

# Who or What do I Rely On?

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Preacher: Rev. George Sinclair

[ 0 : 00 ]     Father, nobody in the world tells us to beware of idols that we carry around in our minds and in our wills and in our hearts. And most of the idols that are in Canada and in our own lives are invisible.

Father, we ask that your Holy Spirit this morning would use your word and bring your word deeply into our minds and hearts and wills, our very souls and bodies, and reveal to us, Father, the functioning and functional idols of our heart that keep us from you, cause great damage in our own lives, and harden our hearts towards others.

We ask, Father, that your Holy Spirit would help us to recognize these idols and then that your Holy Spirit would help us to turn from them and to become disciples of Jesus who are gripped by the gospel, living for your glory.

And this we ask in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior. Amen. Please be seated. It's allergy time of the year, which means my throat sounds a little bit rough.

Fall and spring, rough for us allergy sufferers. We all know who we are, right? Afterwards, we can all talk about the best antihistamines and stuff to use. So, here's the thing.

[ 1 : 25 ]     I don't know if you were paying much attention when Jeremiah read the text in 2 Corinthians, but in the text in 2 Corinthians, Jeremiah read something, which because those of us who are Christians, we're all going to say, yes, amen, that's true.

In fact, I have that verse. It's a magnet. It's on my fridge. But the fact of the matter is we also know that it's not true. And we just don't like to share with each other that, in fact, we think the verse probably isn't true.

And, in fact, one way probably to terrify just about everybody in the room would be to say, we've arranged a bit of a surprise today, and ten of your co-workers or your neighbors who aren't Christians are on the other side of that door, and we'd like you to go and take 2 Corinthians 1, verses 3 and 4, and share with them how real and powerful it is in your life.

And probably we would all be terrified. Maybe not all of us, many of us. Because 2 Corinthians, it says about, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our afflictions.

So, how comfortable? In fact, it might be very, very funny. It would cause great affliction in our lives if we had to tell others about how God comforts us. I'm the only one who's laughing at that story.

[ 2 : 53 ]     I mean, it's actually part of the irony of this week. It kept the Holy Spirit kept, like, it's funny, when you have to, those of you who have to lead a Bible study or teach the Bible, I don't know if it's like this for you, but it's like this for me.

Often it's as if the God, the Holy Spirit, gets me in a vice and turns me to look at it. And it caused me a lot of stress and affliction this week to try to tell you about how God comforts us in our afflictions.

Isn't that ironic? I mean, that's just part of the process of God comforting me, actually, and working in my heart. But the text seems to make a really, really, really, really big claim that God comforts us in all of our afflictions.

And what happens for us as Christians is that for many of us Christians, we don't experience this, or we don't experience it very often. And so we often have one of two responses, and some of us combine them both.

One response is to put on a false front, to pretend that that's what's going on in our lives. And the other thing is that we become deeply cynical about the Bible and about ourselves.

[ 4 : 07 ] And we maybe cover up the cynicism by maybe trying to be more prophetic or talk about other types of things. And often, which is a real tragedy, we combine these two responses to such a big promise and claim that's been made by God through the Bible, His Word, by maintaining a false front, while inwardly, there is a fair amount of cynicism going on in our lives.

So let's look at the Bible. Like, is God just sort of making one of those whopper exaggerations when He talks about this in His Word?

Like, how are we supposed to deal with something that seems to be such a big promise? Especially if many of you, some of us are here, may be really going through some real worry and some affliction even now as I speak.

So let's get the Bible. It would be very helpful if you took out your Bibles and let's look at them. 2 Corinthians chapter 1. And we'll start reading at verse 1 just to get the context.

And then we're going to pause at verse 3 and 4. And here's how it goes. Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy, our brother, to the church of God that is at Corinth, that's in Greece, with all the saints who are in the whole of Achaia, that's the Roman province, that Corinth was in at the time.

[ 5 : 36 ] Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Andrew, could you put up verse 3 and 4 for me, please? I just read 1 and 2. All three, all of us together using the version on the screen, could we read verses 3 and 4 together?

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

One of the things you're going to discover about the book of 2 Corinthians, there's probably very few books in the Bible that have so many great quotes. And I was trying to think this week about how I was going to structure my talking points, my sermon points, and I realized that really all I was going to try to do was just make variations on this.

So we're going to say this verse quite a few times because it really is the heart of how Paul introduces the book of 2 Corinthians. And notice the very, very big claims which are made.

He is the God of all comforts, of all comfort, who comforts us in all our afflictions. He is the God of all comfort for any type of affliction or suffering or worry or anxiety.

[ 7 : 05 ] And he comforts us in all our afflictions. And it's just as strong in the original language as it is in English. In other words, there is no, the claim is made that God is more than adequate, that he is abundantly full of comfort so that any and every type of suffering or affliction that we might do, any type of anxiety that we experience, there is not going to be a single person here or one that we will meet who will have a type of affliction or suffering that when we bring it to God, God will say, gosh, I have no resources to deal with that.

It's a huge claim made by the Bible, which I believe, and Christians have always believed, is God's word written. Could you say this verse with me again out loud?

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

If you get nothing else out of this sermon but begin to have this verse memorized, then God has been very kind to us because it's way better that you remember God's word than anything I ever say. But it's a big, big, big, big, big claim.

So here's the first thing. Remember, as I said, it would be very, very frightening. It would cause, in fact, much affliction for many of us if we said, surprise, your co-workers or your best non-Christian friends are in the next room.

[ 8 : 46 ] Please explain from your own life how this verse is true. That would probably cause many of us a great deal of affliction. In fact, as we were going to it, we would hope that God would comfort us right then because we didn't know how we were going to say anything about it.

So, you know, here's the first thing. Well, maybe Paul is one of those blessed people. You know, the other day I was in, I was in, surprise, a Starbucks and a guy was telling me, a guy was, I just overheard this conversation about how his vintage Mustang was in the shop and he couldn't drive it on this sunny day so he just had to drive his Audi.

Now, to his credit, he's saying this to a barista who's probably making, I don't know, what's minimum wage, right? She's making minimum wage. And then he paused and smiled. Isn't it hard to have first world problems?

More than that, like 1% problems, right? So maybe Paul is like that guy. Maybe Paul has just, you know, he grew up with rich parents, he lived in a bit of a cocoon, he never had any troubles, his life has been pretty easy.

Well, we're going to see in a moment, maybe you don't remember it, but we're going to see in a moment that Paul, in fact, talks about a profound time of trouble, but it would, just flip to the back of 2 Corinthians. Here's a very, very spectacular text which gives you a bit of a short biography of some of the things that Paul has gone through before he wrote this letter.

[ 10 : 10 ] And just for your information, it's about 10 years after this that Paul will die a martyr's death. So 2 Timothy is written about 10 years after 2 Corinthians. But just if you turn to 2 Corinthians chapter 11 and we'll begin reading at verse 22.

Are they Hebrews? He's talking about people who are causing him a lot of trouble in the church in Corinth. Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they offspring of Abraham?

So am I. Are they servants of Christ? I'm a better one. I'm talking like a madman. With far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless beatings and often near death, five times I received at the hands of the Jewish leaders the 40 lashes, less one.

That's 39. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. And that doesn't mean with drugs. That means they threw stones at him, hoping that he would be, the end result would be that he was dead.

Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked. This is before the description of the shipwreck in Acts 27. I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked. A night and a day I was adrift at sea on frequent journeys in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from pagans, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers, in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure, and apart from other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches.

[ 11 : 50 ] Who is weak and I am not weak? Who is made to fall and I am not indignant? If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness. The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, he who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying.

At Damascus, the governor under King Aretas was guarding the city of Damascus in order to seize me, but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall and escaped his hands.

So that's who's writing the letter. So he isn't just a guy whose big problem in life is that his vintage Mustang is in the shop and he has to drive his Audi. This guy's gone through, I'm not going to say he's gone through more trouble than us because I know some of us have faced horrific things.

I know some of us are victims of sexual abuse and some of us have lived through genocide and so some of us maybe could say, wow, I can relate to that.

Like, wow, I can relate to that. But many of us, it's way beyond what we've suffered. So let's, Andrew, can you say this verse with me again?

[ 13 : 04 ] Now that we see that Paul's not just, you know, he's not just a guy who's never had to suffer or who's lived in a cocoon. Let's read the verse again. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our afflictions so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

So, he makes this big, big claim. Now, one of the things which is really interesting about this Bible text is, which we're going to, we're going to go and see how it is, what other things that Paul says about this particular thing, about this, you know, this comfort.

But, we look at this text and now that we sort of are struck with the fact that Paul actually himself had a hard life, but we still sort of look at this text and say, well, maybe it's going to be all right for George or maybe George lives this a lot of the time or maybe those really spiritual people do and maybe there was a time in my life when I knew God's comfort but there's been a long time since I've known God's comfort in any type of way like this which is real.

And, and so we look at this text and think those things one of the problems with a cynical reading of the Bible is that it's actually a very, very subtle way for us to stop listening to the Bible at all and exalt ourselves over the Bible and not maybe think that as the Bible starts to lay out its different truths that the Bible is confronting us with different questions that we need to ask ourselves.

So, the very first question is where do I turn for comfort? I mean, you know, if there's one thing which is true of human beings is that human beings when they're in stress and affliction and suffering they seek comfort.

[ 15 : 34 ] That's a human problem. It's a human experience. We all seek comfort. Every single person that you will meet today when they're in affliction they will seek comfort.

But we rarely ask ourselves where do we actually go to find comfort? And the Bible is going to ask two other questions indirectly in the verses which just follow this.

And it's these questions that we now have to listen to the Bible asking us which are really important for us to understand ourselves and in fact to understand the Bible. Look at verse 5.

For we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too. If we are afflicted it is for your comfort and salvation and if we are comforted it is for your comfort which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we suffer.

our hope for you is unshaken for we know that as you share in our sufferings you will also share in our comfort. For we do not want you to be unaware brothers of the affliction we experienced in Asia for we were so an utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself.

[ 16 : 57 ] Indeed we felt that we had received the sentence of death. Remember I said that Paul would very quickly he doesn't wait until 11 to make them realize that this isn't just pious talk that he himself really has to struggle with something really really hard things in his life.

Continuing reading but that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead. He delivered us from such a deadly peril and he will deliver us.

On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again. You also must help us by prayer so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many.

Andrew could you put up the slide please? Three questions help reveal the functioning idols of my heart. Where do I go for comfort?

What do I rely on? And what do I hope in? Three questions embedded in the text of the Bible that the Bible is asking us in a sense the Bible is saying okay George you like to have your false front you like to be inwardly very cynical about your inability to change your inability for God to work in your life your inability the fact that you know you're not comforted like this the way the Bible is talked about the cynicism that leads to a type of weakness and flaccidness in terms of dealing with other people the type of superiority you in fact have over my word and okay George that's going on I have three questions for you George just you know you're asking me all these questions God God says maybe George you pour out your occasionally you pray and in your prayers it's a bit of a rage against God a bit of an expression of disappointment with me well George my word has three questions for you to consider three questions that the Bible uses the Bible in fact asks that help reveal the functioning idols of my heart where do I go for comfort what do I rely on what do I hope in you know all human beings everyone that we meet it's part of the common human experience that we hope in something we rely on something or someone because the second two questions could be changed to a who rather than a what but what happens so what happens when we start to go through some real suffering some real affliction does our mind if all of a sudden you know somebody could videotape what's going on in your mind and maybe with your body does our mind instantly go to drugs does it instantly go to alcohol guys when you're suffering stress do you wish you could be looking at pornography because you find pornography comforting and then the normal physical things that people often do after they've looked at pornography do some of you when you're under stress and affliction want to go online to look at your bank account to see how much money you have does some of you turn to anger to comfort you anger can be far more intoxicating for some people than drugs and alcohol it can be a source of that an inner source an inner stream that we go to very quickly when we're under stress and affliction to nurture our anger because we find it comforting in a bit of a perverse sense isn't it a bit perverse to think that anger can be comforting do we go to imaginary stories in our minds about how we're great athletes or great lovers or great orators or do we go to imaginary places do we when we're experiencing a lot of stress just wish we could get to the television so we can watch eight episodes of some mindless sitcom and by having that experience of being numbed find some type of comfort where does our mind and our heart drift when we're under suffering and affliction and and then where where do we tend to go in our mind and in our body when we have to maybe start to try to when we think about what we're going to rely on to deal with the source of the problem like what do we tend to think of that we can rely on like many of us are we start to rely many of us think about

[ 21 : 55 ] how we're going to rely on ourselves maybe for some of us maybe not as much in our culture we think about how the tribe or the union or the professional association that that's what we're going to rely on or our money or our power or our prestige maybe some of us start to think of different dialogues and conversational things that we're going to do and we're going to rely on how we're going to be able to verbally manipulate or harass the other person to deal with the problem what are we hoping do we start to in our heart think that you know if I just get that promotion this problem is going to go away if I just finish the degree then that affliction will stop if I can just find the right person to marry then that will stop if I could just have a change of my gender then my suffering will stop if I can just live as an uninhibited gay man or lesbian woman then my troubles will stop if I could just divorce my husband or my wife then my troubles will stop you see we don't realize that we've maybe made an idol out of pornography the comforts the things we turn to to comfort us they reveal the idols what like we turn to pornography as an idol to comfort us we turn to fantasy stories of our greatness to comfort us we've made an idol of this and then maybe we're going to rely on our degree or our verbal ability to solve our problem and we're going to maybe hope in the right person to marry or the right sexual experience or whatever it is that that's going to be that's our hope and notice that for many of us we have contradictory idols have you noticed this that idols only cause trouble because often what comforts us conflicts with what we can hope in and conflicts with what we rely on like let me just give you a little bit of an example how many of us

I've lost my place in my notes how many of us we where we go to for comfort is we drink that's what's going to comfort us if we can just have some alcohol to drink and what are we going to rely on to get us through those really difficult conversations with our boss what we're going to rely on is that we can have a mickey and we can just take a few sips or I knew a guy who couldn't go into any type of conflict without having to smoke a joint and at the same time maybe what our hope is that we're going to get that promotion or that we'll have the great marriage but how many marriages end because of a reliance on the bottle the very thing that's going to bring us comfort wars against our hope how many people get demoted or lose their job because they go to the bottle the thing the idol that they worship that we worship to comfort us is the very same thing that robs us of the idol which is our hope we lose the job because of the bottle how many of us that suffer and the way we the comfort we find is in anger and what we rely on is all of those types of conversations that are going on in our head about how we're able to get that person and put them in their place and that's the thing that goes through our mind and that's the thing that we're going to rely on at least in our own mind and yet that it ends up that we don't get the job that we hope for because that anger and those verbal patterns they come out in our job place and nobody wants to give you the promotion how many of us find our comfort in something like pornography and then we also maybe want to take all sorts of other things in terms of relying on jobs and maybe making lots of money and that's how we're going to deal with our problems and our hope is marriage but our over-focus on pornography makes it really hard to actually have a healthy relationship with a member of the opposite sex where it's not pornography but it's sex and it's the sexual release that comforts us but the multiple sexual partners makes it increasingly difficult to actually ever marry someone and marriage is our hope and then in our pride in our blindness when we in our hearts turn our to certain comforts and certain reliances and certain hopes and then we say that the

Bible is untrue and God will say to us George you never turned to me for comfort you never turned to me to rely on me you never turned to me to hope in me you've spent all your time with your idols and George your idols are ruining your life and God doesn't say this to us in anger he says it to us with tears he says George don't you realize that I am the father of all mercies and the God of all comfort don't you realize that I sent my son to earth knowing who you are and what you're like and knowing fully who you are I sent my son to earth to die in your place and don't you know that I raised him from the dead that death has been defeated and so is sin so why don't you hope in me why don't you rely on me could you put the second

Corinthians text up again please could you read it with me again together blessed be the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ the father of mercies and God of all comfort who comforts us in all our afflictions so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God the other thing that our idols do because we might still say that I mean it last two weeks ago we talked about Amos 8 and Amos 8 had this powerful image image of people dying of starvation and dying of thirst and the powerful image was it was a tragic image it was an image of people dying of hunger and dying of thirst while they were surrounded by food and drink and in that particular vision it was because these as a people were constantly telling God to be quiet and to be silent and God eventually gave them what they wanted and so while they were surrounded by God's word and it was easily available for them and it was true food and true drink they could no longer hear it and in their frantic activities to deal with the fact that they were dying of hunger and dying of thirst they could not realize that God could feed and provide drink for them and it was right there they were dying amidst plenty the other thing that idols do is they make us it hard for us to recognize

God's comfort because of the nature like what is it that we get when we go to a bottle or a drug you know you you snort the cocaine and it goes instant rush and so we listen to this text of the Bible and we listen to it with the idols of our hearts whispering in our ears so that we misread the Bible and think that the Bible is a feeling the Bible is like a drug that gives us ecstasy that the comfort the Bible is talking about that God gives is a particular feeling maybe it's a feeling of peace maybe it's a feeling of ecstasy maybe it's something that's instantaneous that something that's like anesthetic which will just completely and utterly numb us that God's comfort will be like a force field that keep all bad things away from us that God's comfort is going to be something like a superpower that just means that we can always overcome every affliction that it's just going to be something which is sort of there like a tattoo and once you have this God's comfort on you it's just always there or we think that somehow or another that God's comfort is going to be something that exalts us that we're able to have so much of God's comfort all of the time that we can boast about it to our friends that we're worried that somehow or another

[ 31 : 12 ] God's comfort is going to come to us it's going to remove from us all courage that it's going to make us passive that it's going to make us lazy that it's going to sort of remove us from all hope because we're just sort of blissed out with God's comfort or that God's comfort is magical or that God's comfort will remove consequences or God's comfort will mean that we never suffer risk that's idle speaking to us the word comfort is the same word here as is used of the Holy Spirit in John 14 15 and 16 the comforter God's comfort is not separate from the gospel and it's not beyond the gospel it's not as if you have the gospel God made him who knew no sin to be sin for us so that in him we might become the righteousness of God that's how

Paul's going to describe the gospel in a few minutes and God's comfort isn't well okay now we got the tattoo for the gospel now we move on to something which is his comfort no no God's comfort is the knowledge that he is with us that he's beside us that he carries us that he is sovereign that he's all powerful that he's all good that he's untamed that he knows me perfectly and that he's with me we enter the Jesus way one by one when we put our faith and trust in Jesus but we walk the Jesus way with Jesus and with others we don't walk it alone and in heaven we'll find out that a lot of the time that we think that we've been so strong and that we've been striding along on the

Jesus way and heaven we'll find out that we were carried by the prayers of others and that it wasn't us walking and it will profoundly humble us and once we're gripped by the gospel and learn to pray for others others will maybe find in heaven that those times that they thought that they were most strong in walking the Jesus way is they were carried by you by your suffering for them by your intercession for them by your financial help for whatever way and God has no comfort apart from himself and he makes us know himself known and reconciles us to him through the cross that Jesus seeing who we are perfectly and completely with absolutely no illusions about who and what each of us are knowing each idol that we have in our heart and especially knowing those unrecognized idols that we have in our heart that he came and lived a sinless life in fellowship with God and dies upon the cross

God made him to be our representative God made him who knew no sin to be sin for us that on the cross all of our idolatries all of our shame all of the wrong things we've done all of the good things that we failed to do all of those were laid on him God made him who knew no sin to be sin for us and he takes into himself all of the things that we've done wrong God made him who knew no sin to be sin for us so that in him when we put our faith and trust in him we put our hands in his and he comes into us to live within us and we come into him to live in him God made him who knew no sin to be sin for us so that in him we might become the righteousness of God that on the cross Jesus knowing everything there is to know about us not only took away and paid the penalty and the price for everything that we've done wrong but his perfect standing and righteousness with the father is offered to us and his act upon the cross that we receive by faith is what makes us right with him and it is as we are gripped with this gospel truth that we can both be shocked and humbled by

God's word to realize that even though we think we're a devout Christian we have many idols in our heart and have turned far from him but it is in the security of the gospel that we can once again listen to the God who says I am the father of mercies and the God of all comfort I will walk with you I am the creator of all things and the sustainer of all things I will bring all things to their conclusion I am sovereign over all things I am all powerful and all knowing and I will walk with you as your God and you are my set apart child my beloved child and I will never leave you I will never forsake you you can pour out your heart about everything that's going on you can pour it out to me I will always hear I will always listen I do not sleep I do not grow weary and my name is mercy and my name is comfort and I raised my son from the dead to show my power and my love for you

[ 37 : 33 ] Jesus says in Matthew 11 come to me all who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest take my yoke upon me and learn from me for I am gentle and lowly of heart and you will find rest for your souls by the way brothers and sisters we're going to say 2 Corinthians 1 3 to 4 again there is so much comfort in memorizing God's word if you get nothing else out of this sermon other than to try to meditate upon these two verses and learn from them this week then that is a good thing let's say it again could you put it up Andrew blessed be the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ the father of mercies and God of all comfort who comforts us in all our affliction so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God and if you could put up there's just three prayers as we bring our sermon to the close three prayers that I offered you they'll be on the web page if you want to look at them if it's helpful to you as a takeaway from this sermon the first one is Lord please make me a disciple of



Jesus gripped by the gospel who is learning to turn to you for comfort and then living for your glory by comforting others with the comfort that comes from you see too many Christians were swamps and cesspools God's blessing comes into our life and then it just stops there we just bliss out and don't realize that if we spend too long just blissing out without handing it on we're just becoming a cesspool a swamp God doesn't make swamps and cesspools he makes streams of living water to bless the world for his glory it's a basic spiritual principle your wealth your your good looks your youth your whatever it is it's a blessing God gives this to you and he gives it to you it's to irrigate your life it's to be a source of blessing in your life but it's meant to be poured out God wants to make you a stream not a swamp a lot of our spiritual problems come because we're not doing something we're just trying to hoard God's blessings but notice the flow of 2nd

Corinthians 3 4 3 and 2nd Corinthians 1 3 and 4 this thing of the comfort coming to us the comfort comforts us and then we are to go and to be used to comfort others and so this text is an invitation for us to also pray to God that he would help us to recognize how we're turning to idols and to die to those idols the next one Andrew if you could put it up Lord please make me a disciple of Jesus gripped by the gospel who is learning to rely and hope in you and so live for your glory I mean the funny thing about it is that when we say God I need to rely on you to deal with this problem father I have this huge financial problem I need to rely on you I need your wisdom in my finances Lord your my my finances they're they're terrible they're causing me so much stress I need to rely on you I need to hope that you are able to bring financial sanity into my life or relational sanity or sexual sanity or job job sanity whatever it is and I mean God God often answers these prayers by sending you to people by giving you a leading as to where you should go who you should call what you should do who comes into your life sometimes he'll just deal with it miraculously often he deals with it through sending you to people or bringing people into your lives but it's so it's not inviting us to be passive but it's inviting us to recognize that I I'm hoping and relying on the wrong things Lord and then the final prayer if you could put it up Andrew you'll notice in verse 11 that Paul invites people to pray for him in fact he urges them to pray for him and this letter is not just written individual saints but to a church and that's why this final prayer is written in the collective it says Lord please make us disciples of

Jesus gripped by the gospel who are living but for your glory by learning to pray for others every day in every way that's what the text is calling us to through the perspective of the gospel that as the gospel becomes more real to us as we think upon it as it grips us as it becomes the ground on which we stand as it becomes the lens by which we see and understand the world and hear God's word that it will begin to shape us in certain ways it will begin to push us into certain things it will draw us into certain things and one of the things that we'll do is to leave deliver us from our preoccupation with ourself to realize our great need to pray for others and that this is a work that God is to do in us as individuals and as in the church I invite you to stand for some of you if maybe as a result of this you haven't really put your hands in the hand of

Jesus to enter the Jesus way there's no better time than now and there's no magic words just say Jesus I want to be yours I want to be yours forever I thank you that you'll never let me go thank you for it you're on the cross it doesn't matter if there's some special I used you know there was a time in my Christian life I I would worry that I hadn't got the exact right words of the sinner's prayer right and it caused me affliction forget about it just cry out to the Lord do you want to be his further as God has worked in us in different ways different ways that we have to maybe call out to him let's just bow our heads in closing father we thank you that you saw that we were a people who worship idols and who are blind to our worshiping of idols that father we thank you that you saw that but still you loved us and sent your son to die upon the cross for us we thank you father that your son in his perfect life and his death and his resurrection that he is your power to make ordinary human beings like us right with you when we receive it by faith father we ask that you would make us disciples of

[ 44 : 21 ] Jesus who are gripped by the gospel and so learning to turn from idols but turn to you for comfort reliance and hope so that we will live for your glory and bear much fruit to your glory in the city of Ottawa and to the ends of the earth and this we ask in the name of Jesus amen