

The Canadian Problem

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Preacher: Rev. George Sinclair

[0 : 0 0] Father, we're going to look at a part of your word that most Christians don't read or think about. And so we ask very much for your help, that the Holy Spirit would help us to understand why such an odd passage of scripture is in the Bible, why you would put it there.

And Father, we ask that you would bring your word close to our heart. Make us disciples of Jesus who are gripped by the gospel, learning to live for your glory. And we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Amen. You know, friends, it's a very interesting time, obviously, unprecedented. These are all like cliches. You know, one of the things that it's really, it'd be really interesting as we get to talk about this, maybe when the pandemic's all over.

But as many of you know, there's sort of like a, there was almost a pandemic of loneliness in much of Canadian society, even before this pandemic has, at least the way it's being dealt with right now, calling for social isolation.

And I, you know, I think about it a little bit for people who already struggle with loneliness and isolation, people who already are struggling with broken relationships and maybe being estranged from their family or having no family at all.

[1 : 1 5] To add on top of all of that, this call for social isolation, it must be very hard for many people, including many of you who are listening to this, just on top of the normal stress that comes from this.

And on top of that, you know, many of us in Canada struggle with trust. You know, we've been hurt in relationships with our parents or with bosses or institutions that were supposed to help us or that we believed in at one point in time and they've let us down.

And so here we have a situation where a pandemic comes into us as a culture, into people like you and me who already maybe struggle with isolation, already maybe struggle with loneliness, already maybe struggle with being alienated from others and already struggle in some cases with trust, trust of other people, trust of institutions.

We're going to look at it really, as you might have heard in the prayer, we're looking at a very odd biblical text today. For those of you who aren't familiar with the Bible or maybe you're very young Christians or maybe you're just curious about what Christians would say, so you're listening in on this, sort of as almost like doing anthropological research on some strange and exotic tribe.

This is a text that we're going to be looking at that Christians rarely read and they rarely, you rarely have sermons on this. The text we're looking at this week and the text we're looking at next week.

[2 : 4 1] We're looking at it not because we are odd, although maybe many of us are, but one of the things that we do at Church of the Messiah is we preach through books of the Bible. The Bible, Judges, was written as a book and we study it as a book.

We begin at the beginning and go right through to the end. And one of the good things about that is it forces us to look at things that maybe we wouldn't otherwise look at and address topics that maybe I wouldn't have the courage to address.

But that's why we're going to be looking at it. So it's an odd story. And one of the things which is especially odd about it is that... Well, here, I'll back up a little bit.

The book of Judges, we're going to be looking at chapter 17 and 18. And it takes place, it's written about this time period after Moses has taken the people of Israel out of Egypt.

And because of their sin, they wander in the wilderness. And now they've come to the edge of the promised land and Moses dies. And Joshua is the one who gets them into the promised land.

[3 : 45] And then Joshua dies. And the book of Judges takes place... It looks at what happens between the death of Joshua and the Israelites entering the promised land.

And when you have... Many of you would have heard of the first kings of Israel, Saul, but especially David. And this time period, really, between the rise of Saul and then David, the very first kings in Israel, and coming into the promised land, that's what's being described here in the book of Judges.

And one of the problems about this text is that for Christians, like there's nothing good that happens in this story. Everything in this story is bad from a Christian point of view.

And to look at this text, there's an extra complication because what the Bible is describing as bad is what Canadians think of as good.

So that causes a problem as well for us. And so I'm going to talk about all of those things, see how we navigate. But having said all of that, remember I said I began by talking about relationships.

[4 : 56] And once we sort of get through why it is that Christians, the Bible describes these things as bad that Canadian society describes as good, it actually opens a door to talk about the importance of personal relationships and social isolation and trust.

And actually the story is a very, very profound and wise insight into things like this. So let's begin. It's Judges chapter 17. And we're not going to be able to read all of it.

Some of it, I'll just tell you the story. Some of it we'll read, but we'll begin at Judges chapter 17, verse 1. There was a man of the hill country of Ephraim, whose name was Micah.

And he said to his mother, the 1100 pieces of silver that were taken from you, about which you uttered a curse, and also spoke it in my ears.

In other words, he personally heard his mom utter a curse on whoever stole her 1100 pieces of silver. Behold, the silver is with me, her son says.

[5 : 58] I took it. And his mother said, blessed be my son by the Lord, which is a very odd response. So just sort of pause there before we read the next little bit. So if you're a bit unfamiliar with the Bible, Jewish people, if you have Jewish friends, they're not part of a tribe.

But originally, the Jewish people all would have been able to say which one of 12 tribes they were part of. So Ephraim is one of those tribes. So we're talking about a Jewish person here.

And what Micah does is he steals 1100 pieces of silver from his mom. I don't know what that would be like in today's dollars. That might be like stealing \$20 million. That's like a lot of money, \$10 million.

It's a pile of money. So Micah's rich. His mom is rich. He rips off his mom. And I don't know what you think about curses. And I'm not going to get into a little bit of a, I'm not going to get into a discussion about curses.

But Micah believes in curses. And what motivates him to give the money back is that his mom has pronounced a curse on whoever stole the money. And Micah believes in curses.

[7 : 06] He gets very, very worried. And so this is what, how the story opens. He says to his mom that he's, he's stolen the mom. And that little bit about the Lord bless, et cetera, et cetera.

It's the mom revoking the curse and asking for a blessing because it's her son. And I guess she has the money back. So what happens next?

Well, here's where things get interesting. Verse three. And he restored, that's Micah, restored the 1100 pieces of silver to his mother. And his mother said, I dedicate the silver to the Lord from my hand for my son to make a carved image and a metal image.

Now, therefore, I will restore it to you. So when he restored the money to his mother, his mother took 200 pieces of silver and gave it to the silversmith who made it into a carved image and a metal image.

And it was in the house of Micah. And the man Micah had a shrine and he made an ephod and household gods and ordained one of his sons who became his priest.

[8 : 12] Now we'll just sort of pause there. So what's going on right here? I'll be right up front about it. So what he's actually, what the mom has done is the mom has said, I want you to make some gods, idols, gods.

In a sense, they wouldn't have thought of them as idols. They would have thought of them as gods. And we think of them as idols, but they would have thought of them as gods. And even though she says that she worships the Lord, the God of Israel, the God of Christians as well, the fact of the matter is, is that she might worship some version of that God, but she has gods of her own, which she finds far more meaningful.

And these gods of her own that she finds far more meaningful because she's a very spiritual person. She wants to have them represented and present, so to speak, in her life in such a way that she can give herself and get meaning in these gods of her own choosing.

Like in a sense, you could say it's a curated spirituality. It's a bespoke spirituality. So here we begin to see actually part of the problem. If you think about it for a second, and for some of you listening, you can see a little bit of a problem here.

In Canada, there's sort of two groups. In Canada, there's one group that sort of says, in fact, likes having a type of bespoke spirituality, a type of curated spirituality, where you take bits and pieces of things which are meaningful, and maybe it's something from Miles Davis, something from Hinduism, something from Buddhism, something from Judaism, something from the Kabbalah, and you curate it, you put it together in such a way that is very, very meaningful to you, and you would say that you're a very spiritual person.

[9 : 55] And in Canada, there's many, many people who would understand themselves in this particular way. And then, of course, in Canada, there's a large number of people who think that that's just bunk, that it's just ridiculous, that you shouldn't bother with such things.

And by and large, in Canada, both groups more or less get along. They just let each other live their own life. And so here's part of the problem.

The part of the problem is that if you read this whole story from the biblical point of view, what the mom and the son are doing is wrong. It's not just sort of like the way a secular, more atheistic person who hears about your love of crystals might sort of roll their eyes or something like that.

But, you know, then you're going to live and let live. You just do what you do, and I'll do what I'll do, and we'll get along fine. The Bible actually views that as wrong, that it's like a very serious type of mistake.

And so it's actually describing as wrong what a large number of Canadians think is good. So this idea of the mom with her different gods and her bespoke spirituality, her curated spirituality, from the biblical point of view, this is wrong.

[11 : 10] Now, that's a bit of a problem, and I'm going to address it in a moment, but it gets even worse in the next bit, because at least with this bit, it might sound as if the Bible is taking the side of those more secular friends of ours in Canada who sort of will roll their eyes at this.

But in fact, the very next thing that the Bible says shows that there's a problem not just between the Bible and the Christian faith and people who like their curated spirituality, but also for the people who roll their eyes and are secular, because here's what the very next bit says.

And this is, by the way, how you understand that the Bible is actually, this whole story is describing something that the Bible thinks is wrong. In fact, in terms of the book of Judges, what's happening right here is this.

The way the book of Judges is structured is you have sort of two introductions. It sort of gives you a 10,000 feet in the air, biblical slash Christian understanding of what you're about to read in the rest of the book.

And then from chapter three on to last week, we have the story of 12 different judges who, judges is a good word, but it really means a type of deliverer that God raises up to deliver people when they get into trouble.

[12 : 32] And what we're gonna see in this story and next story is it's as if we have two case studies of what life was like in Israel that they needed to be delivered from. They needed to be saved from.

So here you can very well imagine some of you who like bespoke, curated spiritualities, I've now been a bit offensive to you.

So I just ask that you grant me a little bit of mercy as we just talk about this a little bit more to at least try to maybe, yeah, just give me a little bit of mercy, a little bit of time. But this next bit in terms of describing what's wrong with what just happened and wrong in general, well, listen to it.

It's chapter 17, verse 6. In those days, there was no king in Israel. That's not a big deal for most of us. Most Canadians aren't monarchists.

But here's the thing. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes. Now, here's another big problem.

[13 : 37] You see, for Canadians, that's a good thing. Like whether you believe in a type of bespoke, curated spirituality, or whether you believe that you're going to follow one of the more historic other faiths of Buddhism or Hinduism or Islam, or whether you think the whole thing is bunk, for most Canadians, other than probably those people who follow Islam, for most Canadians, this idea that everyone did what was right in their own eyes, that's actually like a good thing.

Whether you, you know, are spiritual, or whether you're just like Jack Daniels in NFL football, like, doing right in your own eyes is what makes Canada great.

And Canada, the world needs more of Canada. I mean, that's one of the things that they used to say on the buses and other types of slogans. And here, the Bible is using it as a short form to describe what's wrong. Now, I'm going to just highlight what happens next.

What happens next is just the mom at the personal level and the, and Micah at the personal level just acting out what it means to have a bespoke, curated spirituality.

And they, they set up their shrine and they set up their gods. And then they, after they, they find that there's a better person to sort of act as their spiritual advisor, their guru, their priest.

[14 : 58] And they hire him on just as people hire on coaches or hire on, you know, relationships with spirits, get financial relationships with spiritual masters.

And that's what happens in the rest of the story. And then what happens in chapter 18 is that this whole thing is described, it sort of moves up a level beyond the individual to the corporate level.

And that's what happens in chapter 18 in terms of there's a whole tribe now, which also wants to have a type of bespoke spirituality, a curated spirituality. And at the same time, they're trying to sort of just make a way for themselves, make themselves prosperous, all very, very Canadian, all sounds very, very good.

And they're looking for a land to settle in. And the parts of the story which aren't very good, which we'll talk about a little bit more in a moment, are as part of that, they, and this happens, right, they steal the shrine and the gods of Micah and they steal the priest and they bring him along so that he can be the priest and these can be the gods for an entire tribe.

And then there's some land that they really like and there's an area that they really like and they ask the advice of their gods through this curated priest, the priest that they've chosen for themselves, their spiritual father, their guru, their spiritual master and he gives them an ambiguous answer that basically says they should go ahead and do this and they go ahead and do it and they steal the priests, they steal the gods, they steal the spirituality, they make it their own, it's all still bespoke, isn't it?

[16 : 36] Although they stole it and they then go and they attack a land and they kill people and they steal the land and they make it their own and that's what chapter 17 and 18 is all about.

So how do we sort of talk about it and how do we understand what's just happened? So just to put it very bluntly for those of you who are listening in and trying to think how on earth is, what is George going to ever possibly say about such an outrageous story is the first problem is this, is many Canadians would say how dare God, at least you George, tell people how to worship?

Like how dare you? Like what gives you the right to say something like that to people? And then the second thing which is even more important because you know even the secular people who roll their eyes when somebody talks about their crystals or their tarot cards or their yoga and the secular person rolls their eyes but even they probably would be a bit bothered that I'm actually telling them how to worship.

And then the second thing is how dare God, the Bible, tell us how to live? Like how dare God do that? Here's what Christians would say what's going on in the stories.

There used to be somebody in my immediate circle of friends family who had a daughter who had an imaginary friend. Very true. I can't remember now if it was a year or two that lasted.

[18 : 09] They were quite young but they were quite old enough to speak and they were a very, very articulate child and I'm not going to tell what the imaginary friend's name was or anything like that but this was somebody very, very well known to me and to our family and they had an imaginary friend which lasted for several years.

This person would tell us about the things they did with their imaginary friend and where the imaginary friend lived and where they went to school and what they studied together. Now this would be pretty sad.

It was sort of odd, endearing and odd and they were just young and everybody who knew and loved this young child, this child, hoped that they would grow out of it and they did and she's a spectacular young woman today.

Just as sane as any of you or just as sane as me and she'd probably say she's more sane than me but that's a whole other story but she grew out of it but it would have been pretty sad if it continued on.

Like if she continued to talk and act as if she had an imaginary friend and everybody wouldn't think it was endearing. They'd think there was something seriously wrong with this person and it would endanger this person from having real relationships with real people.

[19 : 24] So just to be completely and utterly clear, at the very heart of this text and the very heart of this Christian claim, the very heart of my belief as a Christian, as a follower of Jesus, is that there is a God that does exist who's real.

In fact, he's in a sense the most real thing in existence compared, I only have, I'm real, you're real but whatever reality you have and I have only comes because this, in a sense, more deeply real, eternally real God has created you and me and sustains you and me.

Our reality, in a sense, comes from him, is derived from him but he has real reality. This God has, he's real and so that's what's behind this text and so if you think about it to, in a sense, if you understand that then what you can understand is to, for those Canadians, those of us who understand and value a bespoke, curated type of spirituality, well it would be a little bit like this.

My wife is real, she's not on camera, some of you know my wife but she's real and you can't just say anything you want about my wife. Like because she's real, some things are true about her and some things are false.

Some things are, you might think of them as a compliment but they're actually offensive. Some of you have heard the story, if I ever write a book on marriage, it'll be, it'll be something to the effect, the subtitle will be all of the dumb wrong things that I've ever said that I want to share with you so you don't say them or something like that.

[21 : 09] I remember once I said to my wife that she was aging beautifully. I'm really dumb. I actually meant it as a compliment and I was actually taken aback when she didn't, she wasn't happy with that particular compliment but you get what I'm talking about, don't you?

Is that, in a sense, if there really is a real God, then if you have a bespoke spirituality or a curated spirituality and you say things about this God, they're either just wildly wrong or just wildly wrong in a way which is offensive to some person who's real, you'll see that there's going to be, then this text can be talking about how these different ways, because what goes on in the rest of the story is you can't just set up anybody that you want to be your priest because God has determined a way, has revealed a way to have priests and you can't just say whatever you want to do is how you worship him because God has revealed who he is and what his character and nature is like and how that fits with our character and our nature and in a sense then how we can worship him in a way which fits at a very deep level with who an individual was made to be, is made to be and what God is like and so you just can't on one hand be spiritual and just say whatever you want if there actually is a real God.

And to our secular friends, it's this, if one of the things which, and she's completely right, if sometime, if I'm at a church thing with a lot of church things or people that I know or, you know, another congregation or something and Louise is with me and people say hi to me and talk to me and ignore her, well, that bothers her and when I tell you that, every single one of you would agree that it's right for her to be bothered because she's right there and she's being ignored and so in a sense to our secular Canadian friends we say there really is a God who really does exist and to act as if he doesn't exist is to ignore him and is to in fact have a type of very, very fatal type of mistake.

But, and that's sort of then how we'd say that this text for Christians is a warning about how you just can't sort of take bits and pieces of the Bible because the Bible is the way Christians believe that God has revealed truth about what it means to be human and truth about himself.

You can't just pick and choose or go in other directions because of the reality of God and our need to learn from him how he is.

[23 : 49] And it's the same then with the morality. I talked about this more a couple of weeks ago. I just want to give you a different type of analogy. One of the problems with the right and wrong is this, that in the story what happens with the self-made gods, the curated spirituality, is because we've chosen this type of spirituality, they've chosen this spirituality for themselves, it ends up, well, it ends up just sort of never checking the selfishness of people and it never pushes back it doesn't, it ends up just in the story.

If you go back and you read chapter 18, it just, in a sense, the spirituality ends up enabling evil. And I'm not saying that every Canadian who has a bespoke spirituality enables evil, but we can all sort of understand a little bit that if you choose a type of spiritual path yourself, the great danger could be that it feeds into selfishness and self-centeredness and won't act as a check on some of the things that any individual will do that's wrong.

And I'll give you a bit of an illustration once again thinking about my wife. If you knew my wife, you'd know that there's many things about her that are good and beautiful. And that means that if you want to get into a relationship with my wife as a friend, there's certain types of things that fit, that work, that fit with knowing the parts of her that are good and beautiful.

They just fit. There's ways of talking, there's ways of behaving that fit. And this is then just amplified, you see, because from the Christian point of view, not only is there a real God that really exists, but this real God that really exists is also the one who's created all things.

It's not that he's self-centered or peevish. A couple of years ago, I was in a coffee shop and there was a chapters connected to the coffee shop or an indigo books, whatever it is that they called it back then.

[26 : 04] I can't remember. It wasn't that long ago. And there was a very hairy, distracted mom, obviously just hoping that if she gave her kid a cookie and a juice box and she could have a coffee and you could just see when she sat down and you'd go, she's just really looking forward to having this coffee.

And she was really hoping that she, with the juice box or the hot chocolate and the coffee, that her child would be quiet for a couple of minutes just so she could sort of, you know, focus and have some adult time.

Many of us who've had kids, we all know what that's like. But the kid very quickly got restless and the mom happened to be sitting right very close to where the books and the cards were and the kid kept getting up and grabbing a card and grabbing this and grabbing that and the mom, mom would get upset with her and this is what the mom every time said to her.

She didn't say, don't touch that, it's not yours, don't touch that, it's wrong. She said, don't do that, you're making me unhappy. Now that's a terrible moral lesson.

But that's not what God is like. It's not as if God, the God, the real God who really does exist, if there really is a God that really does exist that's at all described by the Bible, it's not as if he just has this peevishness that you're doing things that make me unhappy.

[27 : 21] It's in fact that the God who does exist, and by the way, the God who does exist is good and he's made things out of his goodness and out of his love and there's in a sense a type of a fittedness to many things, not for everything, but for some very important and significant things.

And so it is that if to know somebody like Louise, the good and beautiful parts and the wise parts of Louise, if there's certain ways of talking, behaving, and being that just fit with that, to know her in a good way, to have her know you in a good way as friend or as child or as son-in-law or daughter-in-law or grandchild or whatever, or in my case as husband, then how much more it is with God, you see, that there's a fittedness to things, a rightness to things that's not connected to God being peevish or just saying, you're making me unhappy.

And so that's why it is that in this particular text, these two things that the Bible says that people have to be saved from all foundationally go around this idea that there really is a God who does exist, who's real.

And that if, if somebody like me is real or my wife is real and there's things you could say about me that would be just untrue and that would be unkind and would be, I would be right to be mad if anybody's heard you say certain things about me, they'd all say, no, George is right to be mad.

Then if God has that even greater reality and an even greater, in a sense, is-ness, identity, edges, then, well then this, this biblical text actually starts to make an awful lot of sense.

[29 : 09] Now, here's the thing about the God that's described in the Bible and this is, by the way, once again, getting back to the personal relationships which we're going to end up with because I'm starting to move towards wrapping this all up.

But what Christians believe and we only believe this because God has told us and he has told us this not because we have some private knowledge but because God has made it known publicly through his word and I'm going to get to in a moment why we would believe anything at all in his word but the God who's revealed that actually exists is God in Trinity.

It's the Father from all eternity. Before there was anything created that there was the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, three persons, one God and from all eternity the Father loved the Son. From all eternity the Father revealed himself to the Son and from all eternity the Son loved the Father and revealed himself and the Father was in a sense good towards the Son and the Son was good towards the Father and the Holy Spirit is both in a sense that movement between the Father and the Son and is himself a person that is himself revealing and is good and is loving and so that God didn't need to create because he was lonely.

God didn't have to sort of create so when he actually created something he could be good. God isn't self-centered. God in his very nature the triune God is a fullness of love a fullness of goodness and is a person and reveals himself and so he made human beings to communicate to be together.

He made us social. He made us to know others and to be known by others just as he created us to know God and to be known by God. And so some of you might say well George okay like how do you know that?

[30 : 50] Well here's the thing. Christianity I think is unique amongst all the bespoke spiritualities of the world and amongst all the religions and spiritualities of the world. Only the Christian faith lays down the gauntlet and it's put in a very succinct way in 1 Corinthians chapter 15 verses 19 and 20.

The whole chapter of 1 Corinthians 15 would be very good to read and here's what Paul says and Paul is writing Paul is a convert to the Christian faith. He's seen the risen Jesus.

He's writing to a group of people about 17 years 18 years after the death and resurrection of Jesus or 20 years after the death and resurrection of Jesus and they've become Christians and he says this in verse 19 and 20.

If in Christ we have hope in this life only we of all people are most to be pitied. Earlier he says in verse 17 if Christ has not been raised your faith is futile and you are still in your sins.

And in verse 20 but in fact Christ has been raised from the dead the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. And then it goes on and talks about the great benefits we have from knowing who Jesus is.

[31 : 58] And you see what the Bible says what not the Bible says what the great proof of the Christian faith is that Jesus really lived that's nobody doubts that nowadays no serious scholar doubts that Jesus lived and that Jesus really died that he died by crucifixion.

Even the most skeptical scholars accept that Jesus died by crucifixion. And even the most skeptical scholars acknowledge that they've never found the body and that the grave was empty and even the most skeptical scholars will acknowledge that many many people will die because of ideological reasons that many many people will die because they believe in Marxism and they'll give their life for Marxism or for some other type of secular philosophy or ideology but the thing which is so amazing about the Christian faith is that people died because they made the claim that something was true that it happened that Jesus had risen from the dead.

That's why the grave was empty and that's why the Christian faith exploded in Jerusalem because he prophesied that he would die he said that his death and resurrection would vindicate who he is and what his message is and it is because of Jesus Jesus believed the Bible so I believe the Bible Jesus revealed what God is like and that's why I believe it but it so fits and it's so true I challenge you if you want to know more about it you can look up Mike Lacona and Gary Habermas and their case for the resurrection there's many books that outline why it is that it's very likely true that God that Jesus is God the Son of God that he rose from the dead and it's really really spectacular here's the wonderful good news is that God the same thing that God does to authenticate that he's real the same evidence that he provides to indicate that he is real and he wants to know you and be known by you is the same thing that God does to deliver us and to make us right with him the same it's not as if you have to go to one thing to sort of understand why God exists and another thing to understand how it is that he wants to have a relationship with you and will make you right with him the same thing that will make you right with God because I can't make myself right with God by myself

I'm alienated from God as are you I need a savior just as you do and the same thing that saves us is the same thing that reveals the reality of the true and living God and so it is that we get out of that what we can get out of this is that God isn't just sort of an absent God who's all love and doesn't care about the mess that you're in doesn't care about the sense of shame or the sense of lostness or alienation that you might have he's come to save you he's come to save you because he desires to be known by ordinary people like you and me and the God who is the source of love the source of goodness the source of relationship the source of beauty the source of goodness the source of mercy is the same God that's created you and wants to know you and has redeemed you and he held nothing back in redeeming you in the death the life and death and resurrection of his son and so he calls you into relationship with himself and he is completely and utterly trustworthy and as he moves more deeply into your life as the gospel grips you you can start to learn to trust him more and here's the other wonderful thing just as I wrap the sermon up is he doesn't call you just to walk by yourself but he calls you to walk with him with others that he calls us to be together as his people in a sense not only does he restore us to relationship with himself he begins to restore us with me to a proper relationship with myself he begins to restore me to a proper relationship with each other as he calls us to know Jesus to follow Jesus and we never walk with Jesus alone we walk with Jesus in the company of other people hopefully a good local church and so I just want to encourage you to consider Jesus and I want to encourage you if you're a Christian and you're not connected to a good local church to pray and ask the Lord to direct you to a good local church where the Bible is preached and the gospel is proclaimed where you will know that Jesus loves you that everything that needed to be done to make you right with him was dealt with by him and all you need to do is receive it by faith and as the gospel grips you it will grip you to a new relationship with God a new relationship with yourself and a new relationship with others and a new relationship with society and culture to seek to not only share Jesus but to act in such a way that the city is blessed let's bow our heads in prayer

Father we ask that you draw us to Jesus to help us to be gripped by the gospel and if there are any here who have not yet known Jesus as Savior and Lord that they will come to a saving faith in Jesus in Jesus name Amen