

True to Yourself?

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Preacher: Rev. George Sinclair

[0 : 0 0] Father, we ask that the Holy Spirit would come with might and power and deep conviction, not just now as we receive your word, but throughout the entire service.

Father, please, in your mercy, have your Holy Spirit so move the very center of who we are to be able to desire to come into your presence and to receive from you and to respond to you in a worthy manner.

And so grip us with the gospel that we will grow day by day into disciples of Jesus who are gripped by the gospel, learning to live for your glory. And all this we ask in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior. Amen.

Please be seated. So, I'm going to tell you something really boring.

One of the things that Jenny, who's the admin person, and I are going to do in a couple of weeks' time is we're going to set aside at least one day to go over all of the QuickBooks line entries and all of the ways that we record income and expenditures in all of our funds.

[1 : 1 7] And we're going to go right back to zero. Am I putting you all to sleep? But we're going to do this, right? Every single line item of QuickBooks. This is if the council on Monday night gives us permission.

This is what we're going to do. Now, this sounds unbelievably boring, but it's one of those things which is boring, not urgent. We could go another couple of years without doing it.

But it's actually really, really, really, really important. And a lot of times in life, you have to do things that aren't urgent, but are very important. In fact, there's a famous writer by the name of Stephen Covey who wrote a book called Seven Habits of Highly Effective People.

And one of the things he does is he talks about doing good effective people do quadrant two things. Effective organizations do quadrant two things. That's something which is important but not urgent.

Most people live their lives dealing with the urgent, and a lot of the urgent is completely and utterly unimportant. And to spend all your time doing urgent but unimportant things is just a definition to really accomplish nothing of worth in life.

[2 : 2 2] So we're going to be spending this time doing something which is important, help have our finances clearer, but not urgent. I mention this because in the Bible story that we're looking at today, there are several things which make this story sort of very distant from us.

But actually, the story is talking about, if you just sort of bear with me, it's talking about something which is really, really important, but people rarely feel is urgent. And since we all would like to be effective people, nobody likes to go around and say, by the way, I'm an unbelievably ineffective person.

In fact, if somebody said that to us, they're probably hoping we'd say to them, oh, come on, you're actually pretty effective. They're fishing for a compliment. But nobody likes to say that. So this text, believe it or not, is actually dealing with something very, very important, but most people never think it's urgent.

So if you turn your Bibles to Judges chapter 13, Judges chapter 13, verse 1. And if you don't have Bibles, there's some up there.

You can come and follow along with me, and you can keep the Bible if you don't have a Bible of your own. And we're going through the book of Judges. And if this was a Netflix series, we're going to begin a three-part sub-story, so to speak, in a longer story arc.

[3 : 38] And we're going to look at three stories or three episodes about Samson, a person that many people have heard of, even if they're not Christian. And if I was a—well, you'll see in a moment.

This week, we're going to look at the birth of Samson. Next week, we're going to look at the battles of Samson. And if I was a good Baptist, I would know another B to begin the third episode.

But all I can think of is the destruction, you know, the demise and death of Samson. And so, by the way, if some of you can come up with a B to describe that third episode, that would be very handy, and I'll announce it next week.

Samson is the last of the Judges. It talks about this chaotic period in Israel after they've come into the Promised Land. They're constantly being invaded. And they're very, very disunified.

And Samson is the last of these 12 judges that the Book of Judges tells us about. So that sort of gets you up to it. And this week, we're going to look at the birth, which doesn't sound very interesting, other than the fact that it's actually going to deal with something which is very important, but is never urgent.

[4 : 42] And here's how it goes. And the people of Israel again did what was evil in the sight of the Lord. So the Lord gave them into the hand of the Philistines for 40 years. I haven't mentioned this very much, but Philistines who become eventually more and more and more important in the Bible, a way to understand who they are, they're a little bit like if you lived in the British Isles in certain centuries, and they kept being invaded by the Norse, people from what we now call Norway and Sweden and Denmark, sea raiders who would come and occupy parts of the land or maybe just come and leave.

But that's what Philistines were. They weren't actually native to the land. They were sea raiding people who kept invading this land. And for 40 years, they've been oppressing the people of Israel.

But here's the thing, which we're going to talk about it a lot more at the end, but I want you to notice this phrase, and the people of Israel again did what was evil in the sight of the Lord.

I coach people about how to speak, how to teach the Bible, and how to preach. And one of the things I do when I'm coaching people about how to preach or teach the Bible is I say that as part of their preparation, they should try to understand the entire text.

They should take time to look at the entire text and try to understand every bit of it. I'm not patting myself on the back, but after the 8 o'clock service, somebody asked me about a bit of the text which I didn't talk on, and I could give them the answer.

[6 : 13] Same thing happened last week. I said, that's what you should always be able to do. But usually in a text, in a sermon, you're not giving a university lecture. You're giving a sermon, and it means you can't cover everything in the text.

You sort of have to pick a path through the text. And so every week as we've been going through the book of Judges, I've picked a path through the text. And every week I've not mentioned this little phrase, and the people of Israel had gained it what was evil in the sight of the Lord.

But it's actually one of the most important phrases in the entire book of Judges. And you can see that in two ways. But every week it didn't make the cut, so to speak.

But this week, and maybe in another one of the weeks, I just want to, we're going to camp on that a little bit. And this is actually getting at what is important but not urgent. Seven different times in the book of Judges, this phrase has come.

And the people of Israel again did what was evil in the sight of the Lord. Seven times is the number of perfection. It means it's a very, very important idea. It's part of the introduction, and it's part of half of all of the stories of the Judges.

[7 : 20] This phrase has come. And this is the last time in the book that the phrase appears. But the phrase appears, the idea appears in a different form two times in the conclusion of the book.

And it's when we see how it's phrased, the semi-basic concept is phrased with different words that we understand, in a sense, the sharpness of this idea.

If you turn in your Bibles to chapter 17, verse 6, which is at the beginning of a very long conclusion to the book of Judges, and you'll see this.

In those days, there was no king in Israel. Note this. Everyone did what was right in his or her own eyes. Everyone did what was right in his or her own eyes.

And in the conclusion, you're going to see in the two-part conclusion, just like massive foolishness and selfishness and horrendous things going on.

[8 : 30] And you realize that this phrase is another way of getting at this fundamental concept that's explained, said seven times about people did what was evil in the sight of the Lord. And another way to say that is that people were doing what was right in their own eyes.

And to help really bring home that this is an important idea in the entire book is see the very last words of the book. If you have your Bibles, it's 21-25. And the very, very final words of the entire book say this.

In those days, there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes. Now, there's lots of things that are difficult about trying to bring a biblical text to bear.

For those of us reading it today in 2020, in post-modern capitalist or post-capitalist, a knowledge-based economy like Canada in 2020, like Ottawa in 2020, there's lots of things that make bridging that gap very, very difficult sometimes.

And that's why lots of times sermons can be unbelievably boring. They don't attempt to bridge that gap between the ancient world and how we live today. But here we see there's a huge problem that has to be addressed, which I'm going to talk about in a moment, which I think is this urgent thing, non-urgent thing, but actually unbelievably important.

[10 : 00] And that is, how is the fundamental way that most Canadians think about life is this. Brother, only you know what is right for you.

Don't listen to your dad. Don't listen to your brother. Don't listen to religious figures like me. Sister, only you know what is right for you. And you need to pursue what is right for you.

And only, don't let anybody else, don't let your roommate, don't let your sister, your mother, your father, your kids, a church, a school, a coach, don't let any, only you know what is right for you.

And if you want to be really human and really whole, you need to be authentic and pursue that. In other words, do what is right in your own eyes.

Now you see part of the problem. The basic anthem of Canada is do what is right in your own eyes. And the basic message of the book of Judges is, if you do what is right in your own eyes, you're more often than not doing what is evil in the eyes of the Lord.

[11 : 05] And we see a huge gap between the biblical text and us. And it would be one of the reasons why many Canadians would say, like, chuck the Bible.

It's not helpful at all. It's just oppressive. Believe it or not, the way the rest of the story goes actually points to a better way than how most Canadians think.

It captures the good, the true good in how Canadians think, without realizing how unbalanced and dangerous it is.

And the Bible is going to point in this story, hint and show a direction towards a far better way that actually answers the real longings to how Canadians think, without the profound selfishness that goes along with how Canadians think.

So let's look at how it goes. Look how the story goes. So we've already said, I have to get back to my text, we've already said, and the people of Israel again did what was evil in the sight of the Lord. So the Lord gave them into the hand of the Philistines for 40 years.

[12 : 10] And then the story continues. This is the birth of Samson. There was a certain man of Zorah, of the tribe of the Danites, whose name was Manoah, and his wife was barren and had no children.

And the angel of the Lord appeared to the woman and said to her, Behold, you are barren and have not born children, but you shall conceive and bear a son. Therefore be careful and drink no wine or strong drink and eat nothing unclean.

For behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. No razor shall come upon his head. For the child shall be a Nazarite to God from the womb. And he shall begin to save Israel from the hand of the Philistines.

Now just sort of pause there to understand what they're saying is, if you go back later on and you read Numbers chapter 6, which would have been a passage of scripture that would have been available to them at this time, you'll see that there's a special vow of a Nazarite.

And the vow of the Nazarite is for a person, like a Jewish person back in those days, who's in a time of crisis. And not only crisis, but a crossroads connected to the crisis.

[13 : 24] And they really need God's presence and they really need God's direction. And so they take upon themselves for a season, a special vow to live in a sense, in a specially holy way, because they want to be in God's presence.

They want to be able to call out to him for his direction and for his help and for his strength. And so the basic feature of the vow of the Nazarite, apart from the fact that it's a special time of prayer and seeking the Lord's will, is that no razor will touch your head at all.

So your beard, if you're a man, your beard will grow out longer and your hair will grow longer. If you're a woman, your hair will just grow longer and longer. And the second aspect of it is that you don't have anything that's from the vine.

So you can't have raisins, can't have grapes, can't have wine, can't have grape juice, anything connected to the vine, you're not allowed to have. And the third thing is that you're not allowed to be near dead bodies. And it's just like, it's just in a sense three markers.

On one level, it doesn't really matter. It's the same thing how Christians would understand fasting. On one level, fasting doesn't matter other than the fact that it's a bit of a way to symbolize that you're giving up something to devote yourself more to seeking God's will.

[14 : 33] That's sort of the heart of this practice. And by the way, for those of you who aren't familiar with this story, Samson is going to violate all of the conditions of a Nazarite. Every single one of them.

Some of them spectacularly. Don't be near dead bodies. The body count in Samson's life is going to be very high, all at his hand. So, he's going to violate this all the time.

But that's the vow. And God's angel is saying to the parents, this baby that's going to be born to you, he's going to be a boy and he's going to be a Nazarite from birth.

And his purpose is to begin to save Israel from the hand of the Philistines. So, what happens is, verse 6 and 7, Then the woman came and told her husband, A man of God came to me and his appearance was like the appearance of the angel of God.

Very awesome. I did not ask him where he was from and he did not tell me his name. But he said to me, Behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. So then drink no wine or strong drink and eat nothing unclean, for the child shall be a Nazarite to God from the womb to the day of his death.

[15 : 41] Now, just sort of pause here. A little thing to notice in the story. And I've mentioned this before. The angel of the Lord is a being that appears many times in the Old Testament.

And basically, it's a mystery. It's an enigma. If you go back and read theologians, it's not clear whether it's a theophany, like an appearance of God. Some people actually think that it's a pre-incarnate visitation by Jesus himself.

Or it's an angel that has a special relationship with God. But it's very, very clear it's a very unique type of being. And that when this being speaks, it's God speaking.

It's as if God is present right with them, speaking directly and plainly to them. And this being appears as a man. So we know from the editor that it's an angel of the Lord, but they still think it's a man.

It looks like a man. And that's how they refer to this being. So she goes and tells her husband these things. So how does her husband respond?

[16 : 41] Well, actually, her husband believes her. Verse 8. Then Manoah prayed to the Lord and said, O Lord, please let the man of God, notice that, the man of God whom you sent come again to us and teach us what we are to do with the child who will be born.

And God listened to the voice of Manoah. And the angel of God came again to the woman as she sat in the field. Sort of notice, that's sort of interesting, that the man, Manoah's praying it, but the angel doesn't show up to Manoah.

He shows up again to Manoah's wife. But Manoah, her husband, was not with her. So the woman ran quickly and told her husband, Behold, the man who came to me the other day has appeared to me.

And Manoah arose and went after his wife and came to the man and said to him, Are you the man who spoke to this woman?

And he said, I am. Now just sort of pause before I read anything else. If I was in a social gathering with my wife and I meet somebody that I haven't met before and I said to him, Are you the one who spoke to this woman?

[17 : 58] My wife would be upset. Don't take any type of marital advice from this particular story. Men who are married, men who have girlfriends, never refer to your wife or your girlfriend as this woman as if she doesn't have a name.

Just a mere pointer. Just because it's in the Bible doesn't mean that you should go and do likewise. A lot of times in these stories it's telling you what not to do.

I just thought I'd bring that out just in case any of you were a bit confused by it and started referring to your wife as this woman because the Bible told you to do so. Don't do it.

Anyway, verse 12. Continue on. And Manoah said, Now when your words come true, what is to be the child's manner of life and what is his mission?

And the angel of the Lord said to Manoah, Of all that I said to the woman, let her be careful, she may not eat of anything that comes from the vine, neither let her drink wine or strong drink or eat any unclean thing.

[19 : 06] All that I commanded her, let her observe. Now just sort of notice here for a second, the angel actually leaves something out.

He actually, it's a bit of a rebuke to Manoah. He says, Whatever I told her, you need to both do it. And he left out something that he'd said to the woman, so he has to actually listen to his wife.

But the main thing in here is this, just to notice this, and this is going to be really important to understand that thing which is important but never urgent. What Manoah wants is he wants to know the rules and he wants to know the steps.

He says, Okay God, this is really good news that we're going to have a son. So okay, what do we have to do? Okay, you've told me a few things about her and obviously that implicates me but what precisely is it we should do?

And where precisely is it that this is going? And on one hand, you'll notice it's very interesting because that was part of Manoah's prayer, right? So the angel of the Lord speaks to Manoah's wife and Manoah calls out to the Lord, Could you please help us and let us know what exactly it is we want to do?

[20 : 20] And God is answering his prayer by sending the angel of the Lord a second time and now Manoah asks the angel of the Lord, Can you tell us the rules? Can you tell us the steps?

Can you tell us everything that has to be done? So on one hand, the angel of the Lord is answering the prayer but the angel of the Lord doesn't answer the prayer. He doesn't tell him what to do. So it's just sort of left and let's see how it develops because in fact, the angel of the Lord, I didn't flip it, the angel of the Lord is going to answer the request but in a completely out of left field type of way, not the way that Manoah wants to be answered, not the way he's expecting and he might not even have recognized that the angel of the Lord has answered his request.

But here's what happens. Verse 15, Manoah said to the angel of the Lord, please let us detain you and prepare a young goat for you. And the angel of the Lord said to Manoah, if you detain me, I will not eat of your food but if you prepare a burnt offering, then offer it to the Lord.

Now this is actually part of the Lord's answer because if you read other stories with the angel of the Lord, sometimes they do eat food but his refusal to eat food and to have a sacrifice to the Lord is part of the answer that the Lord is giving to Manoah and his wife.

The brackets for Manoah, verse 16, did not know that he was the angel of the Lord. Verse 17, And Manoah said to the angel of the Lord, what is your name so that when your words come true we may honor you?

[22 : 05] And actually, every English version of the Bible gets the original language incorrect. What's happened is that Manoah has become tongue-tied and in the original language that sentence, the question is completely and utterly ungrammatical because it begins with who.

So he wants to say who are you but he starts to say who and then he switches in the middle of the language and realizes he shouldn't be asking who are you. So in Hebrew it's completely ungrammatical.

It doesn't make any sense because it's obvious he's going to ask who are you. He starts to ask that question but then he sort of switches and ends his sentence as if he's saying what is your name? And in English they do a valid thing they straighten it all out.

And he says what is your name? Verse 17 so that when your words come true we may honor you. And the angel of the Lord said to him why do you ask my name? Seeing it is wonderful.

We're going to talk about that in a moment but let's just sort of get to the next thing that happens which fits with this angel's name being wonderful. Not that that's the angel's name.

[23 : 16] So Manoah took the young goat with the grain offering and offered it on the rock to the Lord to the one who works wonders. And wonders here means he does the impossible.

He does the inconceivable. He does the big. He does the wow. He does the whoa. He does the huh? That's what wonders is sort of trying to get at.

To the one who works wonders and Manoah and his wife were watching and when the flame went up toward heaven from the altar the angel of the Lord went up in the flame of the altar.

In other words the angel of the Lord the man entered the flame ascended with the flame towards heaven and vanishes in the air above him.

Now Manoah and his wife were watching and when they saw this they fell on their faces to the ground. Now the rest of the story just is about whether the Lord is going to kill them and it's all important but you get the basic idea here right now.

[24 : 26] Now remember I said that the basic way that Canadians understand themselves is that you know George you need to be true to yourself. Like only you know what is really true and needful for you to be the person that you should be and don't listen to your wife don't listen to your kids don't listen to you know don't listen definitely don't listen to the bishop you know don't listen to the congregation you've got to be true to you you need to pursue being true to you and and on one level we Christians have to agree with part of that sentiment and I think this book here as I'll explain in a moment would be understand that obviously there has to be a way that whatever it is that you're supposed to be doing that it should somehow fit with you and that it shouldn't be completely and utterly foreign to you that there should be something if you in fact are a unique person that is unique about you that is expressed and reflected but consider this thought experiment you know from a very very early age

I was profoundly affected by the story of Martin Luther King Jr. and the civil rights movement in the states I mean I can't communicate that to you I'm older than a lot of you and Martin Luther King died when I would have just been in junior high and so you know the early documentary like I have many memories of the of newscasts of seeing what was going on with Martin Luther King and the civil rights movement in the states and I remember going out of my way to see documentaries and other types of things because from a very very early age there was something about that story which I found very very compelling and even now unbidden to me I can see just as soon as I even tell you this I can see in my mind's eye perfectly some of the some of the iconic scenes of Martin Luther King and his leading of the civil rights movement to deal with the terrible oppression of African Americans in the United States but especially in the south

I can picture these times even now as I speak it's almost making me choke up of Martin Luther King and his and the other other people who are with him it's surrounded by beefy white state troopers and jeering crowds and they're in a place that the state says they're not supposed to be and they get down on their knees and pray and as they're down on their knees to pray first the water cannons come and blast them and then you can see the troopers coming in amongst them and hitting them with their batons their wood and you can see just this profound dependence upon God and upon what is right and not showing violence as a way to defeat hatred and it has had a profound effect on me ever since I was in junior high and as a high school student and still to this day I get choked up just thinking about it and some of you have heard this but here's the thing here's the thing to think about

I hope and I dream that if I could all of a sudden if I was older and if I was an American I hope and wish that I would be one of the people on my knees with Martin Luther King Jr.

and every single one of us here in the room probably does as well most African Americans weren't and they were all being true to themselves they were all pursuing what was right for them and most of them weren't with Martin Luther King Jr.

[28 : 39] but were doing what was right in their own eyes and what about those beefy racist state troopers and racist jeering crowds they were being true to themselves they were doing what was right for them how does the basic message of morality in Canada address this huge problem it can't it can't see why it's important but not urgent if the fundamental way that people talk to themselves about their moral life and their self-identity and their quest does not help them to distinguish between a violent racist and Martin

Luther King Jr. then how is it helpful and if it doesn't actually distinguish between Martin Luther King Jr. and the people who are with him and a large number of African Americans who weren't there but were doing what was right how does it help you how does this fit with the whole story see here's the thing which is very very interesting about the whole story we have this basic sense which I think is correct that you know the worry is that there's going to be some type of a goodness or some type of conformity that will squash us that will kill us that will kill what is unique in us which is beautiful in us which is sort of irreplaceable in us and we have this deep worry so we go to the opposite extreme in terms of our moral exhortations but we have this very very very interesting story here which is in this very very very old book and the thing which is very very interesting in this story is that first of all it's all in the context about being worried about what is right or wrong in the Lord's eyes and for most Canadians when they hear about doing evil in the eyes of the Lord they think the Lord is like a scientist watching rats doing experiments and the scientists don't care about the rats all they're doing is observing the rats and dealing with the rats for their own purpose and their own good in a sense they're oppressing the rats and many people when they hear this phrase they reject it but this story shows us something very very different you see when the angel of the Lord says to the person

Minoan his wife my name is wonderful the angel of the Lord is saying that my name is in a category and who I am is in a category that you have no frame of reference for there's no words for it and there can't be words that come from you for it there's there's something in a sense what the story is doing is it's modeling the Christian doctrine of transcendence and for some of us who are very philosophically inclined for some of us who love abstractions we hear the word transcendence and we get it but most of us aren't very good at abstractions and what you need to understand is this story that there's God I'm God and I am transcendent transcendent means I am completely other I am completely different and when you have something which is completely other and completely different it means that there's no words for that because it's other it's different like if you think about it for a second if for some reason you wanted to try to communicate to a slug or an earthworm and you were able to try to get down into the earthworm and try to communicate to the earthworm the difference between you and an earthworm is a finite distance but the difference between you and the infinite

God is an infinite distance an infinite distance and his name is wonderful there's no human category for it but at the same time that God is saying there's no human category for it God is with them he's right there in front of them he's talking their language he's listening to them he's present and there's this other Christian doctrine to try to describe God is to say that God is not just transcendent he's also imminent and imminent once again is a very abstract word and some of us like abstract words and sort of get it when we get an abstract word just as some people get how negative one can have a square root and I can't get that but some get that I can't get that but some abstraction of imminence but those of you who can't here's how you look at the story and you have here this God being present speaking their language having stooped to them and speaking to them and with them and answering their prayers at the same time he is transcendent he is completely and utterly other but more than that why is he present he's there because he's heard their prayers and he's answering their prayers because he loves them and more than that he's there not just to reveal himself to them so that the transcendent can be known in some way in an imminent manner but even more than that he's come to announce that God is going to do something to begin to deliver the people of Israel from the

Philistines that he's there to deliver them and in the story arc of the Bible this is going to ultimately point to Jesus because Samson is the last of the judges he begins to deliver them from the Philistines but who delivers them from the Philistines who delivers them from the Philistines is David but what do we know about David is David does deliver them from the Philistines but he can't deliver himself from himself he murders people he commits adultery he makes rash vows he can deliver the people of Israel from Philistines but he can't deliver himself and so David himself points to someone who needs to come after him to keep the arc of deliverance so that he David points to his greater son and calls him Lord he's pointing to the person of Jesus who ultimately will come to deliver us and has delivered us from all oppression from all slavery and he begins it by abolishing and dealing with our slavery to sin and our slavery to death by defeating death and that which causes death and his death upon the cross the transcendent

[35 : 38] God who is also completely and utterly imminent comes and stoops to speak to us to be present with us to be in Christmas God with us among us but still transcendent and with us to deliver us you see if such a being does exist if such a story is true then to know from his perspective what is really truly good for me that fits me that is the answer to my longings and my yearnings is because every single human being if they are at all self reflective knows that there is some things within them we're all confused about some things within them which surely will continue on and beyond and be something which is great and worth keeping but there are things within us that we need to be delivered from and if we're honest we get confused about it that's what maturity is about what we think we desperately need at 16 is going to be looking very different we laugh about it when we're 26 and laugh about that when we're 36 and 46 and some people never learn to live perpetually confused and the

Christian gospel is not that we Christians have figured it all out but it's the complete opposite we figure it out that we can't figure it out and we need the one who is completely transcendent and completely other yet is completely imminent and is imminent and transcendent to come and deliver us from all that binds us that in light of his great deliverance that we can now call out to him and know that he is the one that can see the uniqueness and the beauty in each one of us that will last for all eternity that part of every single human being that only we for all eternity can contribute to the great music of heaven where we praise God and enjoy creation that unique bit in every human being that is in heaven that only we can contribute that note that instrument that melody that unique thing out of us from him from all eternity only he can make clear to us what is really true to who we are and it begins by accepting

Jesus as your savior and being grounded in it knowing that it will end with being in the presence of God with great joy in a redeemed creation as part of a great choir declaring God's praises and enjoying it in a way which is just wow and answers the longings of our hearts invite you to stand and just in this moment it's time to do a little bit of work with God not only now but throughout the rest of the service and for some who've never yet given their lives to Christ there's no better time now than to call out to him and say Lord be my deliverer and

Lord help me to trust that as you deliver me as you have delivered me in Jesus and continue deliver me throughout my life that you will be with me and you will help me to understand what is my true good and that fits with me that is right for me and is beautiful and whole and for me that you father alone will do this in your son through the work of the Holy Spirit and through your word and in the context of Christian community there's no better time and now to call out to the Lord for that and for each of us who are bent out of shape by the world it's a reset time where we can just be thankful Lord we've been watching Netflix all week and YouTube all week and paper all week and our bosses all week and all these messages and father I lose the plot line I'm so glad I can be together and help us to trust you and your word to speak what is true in your sight about me as will be true and of great that's the answer to my longings and yearnings so let's just pause in prayer father we ask that you bring the words of this very simple story home to us at a deep level that we hear and understand the words of this story which are at a world around us through the gospel to understand you through the gospel to understand your calling on our lives in light of the gospel father we ask that your holy spirit would do that wonderful work in our lives to make us disciples of

Jesus gripped by the gospel learning to live for the good of others for the salvation of many and for your great glory and all God's people said Amen