

God's True Blessing for His Children

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[0 : 00] Father, Jesus tells us in this parable that there are four types of soil that we can be. The parable that was just read. And Father, you know the state of our hearts and our lives and our minds right now.

Father, we ask that your Holy Spirit would do a wonderful work in us and make us good soil. Father, make us good soil so that as your word comes into our hearts, as we listen with an honest heart, an open heart, that your word will come into the soil of our lives and bear much fruit for your glory.

Father, make us good soil by your Holy Spirit. This we ask in Jesus' name. Amen. Please be seated. So, I don't know, it was I think a year or two ago, there was a picture.

I think it was in almost all of the newspapers. It showed a Russian Orthodox priest, a bishop actually, in all of his spectacular liturgical finery.

And it showed him blessing missiles that were going to be loaded on the planes and the planes were going to go to Syria and they were going to shoot the missiles down at the people in Syria.

[1 : 18] I don't know how many of you saw that picture. But if you're at all like me, it just seemed so wrong. It just seemed so wrong, right? Somebody, you know, very, very clearly trumpeting that they're a follower of Jesus or they claim to be a follower of Jesus to pronounce a blessing on missiles that are going to rain down upon people in Syria.

You know, and the fact of the matter is that there's lots of odd things about blessings. You know, so that one might be a bad one. This one might be something that you like, although we could talk about it a little bit.

I almost brought a picture in that a lot of churches, mainly Anglican churches, on St. Francis of the Assisi feast day, they have a service where people can bring animals.

They can bring, like, dogs and cats and horses and camels, if you happen to have a camel, I suppose. And there's a blessing of the animals. Well, what on earth is going on with that, you know? And in a couple of weeks' time, because after this Sunday, God willing, I'm going to begin this series of sermons on Genesis chapter 1 to 11.

It's going to require that we talk a little bit about what's going on with transsexual issues and same-sex marriages. And what's going on with blessing at marriages and blessing at same-sex marriages? And, like, what is going on with this?

[2 : 38] Like, are Christians just really confused about blessing? And here's another thing. When I was speaking at Parliament Hill on Friday, just, I asked the room, I don't know, there were about 15 people present, and I just asked them, those of you, how many of you still have churches where the minister pronounces a benediction at some point in time during the service?

And, of course, there was an Anglican there, and it's part of the Anglican liturgy to do that. And in Roman Catholic liturgy, it's part. But for those who were in those non-churches, like, basically, most of the churches, they realized, Pentecostal, Baptist, they don't say blessings anymore in church services.

There's no benediction of pronouncing of a blessing over the congregation. So, like, what's going on with churches, with Christians, with how they understand blessing? And the reason this is actually not just an academic thing, like how many angels can dance on the head of a pin, is because, you know, deeply, many, many people in our culture, they have a sense that there should be something like a blessing, or a blessing way, or the idea of being blessed, or being able to live in blessing, is something very, very, very attractive to us.

Even if we have a very hazy sense of what it means, there's just this sense that there should be something like a blessing. And depending on how you are in our culture, if you're an optimistic type, maybe you believe that there is this spirituality, or, you know, this method will lead to blessing.

If you're a more pessimistic type, you'll say, you know, it's just like believing in, you know, the Tooth Fairy, or Santa Claus, only it's for adults. And the reality is that there's just death and destruction, and people being mean, and you just grab the little tiny bit of happiness you can.

[4 : 23] But, well, what's going on with blessing? So the Bible text that we read just a few minutes ago is one of the greatest texts on blessing and benedictions in the entire Bible.

So I really would, it would be great if you turn to 2 Corinthians chapter 13, and verses 5 to 14. In fact, Andrew, while you're turning, 2 Corinthians 13, 5 to 14.

Andrew, while they're turning that, could you just put up the, this is verse 14. And it's verse 14, and it's how the 2 Corinthians ends, and in a lot of church services, it's, like that morning prayer, when we do morning prayer, that's how the service ends, with us speaking this over each other.

Why don't we just say it out loud right now? The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Say it again.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. So, the 2 Corinthians ends with this very powerful benediction or blessing, and we're going to try to unpack that.

[5 : 35] But the whole passage that we read, it sort of begins in an odd way, doesn't it? If you remember, you might not remember how I began the reading, but it begins with this idea of examining yourself.

And the text just before this has a lot of things about command to do things. So, is the Bible text, like, you know, a lot of people, when they talk to me for any length of time about the Christian faith, like outsiders, who are trying to understand things about the Christian faith, they tell me they're often very confused by the Christian faith, that there seems to be all this rules that they have, and it seems as if we're fixated on certain things, and then at the same time, it seems to be that there's this grace thing and forgiveness of sins.

And it's very hard for them to figure out from the outside how it is that all these commands, examine yourself, be of the same mind, and then there's these commands of blessing being given.

Like, is it just some type of deal that if you do all of these things that God will do this, or what's going on? And it's not just people outside the church, that many people who have been in churches for a long time have a hard time understanding how commands and blessings go together.

Because in the world, the way the world seems to work is if you do the things you're supposed to do, then good things will happen, you know, or better things will happen. But if you do all of the studying, if you take all the notes, then maybe you'll get the A.

[7 : 03] It's unlikely that you'll get such a good mark if you do no studying and no work or whatsoever, unless it's a math course and you're a math genius, but that's a separate category, you know? But, so, what's going on here?

Well, let's look up at verse 5, which is where the text begins, and all of this is really important for us to understanding what blessing is, and how commands and blessings all fit together.

So it says, examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves, or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you, unless, indeed, you fail to meet the test.

Now, isn't that a very, very odd way to try to start to lead up to a final benediction or blessing? Like, you know, a lot of people from outside Christian circles, they believe that the Christian faith is a bit of a con game, that you promise, you know, it's like those people who, you know, they move things around, they put a pea or something or a marble or something in a cup, and they move it around really, really quick, and then you have to try to pick what it is, and there's always this sleight of hand, and they promise these things, but then they're really getting you to do this, and just sort of way to get your money out of you, and get your time, and it allows people to stay powerful while you just end up really trying to figure out these shifting rules, and so that's what's going on here.

Well, those of you who were here last week, you might remember what just went on a little bit before, so let's look, we're going to look at verse 5 again, but could you go back up to verse 3, and it's sort of finishing at the end of a sentence, it says, since you seek proof that Christ is speaking in me, but here's the important part, the second part of verse 3, he is not weak in dealing with you, but is powerful among you, he is not weak in dealing with you, but is powerful among you, and so just before we read, verse 4, for he was crucified in weakness, but lives by the power of God, for we also are weak in him, but in dealing with you, we will live with him by the power of God, examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith, okay, well, what's, what, why is that so important to understand what's going on with this, examine yourself, well, you might remember last week, we talked a little bit how that part in verse 3, he is not weak in dealing with you, but is powerful among you,

[9 : 31] I mean, I don't know, that's true of us right here, and in the eyes of the world, they wouldn't look at us, and say that we're very, very powerful, but what the text is talking about here is not worldly power, in fact, Paul is writing this to a group of people, most of them were pagans who had become Christians, a few of them were Jewish who had become Christians, it's only about five or six years, give or take, after Christianity had entered Europe, and Christianity enters Europe, not with armies, like Islam entered Europe, but Christianity enters Europe by a group of four wandering teachers, one of whom was Paul, who tell people about Jesus, and so in Corinth, Christianity definitely isn't powerful, they don't hold important positions of prestige, the culture isn't shaped to try to direct people to the Christian faith, so what does it mean when he says, he is not weak in dealing with you, but is powerful among you, for he was crucified in weakness, but lives by the power of God, well Paul explains this, that there's this mighty thing that God does in the person of his son, that God, the son of God, sets aside his glory, and divine prerogatives, and splendor, and comes and lives amongst us, and he comes, and he lives amongst us, all with the purpose of ultimately dying upon the cross, as the means by which God is going to make right, human beings with himself, who put their faith and trust in him, and it's the complete opposite way, of how the world understands how things should be made right, because generally speaking, the way we in the world think that things should be made right, is to give things more power, like if we want to make poverty right, well we feel like we have to give maybe governments more power, or something like that, or we want to make the economy right, we just naturally feel that there should be somebody, or some group that gets more power, but God, he understands, that at the very very center of the human problem, is this desire for more and more power, that the whole way, that the human race went wrong with God, was because human beings wanted to be like God, and by being like God, they would have power, and so in this very very very very powerful way, not just as an object lesson, but to set things right,

God, the son of God, becomes weak, he empties himself, and he becomes weak, he's born, he's a tiny fertilized cell, that has to lodge on the womb, of his, that God creates this out of nothing, and it has to be lodged on the womb of, the wall of the womb of Mary, and he's completely and utterly weak, and he lives a humble life, but a life where he does nothing wrong, and at the end of the day, he pursues weakness even still, by allowing himself to go, and to be put on, falsely accused, and falsely condemned, and put on the cross, and mocked, and rejected by the people, and by the greatest civilization, that the world had ever seen, he's rejected by the greatest civilization, and the people who knew his ways, and he dies upon the cross, and as he dies upon the cross, it looks from the eyes of the world, whether it's from the eyes of religion, or from the eyes of spirituality, or from the eyes of culture, or the eyes of philosophy, or of economic power, or of military power, or of artistic and aesthetic power, from any sense, it looks now as if his life has been a complete and utter failure, but Jesus describes himself as the Lamb of God, he accepts the description, that he is the Lamb of God, who will take away the sin of the world, he doesn't say,

I am the mutant superhero, who will take away the sins of the world, but he accepts this description of him, depiction of him, as the Lamb of God, who will take away the sin of the world, and the Lamb of God is slain, and when we see Jesus dying upon the cross, in complete and utter weakness, and it looks as if it's been a complete failure, this in fact was God's plan, to provide a way, and a power, to make human beings right with himself, when they put their faith and trust, in what God does, in the person of his son, because just as in sacrifices, whether they were pagan or Jewish, there's this idea that there's going to be an animal, that dies in your place, and there's some type of a putting of a hand, in a sense, or some type of transference, or acceptance, that this will be in substitute for me, and in a sense, the punishment or the doom that I deserve, will now fall on this helpless animal, where I go free,

Jesus depicts himself as the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world, and because he is God, the Son of God, the second person of the Trinity, and even though he has stripped himself, not only of divine privileges, but as he lies upon the cross, as he is hung upon the cross, he's even stripped of his clothing, he is completely stripped, but he never stops being God, and because of that, that when he dies, it's not just him handling the sin, and all my desire for power, all of the things that bend me out of shape, because I have rejected God, not just for me, but he can stand for every human being, who puts their faith and trust in him, and so what Paul is saying here, to the Corinthians, what he's reminding them, is his letter becomes, and it's so important, that he reminds them of this, just before he starts to tell them, to examine themselves, and to be of the same mind, and to do this, and to do that, he reminds them, that God's power, has come upon these ordinary human beings, when they have put their faith, and trust in Jesus, in his first letter to Corinth, he tells them that, you know, not many of you are very wise, and not many of you are very rich, and not many of you are very powerful, but God takes ordinary people, like you and me, jars of clay, like you and me, some people, terribly far from the kingdom, if you go, and you read 1 Corinthians, the letter before 2 Corinthians, it's very, very clear, there's,

I mean, there's, you know, prostitutes, and it's, I mean, there's just, like all the whole rank of society, from some people, who are quite rich, to some people, who would be at the very, very bottom, that they have all put their faith, and trust in Jesus, and they're now this one people, that God's power, it's when we put our faith, and trust in Jesus, it's when we hear this message, and accept that it's God doing this, it's not just my declaration, that now I'm going to live a new life, it's me putting my hands out, whether literally or figuratively, and as I put my hands out, whether literally or figuratively, to Jesus, and it touches him, it's as if now, my sin, my life, my past, my present, my future is now on him, and as he has died upon the cross, he's died for me, and it's not just my declaration, that it's not like another, new year's resolution, which is all about my power, to try to accomplish my goals, because I want to be slimmer, or I want to be more muscular, or I want to be richer, or I want to look younger, or I want to look older, or whatever the heck it is, it's all about our power, but when we put our hands out, to Jesus in weakness,

[17 : 25] God's power comes into us, to make us his, and that's why Paul can say here, he is not weak in dealing with you, but is powerful among you, for he was crucified in weakness, but lives by the power of God, for we also are weak in him, but in dealing with you, we will live with him, by the power of God, on Friday, I was trying to think of an analogy, to speak on Parliament Hill, because I had the great privilege, to speak on Parliament Hill on Friday, to some of the staffers, and so I gave them a bit of an early version, of this sermon, and I tried to say, you know, the whole Christian life, begins with weakness, because it's a type of surrender, and the analogy I gave them, is imagine if Justin Trudeau, came into Rona Ambrose's office, in full sight of people, seeing him going into her office, and he goes into her office, and sits down in front of her, and says, you know, Rona, on this particular policy, the Conservative Party, is completely right, like, in fact,

I'd like you to write, all of the legislation for me, and I'll move it, because you're right, well, can you imagine that happening, and I'm not picking on Trudeau, it could be the other way around, imagine what would happen, if Rona Ambrose went into Trudeau's office, and said, Justin, you're completely right, could you just write this down, because I'm going to completely, the Conservative Party is going to change, all of its policies, as you just write it down, what needs to, what you can, it's not going to happen either, right, but the Christian life, begins, in a very, very, very real sense, by us surrendering to Jesus, by being weak, before him, and part of, not only is that how it begins, but part of the growth, in our Christian life, in a very, very ironic way, is increasingly, surrendering to Jesus, I mean, once we surrender to Jesus, and he takes us, then we're his forever, forever, you see, just look down again here, look at it, like just listen to the whole flow, of how it now goes, look at verse three again, the second part, he is not weak in dealing with you, but is powerful among you, for he was crucified in weakness, but lives, by the power of God, that's the resurrection, for we also are weak in him, but in dealing with you, we will live with him, by the power of God, examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith, test yourselves, or do you not realize this, about yourselves, that Jesus Christ, is in you,

Andrew, if you could put up, the first point please, a Christian, you know, I tried to figure out, how to do this, in inclusive language, it just sucked, so I've written it twice, because it, you have to do plurals, and it just, it didn't make any sense, it didn't make sense, a Christian, is a person, who has let Jesus Christ, come into him, and be his savior, and Lord forever, a Christian, is a person, who has let Jesus Christ, come into her, and be her savior, and Lord forever, that's what, Paul is talking about here, and you see, this completely, and utterly, changes the whole notion, of examination, we're going to talk about this, a little bit more, towards the end, as we look again, at this whole idea, of blessing, but, when we put our faith, and trust in Jesus, it's, not just, that we're made right, with God, but,

Jesus Christ, the savior, and the Lord, of the universe, actually comes, and lives, and dwells, within you, doesn't matter, how messed up, your life has been, or how powerful, your life has been, doesn't matter, if you've lived, your life, in complete, and utter, rebellion against God, or if you've been, superficially, obedient to God, by living, a superficially, moral life, or maybe even, a pretty moral life, none of these things, matter, none of these things, actually put Jesus in us, that when we put our faith, and trust in Jesus, Jesus Christ, actually comes, and lives, in, you and me, and, so part of the examination, of ourselves, is just to think, about the fact, that Jesus Christ, lives in us, and, you know, the language of love, I saw this, past week,

I think it was, it was actually, maybe it was even, on Valentine's Day, I don't know, if you get Netflix, there's a very, very interesting movie, called Calvary, it's an Irish film, and, it's a very, very powerful film, actually, and, it's all about, it opens with, I'm not giving a spoiler alert, because the first, if you watch the movie, by the way, you can't miss the first minute, because if you miss the first minute, of the film, nothing in the film, will make any sense to you, and in the first minute, there's a priest, sitting in the confession, that this thing, this little door slides open, there's a person there, and there's a very dramatic thing, that the man says, to the priest, and then at the end, of the thing, the man says, to the priest, that he's going to kill the priest, in a week's time, he's going to murder him, and, and he's going to murder him, because he hasn't been a bad priest, he's a good priest, and he says, I'm giving you a week, so you can set your house in order, and the rest of the movie, is the week, including him dealing, with his daughter, and because he was, he's a widower, and after his wife died, he joined the Catholic priesthood, and there's a very, very powerful scene, no spoiler alert here, where his daughter, and him who've been, you know, they have things, like a lot of parents have, with their kids, and fathers with daughters, and mothers with their sons, and fathers with sons, etc., and there's a very, very powerful scene, that would resonate with everybody, because it's just, we all understand it, at a fundamental level, and he says to his daughter, that he'll always be here, and then he says,

[23 : 45] I'll always be here, and he puts his finger in, on her chest, and then he says, you'll always be here, and he puts it, on his own chest, and I don't think it matters, whether you're a Christian, or not, at a very, very human level, we all understand that, don't we?

that there's something, about the very nature, of love, between two human beings, that when we, that part of the whole thing, about love, is that you're opening, your heart, you're opening, the inside, of who you are, in some small, or big way, to the other person, hoping that they will start, to reciprocate, by them opening, something in themselves, so that something, of you, starts to come, into their life, at the level, of personality, and imagination, and emotion, and habits, and right and wrong, and it just, it starts, you start to get, into their lives, and they start, to get into your lives, and we all understand that, and that's why, you see, the Bible is very, very, sometimes it confuses, Christians, because there's language, of Jesus coming, to live in us, and language, of us coming, to live in Christ, but that's exactly, how it works, for human beings, isn't it?

Like the language, of the Bible, is very wise, and what the text, is saying here, is that it's, Jesus actually comes, because of what, he's done for us, on the cross, and his resurrection, which vindicates, that he's from God, and when we put our faith, and trust in him, in a sense, when we reach out to him, and he reaches down, to us, and we connect, and as we connect, all of my sin, and shame, and rebellion, and lust for power, and narcissism, and the messes, everything is transferred, to him, he has dealt with it, in his death upon the cross, and there's not only, that transference, but there's an entering in, that Jesus enters in, and I enter into him, that's why it uses, the double language, so mindful, of all of this, let's listen, to the rest of the, of this passage, going up, to verse 14, and verse 14, intensifies this image, and then helps us, to understand, how commands, and blessing go together, listen to it again, verse 5, examine yourselves, to see whether you are, in the faith, test yourselves, or do you not realize, this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ, is in you, unless indeed, you fail to meet the test, he's been a bit jovial, here in the Greek, he's, he's not saying this, because he thinks, they're going to fail, and by the way, what he's really doing here, another thing, is not only, all the way through the letter, they've been judging him, and what he's doing right here, is he's saying, the same type of thing, is what Jesus says, is you need to see, the log in your own eye, before you see the speck, in the other person's eye, and you've been spending, all your time, examining and testing, me, or other people, you need to examine yourself, it's just good wisdom, in verse 6,

I hope you will find out, that we have not failed the test, but we pray to God, that you may not go wrong, do wrong, not that we may appear, to have met the test, in other words, he's not concerned, about how they view him, but that you may do, what is right, though we may seem, to have failed, once again, he doesn't care, whether he's failed, he wants them to do right, why, for we cannot do anything, against the truth, but only for the truth, you could do a whole sermon, on that verse, couldn't you, for we cannot do anything, against the truth, but only for the truth, verse 9, for we are glad, when we are weak, and you are strong, your restoration, is what we pray for, and the word there, that's translated, as restoration, in the original language, it could also be, translated as mending, it's the fixing, of a broken bone, that's what the language is, it's the language of medicine, somebody breaks their bone, and they, you put it in a splint, and, and, and, because you desire, and then you know, you rest it, and everything, so that the bone will be, mended, it will be restored, restored, and that's, what Paul's desire, has been, is that there seems, to have been a break, in his, their relationship, with him, and there seems, to be a worrisome break, in the relationship, with Jesus, and all he wants, is for the bone, to be restored, he just wants, their restoration, he wants them, to be mended, that's what he prays for, verse 10, for this reason,

I write these things, while I am away from you, that when I come, I may not have to be severe, in my use of the authority, that the Lord has given me, why has the Lord given him authority, for building up, and not for tearing down, for growing things, not for sending missiles down, just to completely obliterate everything, but to grow things, that's the fundamental goal, for health, finally brothers and sisters, verse 11, rejoice, five commands, statical commands, rejoice, it's a present tense, in other words, it's as much as you can, choose joy, too many of us, in our lives, we snatch, unhappiness, from the jaws of joy, we have an opportunity, to be happy, and then rather, than being happy, we think of the terrible thing, the person said to us, or we think about, you know, the wrong thing, that we've done, or we think about, some other type of thing, and the chance of joy is there, and we turn from joy, he says be in joy, he says, aim for restoration, that should always be your goal, to see things, that have been broken, or fractured, to see them mended, that should be your goal, you should be known, as healers, as wounded healers, that's how you should, try to understand, who you are, to be healers, to live in, to agree with one another, sorry, comfort one another, and another way of translating it, is that you encourage, each other, to agree with one another, which really there, in the original language, the idea isn't that you agree, with each other, in terms of, you know, about Trump, or something like that, but that, that the truths of the gospel, and truths of God, are the things, that you both think upon, and, and, and, and, and, and, and, and live in peace, and the God of love and peace, will be with you, and here it's very important, it isn't saying, okay, if, if you're in joy, and if you aim for restoration, and if you comfort one another, and if you think about the right things, and if you live in peace, then the God of love and peace, will be with you, he's saying, that as you're doing this, in the original language, it's not as clear here in the English, but in the original language, as you do this, remember, what do you need to remember?

[30 : 30] That the God of love and peace is with you, he has been with you, he is with you, he will be with you, greet one another with a holy kiss, all the saints greet you, the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all, now it's a bit of an aside, I have to watch my time, I haven't looked at my time in a while, okay, we, notice here, Andrew, put up the next thing please, the Trinity, is inextricably connected to the gospel, just, it's one of those little small things, you know, you're talking to a Jehovah Witness, or something like that, the Jehovah Witnesses, try to rewrite the Bible, to get out things of the Trinity, but they can't do it, because it's in there so often, but look at verse 11, the God, singular, of love and peace, will be with you, and then, in verse 14, the three persons of the Trinity, the three persons of the Trinity, and we're going to just look at this verse 14, and then how it affects our lives, but here's the first thing, if you could put it up,

Andrew, a biblical blessing, is a proclamation of the truth, and a prayer, for that truth, to be real, in our lived experience, now I'm not just saying here, it's a proclamation, that two plus two equals four, or that Ottawa, is the capital of Canada, it's not, but I want you to understand, is that, when Paul, when God causes this to be written, the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all, it's a proclamation of truth, just as true as two plus two equals four, or that Ottawa is the capital of Canada, it's true that Jesus is the Lord, that he is the Christ, it's true that grace comes from him, it's true that God exists, it's true that the Holy Spirit exists, and that there's a type of fellowship, or koinonia, it's true, it's a proclamation of truth, over the person, or over the congregation, but at the same time, that it's a proclamation, a declaration of the truth, it's also, in a sense, a prayer, a longing prayer, that that truth, will be what you live your life out of, and what shapes your day, what shapes your memories, what shapes your imagination, what shapes your longing, your business deals, your relationship with your husband, or your wife, or your best friend, it's a prayer, that that will shape you, that that truth will shape you, the next point,

Andrew, all about blessings, God wants me to know what is real, so that I will live, in the real world, as his, God wants me to know what is real, so that I will live, in the real world, as his, you see, prayer is so weak, unless God really exists, if God doesn't exist, prayer is such a colossal waste of time, but if there is a God, who does exist, and because you have put your faith, and trust in Jesus, and he's now, not just God, but your father in heaven, than to talk to him, about your day, and about your fears, and about your shames, and your need for his wisdom, and guidance, in planning, then that's living, in the real world, and people who live, never talking to God, aren't living in the real world, if God really exists, and so in this blessing,

God wants me to know, what is real, so that I will live, in the real world, as his, and then the final thing, Andrew, if you could put it up, not the final thing, but for the blessings things, God wants me to pray, that you and I, will have a growing, walking, knowing, of what became, unshakably ours, when we receive, the personate work, of the Lord Jesus Christ, by faith, God wants us to know that, he wants us to remember it, and you know, I'm using the word, walking here, in the biblical way, that in both, the Old and the New Testament, often when they want to talk about, doing your day, or how your day works, they use the analogy of walking, it doesn't just mean, going out for a walk, but if you think about it, you know, you get up in the morning, and you, I don't know, you walk to the bathroom, you walk to the kitchen, and you walk to get dressed, you walk to get the paper, or whatever it is, you know, you walk to the bus, you walk to the car, even driving, is a type of walking, right, it's if you actually just traced, what you do throughout the day, and all the things, that you have to do, and that's what, this benediction is here, at the end of it, because God wants me to pray, and if you're writing that down, for yourself, then that's, you're writing that down, for yourself as well, and God wants me to pray, that you and I, not just myself, but for us, that we will have a growing, that's why we pronounce, benedictions over it, because on one hand, this is all objectively true, that Jesus Christ, doesn't just come to live within us, when we put our faith, and trust within him,

Jesus isn't a tourist, he made us for himself, and when we invite him in, he takes residence, for all eternity, but he wants us, to have a growing, walking knowledge, in terms of our actual, experience, of how we do a day, of what became, unshakably ours, when we received him, by faith, that's why it's so important, if you're trying to think, of what to pray over a person, pray, the grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all, like, God wrote that, for us to pray it, like, if you don't know, what to pray, pray that, you know, you're praying what God wants, you can pray this, over non-Christians, why?

[36 : 39] Because this is what God, wants to be true, in the life of your, non-Christian friend, he, there's not going to be, a single person, that you ever meet, in your life, that it is not, God's desire, and heart, that they would accept, Jesus as their Savior, and Lord, doesn't matter, what they say, about how bad they are, or how broken they are, or how messed up they are, or whether or not, that God could ever love, somebody like them, you can know from the Bible, that God does love them, and that you can pray this, over them, that this would be the thing, that starts to shape their life, that they would accept, the grace of the Lord, Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, to be with them, forever, and, and, and, and, it's just, as you, as this grips us, Andrew, if you could put up the next point, I know this is going to sound, a little bit bold, because a lot of Christians, are terrible at self-examination, and a lot of people, who aren't Christians, are a billion times, better at self-examination, but as we're gripped by the gospel, only the gospel, makes real self-examination possible, you see, it's really hard, to examine yourself, if you feel under accusation, if there, if you think you have to sort of examine, what, you know, let's say you have to go and tie, you don't look, okay, you have to parallel park, and there's a group of people laughing at your attempt, it's so hard to figure out what you're doing wrong, right?

Or, even if you have to do something like figuring out what you're doing wrong, and the people are rooting for you, it's still really hard, right? Like, it's really hard in a relationship, to really practice full self-examination, because you always have a lingering worry, that if that self-examination ever came out, and, and the other person found out really what was going on within you, they wouldn't want to love you anymore.

But, you see, as the gospel grips us, as this blessing grips us, then it, and, and you see the other thing about it, is it really, religion and spirituality often work to undermine real self-examination, because religion and spirituality both work on accomplishing something.

But, this whole gospel message is not about accomplishing something, it's not about, you do, you hope that you get enough good, good marks in university, so that you get, make the cut off, so you can go to law school, or medical school.

It's not like that at all, because it's about us surrendering, like Rona Ambrose, going into Justin's office, it's, it's about surrendering, and then when God comes in, when Christ comes in, he actually comes in, and he lives there, that, you know, a woman can't be half pregnant, like, she's either pregnant or not, and you can't be a half Christian, or a quarter Christian, you might be a Christian, who's being choked with thorns, you might be a Christian, who has very shallow soil, but you, you can't be a half Christian, or a quarter Christian, because, Jesus actually comes, and lives within a person, who's given their life to Jesus, and here's the powerful thing, about the gospel, Jesus isn't a tourist, he's not going to leave, he now lives in you forever, and it, it only is the gospel grips us, that we can realize, that everything I have ever done in my life, and everything I ever will do in my life, was known by Jesus, when he died upon the cross for me, things, which maybe, I, maybe I'll see someday in five years,

[40 : 20] I'll see something, and all of a sudden, a memory will be triggered, of something terrible, that I happened to me, or that I did, you know when I was seven, or eight years old, or younger, and that will be a complete, and utter shock to me, it might be very hard, for me to live with, but Jesus knew about that, when he died upon the cross, and he took me as his own, and it's only when you have, the security, of the love, that we receive in the gospel, that this blessing speaks over us, that we start to realize, that you know what, my being accepted by God, doesn't depend upon, how well I do in this sermon, and my acceptance to God, does not depend upon, how good I am doing it, anything in particular, he's not going to turn his eye away, from me, and that type of, unbelievable, perfect knowledge, security, as, as the gospel, grips us, it starts to make, self-examination, really possible, and it starts to make, even possible, to attempt things, because, because, because, he's accepted me, he's accepted, me, in the cross,

Andrew, could you put up, the final one, I'd like to invite you to stand, if you're here, as a guest this morning, what I really want to, you know, and you would describe yourself, as maybe a searcher, or a seeker, or, maybe you don't know, how to describe yourself, because maybe you had a, a period of time, when you were very, very full of belief, and then you've had a, period of time, where it seems like, you've been very, very far away, and you know, I would just say, you don't have to try to sort, like, here's the thing, this blessing's for you, when I said earlier, there's not a single person, that you can ever meet, that God doesn't want, that this blessing, to be true in their life, when they receive Jesus, he's talking, I'm talking about you, the Bible's talking about you, it really is, and so this is just a prayer, that I've written, to try to summarize, this whole thing, I'm going to invite you, to pray it with me, if the Lord has touched your heart, and I just want to say, once again, if you, this for some of us, can be our conversion prayer, knowing that Jesus, will come into our lives, and be our savior, you know, maybe just, just say Jesus, come in and be my savior, and never let me go, and never leave, and take me, just, you know, it doesn't have to be, fancy theological language, but there's no time better, than right now, right now today, to cry out to God, and, but for all of us, in light of this, beautiful text, the grace of the Lord,

Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all, I invite you to pray with me, loving heavenly father, please make us, disciples of Jesus, gripped by the gospel, who have a growing, walking, knowing, of what you have, unshakably given, to all who receive, Jesus as savior, and Lord, help us, to then walk, in the fellowship, of the Holy Spirit, to your glory, and praise, amen, father, I just pray, over us all, that the grace, of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship, of the Holy Spirit, be with you all, be with us all, in Jesus's name, amen, amen,