

Offensive Christianity

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[0:00] Let's pray, shall we? Lord, we thank you for your word as we gather onto it now.! Encourage our hearts and help us to see the cross, to be encouraged and uplifted by your truth, Lord, we pray.

In Jesus' name, amen. I want to start off with a warning. This message is M-rated for mature Christians only. It's offensive.

This is an offensive message. It may offend some listeners here. This message may be dangerous to your health. It contains offensive language. I'll be reading from some offensive literature.

This is offensive, isn't it? It's banned in some countries around the world. This is a banned book. It's so extreme. It's so offensive to many.

Too hot to handle. Ouch! This is an offensive book, the Bible. And I can bring you just a sermon today, but I'd much rather bring you Jesus, bring you the Lord.

[1:02] And to talk about offensive Christianity. Offensive. Firstly, the cross is offensive, isn't it? The cross is offensive.

A man on a cross. That's offensive. It's ugly. It's brutal. A man on a cross.

It talks about the curse. Cursed for humanity. And the Lord Jesus, this man who was the man on the cross, he tells us in Luke 14, 27, of a cross that we are to bear.

He says, And whosoever doth not bear his cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.

Elsewhere it says, We must deny ourself, take up our cross daily, and follow him.

The cross. It sets Christianity all apart from every other religion, any other kind of way of thinking about faith, about truth. The cross.

[2:02] It's offensive. It tells us in 2 Timothy 2, 12, If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him. 2 Timothy 2, verse 12.

And like Paul says, But we preach Christ crucified unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness. A stumbling block, an offence.

Something that's offensive. Something that will jar us and make us fall. As it were, an offence. A stumbling stone. A stumbling block to the Jews and to the Greeks foolishness.

The cross. Paul says, I preach Christ crucified. In Philippians 3, verse 10, he says this. He says, That I may know him.

He counts this as something that is central to his message that he has been commissioned to deliver. He says, That I may know him. And the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death.

[3:04] Paul's talking about the cross. He says, The fellowship of his sufferings. Now, the son who preach your best life now, as if becoming a Christian is somehow going to make life more easy and more pleasant and more satisfying, as it were.

Now, there's a sense where God does bring the ultimate satisfaction, but it's not in a secular sense of satisfaction. It might mean the fellowship of his sufferings for you.

Many countries, it does mean that, doesn't it? And we know the son that we've been witnessing to. If they convert to Christ, they're going to be anathema to their families.

They're going to be outcasts from their religion and potentially subject to serious consequences if they follow Christ. Even in Australia, that can happen.

Because the cross is offensive. Amen? The cross, it means total commitment. When he says, take up your cross and follow me, it means absolute commitment. When you take up a cross, it means you're on the way to your execution.

[4:12] The cross, it's an instrument of death. It's not just some kind of carved piece of wood to hang around your neck or to hang on your wall. God forbid. But it's an instrument of death.

It's an instrument of torture, of the crucifixion and punishment and suffering of our saviour. It's not an object that we bow down and adore and worship.

As such, we worship the one who was the one on the cross, who now is the risen saviour and Lord. The cross, it's painful. The cross is painful. For us, it's God's operation, his development process in our lives.

We're called to the fellowship of his sufferings. That means it's going to be a bit ouch. The fellowship of his sufferings, doesn't it? It means the Christian life might mean bearing some discomfort and trial and inconvenience.

The cross, God's dealings are not always pleasing to the flesh. Let's face it. You know, the whole Christian message is quite offensive, really. In a world where self-esteem is exalted and self-will and self-affirmation, the Lord Jesus talks about self-denial.

[5:26] He says, deny yourself. He doesn't say affirm yourself. He says, deny yourself. He says, die to yourself. And God calls us to the cross. Paul says, I die daily.

There's a sense where he was dying to himself in a daily, repeated action of nailing his flesh, of dealing with his flesh, of killing his flesh, his old man.

And the cross is offensive. Christianity is offensive because the basic message of Christianity is you cannot save yourself. You cannot. You know, that's pretty offensive to the flesh, really, isn't it?

That's pretty offensive to the pride and the self-will of man that would say, I want to be my own saviour. I'm going to try to get to my own heaven by my own works. The Bible says, there's none of that.

There's none of that. You cannot save yourself. And it tells us, in Colossians 3, verse 3, that we are actually to die, to actually come to a spiritual dying of our carnal, of our old man.

[6:32] It says, in Colossians 3, verse 3, for ye are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God. There's a sense where that old man, you know, I've got to tell you, there's an Andrew Craig that rears his ugly head every so often and I've got to nail him back down again on the cross.

Amen? I die daily. I've got to kill that old man, the old man, the old me, the old fleshly man. He still shows his face now and again and he's got to be killed.

He's got to be killed off. That's the cross. That's what it means for us as disciples. What does it mean? Being his disciple, in Luke 5, 11, it says, they immediately left all and followed him.

That's radical, isn't it? That's the cross, isn't it? You know, the cross is shocking. It means death. It means death. Let's get really down to the nub of it here. The cross means death.

There was a female prison guard in New York. She was fired because she refused to stop wearing a cross and the court said that it might influence towards Christianity. She lost her job because of the cross.

[7:39] Now, I'm not a big fan of wearing a cross because I've got questions about that personally but some Christians choose to wear crosses and it's a reflection of their faith. That's their conviction to wear a cross and she got fired because she wanted to wear a cross.

Discipleship. It's about the cross. It means dying to self. It means the consecrated heart. It means the fellowship of his sufferings. It means pain. It means discipline. It means cost. It means hardship.

Romans 12.1, it says, I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God which is your reasonable service.

A living sacrifice. That sounds painful, doesn't it? A sacrifice there lying on the altar as it were to be offered up and that's the offensive cross of Christianity.

And one of the problems of our day is truth decay. Truth decay. And we live in a day of a watered down gospel and everything is so, it's got to be so palatable now.

[8:50] You know, the preachers have to be so warm and fuzzy and flattering and just giving you a very comfortable kind of message to make you feel at ease and comforted.

You know, there is a time for comforting but there's also a discomforting of the comfortable. Amen?

We need to get such. If we're feeling comfortable in our Christianity, we need to get discomforted from that comfort zone.

And so, the preacher, his job is not to make everything so palatable that it's so pleasant and comfortable that we don't hurt people's feelings that as people can be very sensitive these days, people can get very sensitive but when we look at the offense of the cross, we've got to realize I've got to carry something.

I've got to be in the fellowship of his sufferings. I've got to love till it hurts. That's the cross. He loved us till it hurts. I've got to pray. I've got to give. I've got to forgive.

The cross, it hurts. And there's a sense where it's a hard gospel. Of course, we know the essential truth of the gospel is that he has paid it all. And then there's the discipleship.

[10:07] There's that sense where there's a devotion. There's a living sacrifice. There's a carrying of our cross. There's a taking the road to the cross.

It means the fellowship of his sufferings. There's a sense where Christianity means we're going to live it out where the rubber hits the road. We're going to live out our Christianity such that it's not a casual commitment.

When you look at the word commitment, really there's no such thing as a casual commitment. The cross means total commitment, doesn't it? It means that we're giving ourselves as a living sacrifice. And it goes contrary to how the world thinks these days. A world where it's all about self-esteem and self-love. The Bible says all your righteousnesses stink.

Sorry, you've got smelly, dirty, filthy rags that you call your righteousnesses. Jimmy, you're terribly, you know, it's a big problem for you. All right. And it's, I'm saying it for me too.

[11:14] I've got these filthy rags that I think are my righteousnesses. My righteousnesses. The Bible says it's actually that they're unworthy, aren't they?

All the good that we can do is really, as it were, just a filthy rags. And that's offensive, isn't it, to our self-esteem.

It's offensive. In a world where some would praise people up and praise them for having self-love and their ego and their pride and tickle their ears and it's offensive for such a one to be told your religion cannot save you.

Oh, it's all that I've ever learnt. You know, we're talking to some young fellow yesterday, been to a church school, I guess for much of his education and he probably heard much of the Bible now and again but he had religion but he didn't have relationship with God and we had to, in effect, we were telling him that his religion could not save him.

He needed the saviour. That's offensive, isn't it? Some people would really get quite strongly, aggressively resistant to that kind of thinking. The world wants a religion that makes no challenges.

[12:28] It makes no demands. If it feels good, do it. The cross doesn't feel good. Yeah, but we're living in a context of eternity where, you know, and I could say to you truly, can I arrange to meet you 2,000 years from now in heaven and one day we'll set a place and a time and we'll make that appointment, that reservation that I can meet you one day on the streets of heaven and we can have a bit more of a conversation about things.

That happened 2,000 years ago back on earth. That's the context of eternity that we're living in. We can look at life in the terms of that, in the terms of the dimensions, the perspective of eternity.

You know, there's someone that I'm presiding at their funeral this week. She's gone. She's not living here, she's not walking here on this planet anymore. She's walking on golden streets.

There's a sense where we've got to get things in the perspective of eternity, in the terms of eternity. Do we live by the popular radio station WIIFM?

What's in it for me? It's what some people live by, isn't it? What's in it for me? They tune into the WIIFM. They live life by the standards of what's in it for me.

[13:47] What am I going to get out of it? How can I please my flesh? How can I satisfy my sense of religious pride and righteousness of my own making? And the cross is offensive. It says the only way you can be saved is because of the cross.

The only saviour you can find is Christ. He's the only saviour. And the cross, it's offensive because it says that our religion is not enough.

You must have the cross. You must have the crucified one. You must have the risen one. Your works based salvation is not going to save you. Your filthy rags of righteousness are not going to save you.

You must have the cross. The Christ of the cross. So the cross is offensive, number one. Number two, the Christ is offensive. The Christ is offensive. In Mark 6 verse 3, it tells as Christ came to an occasion there in Mark 6 verse 3, they say, is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James and Joseph and of Judah and of Simon?

This is Mark 6 verse 3. Are not his sisters here with us? And the context it was that he had done such mighty works.

[15:03] He began to teach in the synagogue and people were astonished. And it says in Mark 6 verse 3, and they were offended at him. They were offended at this Christ.

The Christ is offensive. You know, Jesus our Lord would never have been a candidate for the ecumenical council. He upset the Pharisees and the Sadducees. He wouldn't have qualified for some membership in the Church Growth Institute.

Because as far as numbers went, there was nothing much to show in terms of numbers. In Matthew 26 verse 56, it says, then all the disciples forsook him and fled.

Matthew 26 verse 56, everybody scattered, everybody left the church. All the disciples forsook him and fled. The Christ is offensive.

He is offensive. He does not mix his words. You see Matthew 23, when he laid it on the line for the Pharisees, he was blunt with the hypocrites. Christ is offensive. He's like his cousin John the Baptist who confronted sin.

[16:09] He told it like it was. When Jesus went to church, he went around casting people out of the church. He cast people out of the place. The money changes. He overturned the tables.

He disrupted the furniture. He scattered the carryings on of those that were trading in the temple. He cast the people out. As it were, the Christ is offensive.

The Christ of which we speak is the one saviour. This book tells us of. In Hosea 13, 4, it tells I am the Lord thy God from the land of Egypt.

And thou shalt know no God but me, for there is no saviour beside me. He's the Lord who brought us out of Egypt. And he says, thou shalt know no God but me, for there is no saviour, no saviour beside me.

Now that's pretty offensive to some people, isn't it, these days? You're saying that your Christ is the only way to God. You're saying that your Christ is the only saviour for me.

[17:15] Yes, we are. That's extreme, isn't it? That's exclusive. You know, that's not very inclusive. It's not very tolerant. These are bold claims.

That's narrow-minded to have such a claim. And we must be. We must be one-eyed. We must be like Jesus. No other saviour, no other God beside me, he says.

And Jesus saith unto him, in John 14, 6, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me.

He's the only one. You know, there's a temple in Kyoto, Japan. It's called the Temple of a Thousand Buddhas. You can choose your own God, small g. You might have one God one week, or one God one day, and one God the God choose whatever you want.

There's a kind of smorgasbord out there, and the internet gives you access to multiple religions and faiths and philosophies. You can pick and choose your own God. People would like that these days.

[18:24] That sounds very new age, doesn't it? It kind of sounds trendy and relevant. Maybe when you pick one of those Buddhas out of the temple of a thousand Buddhas, maybe you there's people that would say many paths to God.

There's many paths. I'd say there's many paths to hell. Yeah, but there's only one path to heaven. The Lord Jesus, he is the way, the truth, the life. For us there is one saviour, one, one only, the great God and our saviour, Jesus Christ.

In Titus 2, 13, the great God, our saviour, Jesus Christ. Now saviour is exclusive, the one saviour.

He is saying you cannot, cannot save yourself. You simply cannot. Some who believe in him would choose to keep quiet about it. Some would be as the Pharisees in John 12.

They believed but they did not confess him. They loved the praise of men more than the praise of God. That's John 12, 42, 43. Let's not be like them. Let's rather join with the offensive Christ and declare the offensive message that our world absolutely needs to hear.

[19:43] That there is one saviour and only one. Australia would rather serve other gods. The God of lust, of gold, of entertainment, of sport, of science, of humanism.

You know, driving around on the way to church. We saw many worshippers this morning on the sports fields, worshipping the God of soccer, worshipping the God of this sport or that sport or the other.

And we don't speak against such gods. They're the gods of Australia. How dare we? Of course, I know there's harmless interaction with sports and I know some interact with sports.

I'm not having a go at anyone. It's just that sense of it's almost like it is the God isn't it? For heaven and he talks about some musts for us.

He says ye must be born again. That's offensive isn't it? Wow, how dare he? How dare he be so exclusive? He is. He is exclusive because he is the only saviour and if Christ be God and died for me then no sacrifice can be too great for me to make for him.

[20:56] So said! C.T. Studd. He was clear cut. He said it like it is. It wasn't any sugar coated message from his lips.

But this Christ, the Christ of the Bible is still offensive today isn't he? You know there's manger scenes in the US that were legally banned and people ripped them down and burnt them and threw them into the streets because the Christ of the cross the Christ of the manger is still offensive today such that and I'm not a big fan of Christmas so called but they even cross out the name Christ and call it Christmas now don't they don't even call it Christmas anymore and this Christ the Christ of the Bible he always offered compassion and forgiveness to sinners and he offended the religious types we want to make sure we're on the right side of the Christ don't we as a sinner seeking forgiveness come with a bowed knee a bowed heart a bowed will not as the religious ones saying I'm above this and I'm I don't need a saviour let's be like

John the Baptist himself who said he must decrease he said of John himself that he John must decrease it was a divine imperative and that he Christ must increase we're called to manifest this Christ the offensive Christ because his message is our message his love should be our love constraining us propelling us compelling us when we think of the offensive Christ we think of the price that he paid of the reputation he laid aside to be counted amongst us to be counted amongst the transgressors the relationship made possible because of this gracious Christ the cross the Christ is offensive and thirdly the church is offensive you lot here you're offensive you're offensive to the world out there the church is offensive or at least it should be we should be salt we should be light we should be different we should be on the cutting edge we should be proclaiming the truth we should be bold biblical

Christianity is a thrill and a challenge we are peculiar people some of us are more peculiar than others bless God we want to be such a people don't we that we are not fitting in with the world and its ways that we can be as it tells us steadfast unmovable always abounding in the work of the Lord for as much as you know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord there's a great blessing to be such an offensive church as it were I'm using tongue in cheek language here but that sense that we should be different we should stand out we should be having a message that is clear cut and it's radical it's different from the messages that are all around us today that we should be as it says active always abounding that your Christianity should always be abounding but the work of the Lord you should always be abounding in that Daniel tells of people who know their

God shall be strong and do exploits they will take action people of God look through the pages of scripture ordinary men and women just like you just like me ordinary people yet God harnessed them and made them a force to be reckoned with a dynamic radical people and theirs was a powerful gospel we should be an offensive church in a good way that we are standing up to the falsehoods and the falling away that we should have a tough Christianity that sings while it's suffering church they they not conform they they with stood that which was the comfortable

[25:40] Christianity of the day because they declared the gospel they stood for the truths of God and friends Christianity is illegal in some

countries and if we were in another land then this one we could face torture this is not just not just aggressive kind of language or you know this is not just theory this is fact that we can face torture and imprisonment persecution believers can face years of imprisonment and punishment would we be strong if we were in such a land in some villages in South Sudan all Christian males have been crucified this is what's happening in modern day Africa more believers have died for Christ around the world in the 20th century than in all the other 19 centuries combined of course we're in the 21st century now but still the fact that there's much more escalation of persecution and

Australia is trying to bring in laws today that could if taken to the nth degree could outlaw what I'm saying here tonight it could outlaw the preaching of the gospel it could outlaw that offensive cross that offensive Christ that offensive church oh you're just rocking the boat you're being intolerant of the culture the culture what culture the values the values what values the values of this stinking nation it's offensive this message it's not inclusive of course it is inclusive in that we're all included we're all sinful and sinners and we're all just as lousy as one another sorry but I'm saying it like it is none of us are worthy it says we're all sinners but his grace is all sufficient isn't it praise God for that it's offensive this kind of talking is offensive because really when we talk about values traditional family values are assaulted today it's a cesspool out there what's going on what the world is promoting and condoning and celebrating the government our taxes are paying for the celebration of sodomy on our streets gambling drugs permissiveness the TV is filled with blasphemy propaganda

I was just listening to the radio today and I was really blown away they touched something very sacred to me not that I really care about it but just tongue in cheek coronation street coronation street that's the land of my homeland I was born on coronation street just about I used to talk like those weird people on coronation street and I listened to this radio story and this was just today and they said they introduced a black family which is great but more than that they introduced a homosexual character to coronation street it's just another domino falling isn't it another domino falling that okay it's all acceptable it's all condoned and tolerated and the next generation will think that's normal a godless society they're the values of the world we live in where we got the propaganda the schools indoctrinating our kids with immorality and the fact is we're living in a modern

Sodom that's offensive but that's the reality we're surrounded by impurity alcohol abuse abortion tens of millions the morality level is down here as it was in the days of!

the perversion of Hollywood the irreverence the foul mouth you see them parading down the red carpet men wearing dresses now whatever it was some recent thing wasn't there some award they're awarding perversion they're rewarding and acknowledging and praising perversion and prayer is banned in different ways now they're trying to get prayer out of some of the parliaments of our land profanity porn vice offensive language that's the norm now that's the values now Australia is pagan it's post christian it's an idol worshipping nation it's corrupt filled with abomination it's a sick land it's almost makes me wonder why was I national why would I want to belong to Australia no honestly there's a sense where you think where's our nation going it's going down the tubes isn't it and as the church we're offensive to that culture we uphold different values decency let's take a stand let's get angry with the anger of

[30:41] God let's get a righteous anger because it shouldn't be that way let's be shocked let's be disturbed let's be disturbing to stand out to stand up to stand against now you're the offensive church you are the saints the holy separated elect the the God fearing the men and women of God the saints salt light you're offensive you are really offensive and the world will see that unpleasant because the message that we have the saviour the salvation that we have is counter cultural as counter to the comfortable popular way and we stand for Christ we must we must yet some would be as in Isaiah's day in Isaiah chapter 30 where there was rebellious people lying children children that would not hear the law of the

Lord and they say to the seers the prophets they say see not to the prophets prophesy not unto us right things speak unto us smooth things prophesy deceits you might think okay I've had enough of Andrew Craig he's always going on about about hard things about about Bible things I want to go down the road where they talk about about smooth things right things are not what they wanted they wanted the wrong things they wanted a gospel of ease of amusement of plenty of comfort there's a jokes book out now for preachers I've got lots of books on my shelf but I don't have this one it's called Amusing Grace!

Amusing Grace there's a lightness there's a carelessness as if preachers have got to be joke tellers and make everybody laugh and just amuse the people we're not here to amuse we're here to declare we've got a commission we must impart and that word is that the cross is offensive people of God the cross the cross it's offensive the Christ is offensive and the church is offensive so lastly let's take the offensive let's take the offensive let's with the battle lines are drawn we're living in a culture that is anti-God we need to not be afraid to be on the front line to get a fresh hunger it's important that we impart the message you know really in some ways probably the most important meeting of the church is the outreach meeting in a way if you can't make the outreach meeting at least make some outreach there's plenty of these tracks here

I don't want to see them gathering dust get your feet moving and put them in letter boxes there's lots that we can do we'd rather run out and have to get thousands and thousands more printed because time is too short you know think of people passing away people that were alive last week have gone and life is too short isn't it we need a strong message not diluted watered down easy on the flesh we don't want shabby flabby ineffective make believe second rate Christians we want to be an all out people for God not phony wimpy counterfeit feel good social gospel preaching but a cross-centered Christ uplifting a bible based soul-saving gospel we must take the offensive we've got to take the offensive don't be afraid to be offensive now of course there's wisdom you don't want to lose your job as it were you've got to sustain your family's support but there's that sense where we should not be afraid to speak a word we shouldn't be afraid to be a threat to the devil to be Christians with character with backbone and we'll keep on keeping on nothing will deter us it's so easy to be a quitter but we've got to keep moving forward we've got to keep pressing ahead nothing should deter us because this is too important for anything to hold us back take the offensive it's time for conflict conflict for aggressive confrontation you know there's enemies of the gospel out there these many that are door knocking taking a contrary gospel out to people and it's not a gospel at all there's no good news about what they're saying and we need to get serious and determined for Christ and his truth it's time to declare war blow the trumpet that's what we need to do we've got to blow the trumpet amen there's a call to arms you know what did they do they blew the trumpet I like making my dad lose his voice and he doesn't talk so much afterwards we've got to shout the battle cry don't we we need to sound the trumpet people of God because we're an army we should be advancing we should be taking the offensive to be a godly people and there's a sense where I don't know if I'm getting this over or not here but and maybe it sounds a bit extreme but I guess I'm wanting to talk in an extreme fashion here tonight because there's a sense where the violent will take the kingdom of heaven as it were there's a sense where we should get violent against the devil now of course for those watching on the internet we're not we're not talking about becoming terrorists or anything but we should be we should know the terror of the Lord we should know the fear of God because there's eternity at stake here there's precious souls and we should be a people who will get a radical to storm the gates of hell as you know our brother Jimmy was talking about various organisations that try to to support Christians being salt and light we need to be such a people that we are taking the message that matters to the world around us are we afraid of the devil or is he afraid of us there's many that we could many more things we could say excuse me to stand for holiness to stand for right to be willing to sacrifice there's many Christians that are not willing to sacrifice and I'm not talking about money necessarily but just about putting themselves out and I put a call out on Facebook today saying would someone be willing to put themselves out and someone volunteered amen

[37:23] I'm glad of that thank you sister you know we need to be willing to put ourselves out God wants workmen who'll pay the price who'll go the distance are we willing to suffer shame for his name the early church was or are we ashamed of his name some that their Christianity is only when they can fit it in let's not be like that let's take the offensive we've got to get to a place where we really believe in our Lord and Saviour and

act like we believe not saying putting it on but the sense that our Christianity our faith should so it should so fill us and make us more fervent the faith that we have should it should provoke us to not be complacent to be saltier and if Christians can be saltier the world would be thirstier you know there's a saying my dad loves this one only one life which will soon be passed only what's done for Christ will last and I urge you tonight to consider these things you know this has been a very offensive message no one's walked out someone walked out for a few minutes there but you came back in no one's walked out here tonight so thank you for paying attention for not being offended but this message is dangerous the cross is offensive it's divisive it says there's light and darkness it says there's salvation one way there's one saviour the Christ is offensive there's only one saviour that can save everything else is a cheap worthless substitute any other religion or philosophy or mindset is worthless and even our righteousness are as filthy rags in contrast to the Christ he is offensive he will still cause division as he did he said

I've come to bring a sword and the church is offensive we're meant to be such that we're meant to be so bold and assertive for the truth that we won't care that people may reject us now as a Christian you will be rejected our Lord was wasn't he despised and rejected of men you know we're in good company if that happens to us amen so let's not be afraid to be offensive in a goodly way to be offensive in the sense that this message is in stark contrast to the world's philosophies which are godless and the world's values which are darkness that we are salt and light so be encouraged brother and sister I've been preaching really to Christians here tonight but really not assuming all are Christians I urge you today if you're trusting in anything but the Christ turn to him have faith in Christ as the one saviour the one who died on the cross was buried rose again the ever living saviour and

Lord can be your saviour and Lord as you call on his name as you give your heart in faith to him he will receive that faith and he will grant you the gift of eternal life by his grace and I urge you to make that choice today as you trust him and you'll become one of the offensive ones because we're offensive to this world don't be surprised if the world hates you you know Christians here tonight you might say oh being a Christian I know I'm the only Christian in my workplace I'm one of a few and it's hard going I'm just surrounded by people who don't know Christ it is going to be hard the Lord Jesus says they're going to hate you like they hated me but don't let that deter you rather let it reinforce that you're with him you're with the one despised and rejected the offensive Christ let's pray Lord we thank you that your word is still truth and it will always be the truth Lord for the cross you call us to carry the discipleship road that you call us to walk help us not to be deterred to rather be strengthened that you would guide us and help us to be strong Christians that we can be ever more growing and ever stronger by your strength

Lord by your empowerment by your Holy Spirit filling us Lord and directing our steps help us to be such a people that we won't be afraid and we won't be deterred and we'll be willing to be willing living sacrifice Lord help us to make the make that stand where we can to not hold back when we are challenged to not hold back but to press ever forward in Jesus name we pray amen