith with thanksgiving. Feed on him in your hearts.
So this is a very profound thing to say, and it's not something that I invented. It's in this ancient liturgy. Because what do we feed on in our hearts? I was really convicted with this a couple of weeks ago.
Well, many of us, if we're honest, we feed on thoughts of revenge. We think on unforgiveness. We think on greed.
We think on adultery. We feed on envy. Very huge problem in Canada. If Canada has one besetting sin, it's not our sexual problems, which we have.
[17:36] It's actually the greatest sin is the sin of envy, which is thinking, being upset by those who have things that we don't, that we value, and wanting them to get lowered and destroyed, even if we don't get enriched in the process.

It's a very huge problem in Canada. And that's what we feed on in our hearts. It's what we think about during coffee breaks when we're falling asleep. I'm not saying we're all completely evil all of the time, but these are shameful things.
And that's what we feed on. Isn't it? More than you think about this, their end is destruction, their God is their belly, they glory in their shame.
When they say their glory in their shame, it's what they feed on it, and they have a confidence in it. Like, they think it's a good thing. We think it's a good thing when we think of these things.
And our minds are set on earthly things. And then why does it say that we're enemies of the cross? Because most people would say that's not true. That most people would say, I mean, I never give Jesus a thought.
[18:44] Why would you say that I'm an enemy to the cross of Christ? Well, we see that when we come face to face with the Bible saying something, a no, to something that our appetite desires, or we want to set our minds on.

So you ask, you tell a very, very rich person, if I was to tell a very, very rich person, that it's not that having money is a sin, but if you earn your money in such a way that people are oppressed, that's wrong.
You should stop it. And that the highest form of living is not amassing a fortune, but being more generous. So God says you should begin by giving away 10% of your wealth, and because you can afford it, maybe it should be 20 or 30 or 40%.
And can you imagine me saying this to a very rich stockbroker or business person? You expect it to be used as an example about sex. Let's not use about that.

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Let's just talk about anything from forgiveness. You know, you should forgive. What do you mean, I should forgive? And as soon as God's commands intersect in a way which is pointy enough that we might actually feel, well, how do we feel?
[20:03] Who is God to say that to me? We want to go against God with our elbows up. And we want to stop our elbows up because we want to give him the finger, which it's hard to do that with your elbows up, so you have to go back and forward.

You see, at that point in time, you realize that even though God is a God of grace and mercy, that in fact, if it impinges on it, we experience him as an enemy, as a threat.
Now, just before we go anything further, you can begin to see that in some ways, the whole Bible text today is about two different ways. And the hope is that you will choose to continue to walk in one way or move to one way if you aren't already, and then some advice and beautiful wisdom about how you deepen and walk in that way.
And one way is the way of destruction. The other way is the way of undeserved kindness from God, undeserved mercy from God, undeserved unearned grace from God.
Those are the two ways. But before we go any further, Paul here is not othering. It's far from it. It's the exact opposite of othering. He's not pointing a finger.
[21:19] It's like that old analogy. If I point a finger at you, I have three fingers pointing back at myself. And he would be the first to say, not only if I could point my thumb backwards, I would do that too.

I mean, just before this, he's talked about how he used to boast in the fact that he persecuted Christians and put them in jail and killed them. Something for which he's now ashamed. You see, the Bible would say that all human beings, in a sense, when the Bible says, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, in a sense what the Bible is saying, for all human beings walk in the way of destruction.
And it's only by God's grace and mercy, his undeserved kindness, that Jesus takes me, in a sense, out of one way and puts me in the other way. That's what the cross is all about. The cross is not, look at all those bad people and we're the pure people in here.
And hopefully it's come forward in how I'm talking. It's me, it's me, it's me, oh Lord, standing in the need of prayer. It's why Spurgeon so truly said, the Christian way is not a way of othering, but it is one beggar telling another beggar where to get free bread, the free bread of eternal life.
And that's what I am here to tell you about. There is a better way. There is a way that you enter purely and utterly by God's grace, his mercy, his kindness, and his beauty coming to you in a way which is unmerited and undeserved.
[22:43] And that's how it came to me. It's the only way it comes to anybody when his grace comes to you, completely unmerited and undeserved. And that's the next bit. Look at verse 20.

One of the things which is really important in the Bible is the Bible, the New Testament especially, is the book of big butts. It's big butts in the sense that there's a but after something like that.
And it's a big but. You need to really pay attention to it. So look at verse 20. But, he's going to talk about another way. Our citizenship is in heaven. And from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.
A very dense text. Let's sort of try to one. This is the way of undeserved grace. And it gives us truths to remember and to rehearse and to tell each other.
And the first thing here is it's not telling us to be so super spiritually that we don't deal with the real. The way to deal with those things is all laid out here. Look at verse 20 again.
[23:52] Our citizenship is in heaven. I just want to tell you, for a lot of us in this room, we don't appreciate that word citizenship. But I also know that there are people in this room who came to Canada as refugees.

They understand the importance of citizenship. There are people here who've come as immigrants. They understand the value of citizenship in the right place.
And when it says our citizenship is in heaven, heaven is the place where God rules. Friends, brothers and sisters, someday Max Carney will not be the Prime Minister of Canada.
Our citizenship will still be in heaven. There will be a time when Trump is not... Even if you don't like Trump, our citizenship is not in heaven. Sorry, our citizenship is in heaven. There will be a time when he's not...

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Our citizenship is in heaven. Heaven is the place where God rules. He rules from it. What does Jesus teach us in the Lord's Prayer? Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come.
[24:59] Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Heaven. It's to understand that while we are to be the best Canadians we could possibly be and the best Ottawaans we could possibly be, at the end of the day, Max Carney is our Prime Minister.

King Charles II or III, I think it is, is our king. But our true king, the King of kings and Lord of lords, is our saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.
That's the first thing that it tells you, that he is our ruler. And then it tells you that he will return. Look at this. But our citizenship is in heaven and from him we await a saviour.
It's not that we have to wait for him to come. He's already come. We're waiting for him to come the second time. Christians should be deeply uncertain about when he will return, but we should be spectacularly certain that he will return.
It changes how you think. And he is described as our saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. And this is a profoundly... You see, people, as people from the outside of the Christian faith, you don't understand, they don't understand, and Christians don't understand often when they first become Christians, or maybe they do at first, their grasp with the beauty.
[26:16] But the beauty is deeper as you get deeper into the Christian faith. Because when you see this simple phrase, our saviour, Lord Jesus Christ, there's something emotionally powerful and beautiful about it.

Because, you know, you just think about the average Canadian, just person just formed by Canada. We have a particular origin, which is evolution. And then we have a particular way to try to think of what's right and wrong.
And then we have another particular way to think about how we're going to be spiritual. And we have another particular way to think how about we're going to be practical in this life. And we have another way where we have to deal with the laws.
And then we have another thing about death and what happens when we die. And then we have this whole other thing about longings. And that longings is sort of a separate thing from the spiritual thing or sort of connected and separate from morals, but sort of connected.
And then for some Canadians, there's beauty. And there's all these completely and utterly separate categories. But that's not there in the Bible. We have, what do we have here?
[27:16] We have our saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. There's just one who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body and by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

20 and 21. There is one God in heaven who's created all things, who sustains all things, who will bring all things to their proper end. There is that one God in heaven, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit who have worked together.
They are a God of love because from all eternity, the Father has loved the Son and the Son has loved the Father. I miss that there's a whole other separate principle of love for Canadians and how that love fits with meaning and beauty and right and wrong.
Those things can be all complicated. And it can be complicated for us to figure out how they are. But at the end of the day, there is just the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit with love and beauty from all eternity. And it's the same God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit who has saved us. And God is good and goodness comes from that. And because he's the creator, how to live wisely and well comes from understanding his word. And there is this profound unity and coherence in all of it.
[28:20] And that's who we're looking forward to having come back. And then there's this whole thing about our body, which is just so precious.

You know what it says here? Look at verse 21, who will transform our lowly body. And lowly is a very, very good way to translate it. But you know what it literally says? It says, the body, our humiliated body.
Now some of you are too young and too healthy to understand how your body can be a source of humiliation. Others of us have realized that we're covered with dimples that aren't cute.
And uncute dimples just grow with age, as well as a whole pile of other types of things. And we become very conscious of the humiliation of our body, especially considering to what God wants to

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be.
But it says, who will transform? He will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body. And you know what that means literally in the original language? It's a body. And so it has matter.
[29:29] But it's a body of glory. Glory. It's made of glory. And of matter and energy.

Matter and energy and God's glory is what our new bodies will be like. You see, this is, what this is saying, what this is saying, and when you realize that this is what the Bible teaches, you realize how you can only be saved by God doing something, by putting your faith in Christ and he transfers you out of one way into another way, another area where you are a citizen of his kingdom, of his people.
It's a covenant idea and he is your king. And what it's saying is this. In Christ, what we see here is the final act and word about us.
You or I might die in pain. We might die alone. We might die with no one grieving. In some places where Christians die, they die with people cheering.
And they think they've won. Some die in the haze of Alzheimer's with terrible diseases. But what this is saying is that if you are in Christ, this death and the humiliation of your body is not the final word about you.
[30:56] The moment your eyes close on this world will be the moment your eyes open in the presence of the triune God and you will awake with a resurrected body, one made alive and healed, suffused and infused with the glory of God.

that is the Christian truth.
And we come into this way of undeserved, unearned, unmerited beauty and goodness and grace because of what our Savior Jesus Christ has done for us on the cross.
and we are called to put our faith and trust in Him as He transfers us from one way to another. You know, who better to listen to than Jesus on this?
I mean, He is the one who died upon the cross for you because of His miracles. If you read His biographies, the biographies of Him, you see that it has to have been His love which kept Him on the cross.
[32:11] A man who could walk on water, a man who could knock soldiers down just by a single word could never have been held on a cross unless He willed to die on the cross, unless it was His love that led Him to die on the cross.

And the grave is empty, the body has never been found and He has appeared alive to many people. And so, who is there better to listen to and trust than Jesus who loves you, Jesus who saves you, Jesus who is the Lord Jesus Christ, sovereign over all things, who will transform your body into His glorious body, who is there better to listen to and trust than Him?
And that's why it says to stand firm in it. Look at what it goes on to say. And therefore, my brothers and sisters, verse chapter 4, verse 1, whom I love and long for my joy and my crown, stand firm thus in the Lord and be saved.
So, there is this constant sociological and cultural pressure to forget these things if you're in Christ, to think of other things, to move towards superficiality or to move to false gods.
And Paul is here saying, stand firm in thinking and remembering about this and walking on the way.
And then, we need to get to this other thing in terms of how you live this way.
[33:26] We'll read verses 2 and 3 to get to this in closing. But, I entreat Iodia and I entreat Syntica to agree in the Lord. Yes, I ask you also, true companions, to help those women who have labored side by side with me in the gospel together with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers whose names are in the book of life.

And that's just, for our purposes right now, reminding us that just because these things are true in us doesn't mean we're instantly transformed. Our life in Christ is a quest, a continuing, pressing into these things in a way that changes us because we aren't perfect.
And that's why we have to have penitent, humble hearts. But here's the primary lesson I want to leave you with. Verse 4, Rejoice in the Lord always, again I will say rejoice. Rejoice in the Lord always, again I will say rejoice.
Rejoice in the Lord always, again I will say rejoice. So what's going on here with this particular text? The Bible is not being foolish. The Bible is not saying that you all, you can only have one emotion which is rejoicing.

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The Bible isn't naive. It's not telling you just be, just rejoice. It's not trying to manipulate you. It's not saying listen if something just terribly tragic has just happened to you, you're not allowed to be sad, you've got to think happy thoughts.
[34:43] You've got to think rejoicing thoughts. The Bible isn't telling you that this type of emotion is the emotion that real Christians have that overwhelms all of your other emotions. The Bible understands that you can have things which are sad and tragic and conditions in your life that are very, very, very hard and very, very, very difficult.

And it's not telling you to ignore all of these things and turn away from them. But it is telling you to rejoice in the Lord. And what does that mean? Ten times I think it is in the book of Philippians it tells you to rejoice.
I think it's the same number of times that the book tells you to glory or boast in the Lord. And those 20 times they're connected. It's the same type of idea. And what is it? Why did the Leafs, why did the Leaf fans think the Leafs were going to win the Stanley Cup?
Sorry if I'm touching a wound. Well, what would they tell you? We're going to win a Stanley Cup. We got Marner. We got Austin Matthews.
We got Nylander. We got a great coach. We got a great jersey. We're going to win. Why did the Liberals think they were going to win the election? We don't got Trudeau.
[35:53] We got the man with the terrible orange hair frightening all of Canada. We got Max Carney. We're going to win. Rejoice and glory and boasting is saying, what do you put your confidence in for success?

What do you think will help you, will make you succeed and win? So the text is not telling you to try to manipulate yourself into feeling certain emotions.
It's telling you to think about the greatness and the goodness of God and what the kindness and what he's done for us. In a sense, what it is, you know, there's an old hymn that says, count your blessings, name them one by one, and it will surprise you what the Lord has done.
And what you could almost say here is that the text is saying, count his character, count his attributes, count his promises one by one. Count them every day.
In the moment of your greatest sadness, in the moment when you're having to consider whether you're going to take on a new job, whether you're going to move to another country, whether you're going to deal with huge disappointments or consider taking big opportunities.
[37:13] What you obviously think about all of these things practically, but what you need to think about most of all, if you want to be on the way of undeserved mercy and kindness and grace, is I do have a Savior who's triumphed over death.

Yes, I have this cancer diagnosis, yes, I have this Alzheimer's diagnosis, but I have a Savior who's triumphed over death. I have the promise of a resurrected body.
Political leaders will come and go, but my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will return. I have a Father in Heaven who loves me, who hears my prayers. And that even if I have a very hard time here between the moment now and my death, none of those hard times are the true word about me because my Father in Heaven loves me and I will spend eternity with Him.
Those are the things which we are to remember and have form us, to remember and to form us.
Just in the final little bit about this, why is this text so helpful?
I mean, obviously it's telling us to think and rejoice. You see, the rejoicing comes sideways when you think about this. If you try to force yourself to have a smile on the face of sadness and heartbreak and disappointment, that's emotional manipulation.
[38:35] But it might very well be that in the midst of your sadness, when you remember Jesus and what He's done for you on the cross, when you remember that you have a Father in Heaven who rules over all, when you remember the promises of the Bible, before you know it, unbidden, the corner of a smile appears on your face.

And there's a bit of a lightness that comes to your step, unbidden, indirectly, sideways. So part of the big problem in life is this.
I was a humongous hockey fan, true confession, it was before, of course, the Ottawa Senators. I was a huge Toronto Maple Leafs fan. And I remember I'd become a Christian, I remember walking to school one day, and I was devastated that the Leafs had lost, and it was as if the Holy Spirit said to me, why do you care so much about a hockey team?

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Like, George, really? The Holy Spirit didn't say that, but sort of. You see, when it says about earthly things, the Bible isn't saying that you should never care about having a really good cup of coffee or a really delicious chocolate milkshake or a well-done steak or having a good job or being able to have good clothes or provide for your family or have friends, it's not saying that you shouldn't care about all of those things.
What it's saying is a little bit about what I talked about last week, that the human problem is our loves are disordered, and we were made to have our loves ordered. And what happens for human beings is when the thing which should be their biggest love isn't in that biggest love place, and here obviously the biggest love should be the triune God, it should be our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and if we don't have something to put in that biggest spot, all these other smaller loves will scurry up to take that biggest spot, and then all of our loves are going to be disordered.
[40:24] We end up loving the maple leafs too much, or the senators too much, or food too much, or sex too much, because we were made to love the biggest thing the biggest amount, and not that we don't love anything else, but that you love small things a small amount, and medium things a medium amount, and big things a big amount, and the biggest thing the biggest amount, and part of what discipleship is, is walking with Jesus and reading the word, and being with other Christians, not just in a local church, but from a global perspective, because we need the help of Christians from around the world, and from the past, is the slow process of having our loves ordered the way they should be ordered, and it begins by putting the biggest love, the biggest thing that you should love, and having that as your biggest love.

Please stand. Bow our heads in prayer. Father, we give you thanks and praise that your word addresses the real us in the real world, that it's not a hallmark book, but confronts us about real things that both delight us, and that we long for, but also things that we should be ashamed of, and repent of.
We thank you that it speaks about the real us in the real world, and we thank you, Father, that your word speaks to us in such a realistic way, but also in a way of deep love, that it comes, Father, from your heart, that you do not delight that anyone would perish.
Your longing and yearning is that all would repent and call out to you, Father, to Jesus to be their Savior, that we might begin to walk that way, that path of undeserved mercy, of undeserved beauty, of undeserved goodness and grace and kindness that comes from you.
And we ask, Father, that your Holy Spirit would do a gentle but deep work in us, that day by day we might remember your greatness, your goodness, your kindness, your promises, that those might be the things that we think about the most, that we feed on in our hearts, that we might think about them in our own minds and share them with others and come Sunday by Sunday to be reminded of the greatest things.
[42:43] And so now, Father, as this service, this part of the service comes to the end and we prepare for the next part of the service when we receive communion, we ask that you would help us to feed on Jesus in our hearts by faith with thanksgiving.

And we ask these things in Jesus' name and all God's people said, Amen.

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