

The Wisdom of God: The powerful Gospel

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[0 : 00] All right, so we're in chapter 1, verses 18 through 25, and I want to read it, and then we're going to talk a little bit before we jump into this.

Beginning in verse 18, Paul writes this, for, and let me just pause, every time you see the word for and all these other prepositions, the Bible comes to us as a whole, and there are logical connections from verse to verse to verse to verse to verse to verse.

These verse markings, Paul didn't sit down and go, verse 18, okay? Those markings were not in the original. So what we look for is we look for the words like for that give us logical connections to what came before it and what comes after it.

So, yeah, that's exactly right. So, for the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God.

For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart. Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe?

[1 : 09] Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom.

It pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs, and Greeks seek wisdom. But we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and a folly to Gentiles.

But to those who were called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. That is a great passage. It's got so much in it, packed into it, and hopefully we'll be able to get to all of it. Let's just talk about the problem that's in Corinth, okay? And it's important that we revisit this as often as we can, because I have heard way too many sermons that speak about the division of the Corinthian church just at a very surface level.

That it was just simply everybody wanted their own favorite preacher. And while that was the presenting problem, you'll remember we talked about there's a foundational problem underneath.

[2 : 28] That foundational problem has to do with what verse 17 says, where it says that he, for Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, and not with, and here you go, words of eloquent wisdom.

Those words of eloquent wisdom give us this picture that the Corinthians believed that something was true because of the stylistic choices of the speaker.

In other words, the better the preacher is, the better the pathos of the preacher, right? The passion, the drive, the interest, the excitement of that, then therefore what they say is more true than what someone else says.

And that was the culture of the city, and the church had adopted that culture. So the divisions come because you have to understand that what sounds pleasing to you in a speaker is really in the ear of the beholder.

You can have one person who likes this person the way he preaches and teaches, and you can have another person who says, well, I can't stand that. You know, I can't stand his voice. I can't stand whatever.

[3 : 43] And so the problem then is that the Corinthians believed that the gospel by itself, the content of the gospel, was not enough to work in their lives or the lives of the people in their community.

And because they believed that, they then made choices about who they were going to listen to.

And so they were basically selling out the gospel on one hand and accommodating themselves to the culture on another hand.

Now here's the question. As we think about today in the modern church, can you see examples of those two things in the modern church? Because Paul is saying that if you sell out the gospel and not preach that and not do the content, and you just lean on some other thing, and that's what Joel's doing, I think he's a perfect example of what Paul is preaching against.

And so I wouldn't say, I wouldn't necessarily agree with you, but I understand what you're saying. But I do think we target him too much. I think that there's other people that we need to also think about.

Because we have the same problem even in churches where people are actually trying to preach the truth because we lean on a bunch of other things instead of the gospel. And we'll get to how we do that in a second.

[5 : 06] But I was also thinking about the cultural appropriation of things like the LGBTQ movement or the idea of wokeness. A lot of churches will then say, oh, well, we've got to change what we think about that in order to get them to come in.

Because, you see, when we take the gospel and we press it down, we water it down, we change it in order to make the people out there feel comfortable coming in, we have done the problem of the Corinthians.

So here's what's going to happen. So the church, because they're adopting the culture, because they're watering down and selling out the gospel, there's division in the church, and Paul is going to spend the next four chapters helping them become united.

Because, here's the thing, if you have disagreement about how these things work, then you're not going to be able to work together. It's just not going to happen. Right?

So Paul gives three reasons in this passage about why we should trust the gospel, that why we should not worry about the stylistic choices as being the thing that will draw people in.

[6 : 27] And I'll give you some examples of that as we go. So here's the first reason. The first reason is in verse 18, and it is that the gospel is the power of God. The gospel is the power of God.

Now, let's read verse 17 into verse 18, and I'm going to show you how this is working. He says, For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied.

Why? You need to think that question, why? Because that's the logical connection between verse 17 and 18. And then verse 18 gives the answer as to why. Why?

For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing. He sent me to preach in such a way as to keep the power in the gospel.

Why is that? Because it's folly to those who are perishing, but to those who are being saved, it's the power of God. So being the power of God, this word power is the word *dunamis* in Greek, which is where we get the word dynamite, right?

[7 : 33] And typically when we think of dynamite, we think of something really powerful and explosive, but you've got to think of really the idea of ability, right? Dynamite has the ability to change the landscape, right?

You use it in mining or whatever kind of operation and it can change the landscape. It has that ability. And that's really what we're after here because this is God's ability to save.

His ability to save us is in the gospel. And that's the way he's designed it. Paul says the same thing in Romans chapter one, verse 16, where he says, I'm not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes.

If you were going into Corinth and you saw some Jews and you saw some Greeks, knowing that the preaching of the gospel would be folly to them, you might be tempted to do something else.

For the Jews, you can think about all these things that happened in the Old Testament and the New Testament. I mean, the Jews, they have a history of signs and wonders being performed for their good.

[8 : 47] Like you had the splitting of the Red Sea. You had the feeding with the manna. You had all of these plagues that took place, right? So they could see these miraculous things and you would be tempted saying, listen, I need to win these Jews, so I need to do something that they would understand, so let's do something miraculous.

And Paul is saying, no, no, no, no. No, the power of God to save is not in the feeding of the 5,000, but it's in what Christ did upon the cross. That's where the power of God is to save.

And so we have to kind of think about, even ourselves, our church, our own church, and the churches like us, what is it that we have a tendency to do, right? And we can look at the prosperity gospel preachers and say, man, they're not preaching the truth, but sometimes we have a tendency to sell out the gospel as well.

Think about this, think about this. And some of this may be us, but some of this may be other churches like us, right? There are times that we end up trusting things that we say rather than the gospel.

I'll give you a perfect example. How many of you know what it is to share your testimony? You ever heard that phrase, share your testimony? And what that typically means is tell about the day when you went from being lost and headed to hell to saved and headed to heaven, right?

[10:13] I was 18. I was at Lake of the Pines in Marshall, Texas, and I was sitting on the tailgate of my pickup, and I went from lost to saved in that moment. And my testimony would be all these things that happened that led up to that and how this transpired.

But that's not the gospel. That's what the gospel did to me, but it's not the gospel. And so sometimes we have this tendency to think that, well, the best way to do outreach is to just share my testimony.

Well, it's good for outreach, and it has a place, but God saves by the gospel, not by my testimony. Nobody's ever been saved because they heard I got saved at 18.

That is not the gospel. The gospel is Jesus Christ died for our sins upon the cross, took the wrath of God for us, rose up from the dead, and is now seated at the right hand of the Father.

That's the gospel, right? So we just got to be careful. There are some people who will even think to themselves, well, you know, I'm going to do some outreach, and so I'm going to go tell people about how wonderful our new pastor is.

[11:23] And I know you've all told everybody how wonderful I am. You just keep doing it. That's great. Just keep doing it. That will not save a single person. Now, maybe it might get them to come to church, but that's exactly what it is.

It's just a way to try to get them to come. And it's a good thing, right? It's good to talk about your church, to talk about your pastor, and to encourage people to come. But you've got to keep it in its place, right?

Okay, let's see if we can destroy a couple of golden calves here, okay? Let's think about things like performing musicals. You know what a musical is, right?

A musical is the thing where a choir sings, and maybe there's actors, or maybe there's a narration, you know. Those are great things, and sometimes they're very clear on the gospel, but a lot of times they're not.

And the question is, would that musical save anybody? No. What's going to save them? The gospel that might be in that musical. Okay, let's talk about vacation Bible school.

[12:30] All my growing up years in ministry, I was told that the greatest outreach effort that any church has is vacation Bible school. Why?

Because back in the day, the gospel was constantly taught and preached through vacation Bible school. As years have gone on, it's gotten a little muddy in some places.

Some churches have abandoned the muddiness of that and been like, no, no, we're going to preach the gospel. And as long as the gospel is in vacation Bible school, then we've got reason to hope that God would save somebody.

But if the gospel is unclear, or if the gospel is not forefront in our mind, we can even get to the mindset of thinking that we've done a good outreach just by having this, but it's like, I mean, they go to school nine months of the year.

What's different? The only thing that's different is if the gospel is clear and front and center. That's the power of God to save. Imagine, let me hit a couple more things.

[13:35] We can even show kindness to people. And we should. Why don't you think about this? Building a ramp for somebody's house.

Mowing somebody's yard. Painting somebody's house. Opening up a closed closet or a food pantry. None of those things save anybody.

They're not bad. They're definitely things that ought to be done. But when we begin to think about the eternal things versus the earthly things, everybody's got earthly needs that need to be met.

And as Christians, the gospel and eternity ought to affect us so much that we're willing to give clothes and food and money and time and energy. But we should never expect that that is evangelism or missions or outreach or it will save anybody. It might give us an open door to share the gospel.

[14 : 40] But the only thing that God saves by is the gospel. He does not save by anything else. So long as the gospel is in it, then there is hope.

That's why if we go build a ramp for someone, we should also take time to share the gospel. Right? Because it is the gospel that is the power of God into salvation. Imagine I tell you that I have a... Here's my hammer. And I tell you this hammer is going to build a house. Is that right?

No. Because it's... What is it? It's just a tool. What has to happen to that hammer to build a house? Somebody's got to pick it up and swing it. Vacation Bible school is a hammer. Building a ramp, giving out food is a hammer. The gospel is the arm that can swing it. Right?

[15 : 40] That's the power of God. We were members of a church that did a Christmas musical every year. And we spent \$25,000 every year. On this musical.

We had live animals. We had the whole nine yards. We would have three to four nights. Sold out audiences. We were required to give tickets away. As staff members, I was a staff member at this church. And I had a responsibility to be sure I gave out so many tickets. Had to report how many tickets I gave out. Who I invited. Whole nine yards. Right? And they wanted to see all these people come. And every year we had lots of people that would come. But the gospel wasn't in it. It was a Christmas musical about Jesus. Without talking about sin. Without talking about judgment. Without talking about the cross. Without talking about.

[16 : 39] It was just that God loved us and sent his son. And that is only half of the message. That's only half the message. And so.

But when they were done. This church was known for this. And they would pat themselves on the back. Going like. Look at the outreach we did. No you didn't. Now. Is it a bad thing to do a musical like that? No. Not at all. You want to spend your money on that? You as a church can decide to do that. It's not evil. It's not bad. But it's not the gospel. So keep it clear in your mind. That this. This might open a door. It might be a hammer. But you can't trust the hammer. You have to trust the gospel.

That's the power of God unto salvation. That's the power of God unto salvation. So. So that's. That's verse 18. So if you keep reading verse 18. And you get to the end. And it says.

[17 : 35] But to us who are being saved. It's the power of God. You need to ask a question before verse 19. You need to ask this question. How do you know Paul? How do you know that Paul?

How do you know that the gospel is the power of God? His answer is. Verse 19. For it is written. I will destroy the wisdom of the wise.

And the discernment of the discerning. I will thwart. Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? That's his answer. That's how he knows. So what does this mean? Verse 19 is a quotation from the book of Isaiah. All right. Now.

Here is the story behind that quotation. Everybody knows about King Hezekiah. Let me ask that.

[18 : 33] How many of you know who King Hezekiah is? Or you've heard his name? Got one? Pretty much. Okay. Great. Then I don't have to do a lot of background there. So Hezekiah is king in the south.

Right? He's over the kingdom of Judah. Which includes Judah and Benjamin. Just two of the tribes. The ten northern tribes have already been taken off into captivity by the Assyrians. Okay? The Assyrians came. Took them. Removed them. Brought in some other people. Who later became the Samaritans. Now the Assyrians have come to Judah. Okay? The Sennacherib is the king. The Rabshakeh is the general. And the Rabshakeh comes to Jerusalem. And he starts talking to the people. The common man on the wall. Saying this kingdom. This kingdom. This kingdom. One after one fell to us. Including Israel. Whom your God protects. There's no God that can protect you from us today.

[19 : 31] So give up. Okay? Okay? That's the Assyrian claim. There's no God who can protect you from us. So just give up. So Hezekiah. And all the people in there.

They kind of go like. Ugh. We need help. Okay. Somebody go to Egypt. And ask them to come help us. So they go to Egypt. They give Egypt money.

And they want Egypt to come and help them. And the Rabshakeh is saying. Listen. I know you've gone to Egypt. But Egypt's not going to be able to save you. Nobody can save you. So Isaiah comes to Hezekiah.

Says the Lord will deliver you. And so. In the night. Rumors come to the Rabshakeh. That something's happening back in Assyria. And when he gets there.

Sennacherib's been killed by one of. One or more of his sons. And the kingdom of Assyria. Falls into chaos. And the Babylonians come. And wipe them out. There's nothing.

[20 : 29] There's nothing about the wisdom. Of the Assyrians. Who think. That because what has been in the past. Is what will always be. There's nothing about that wisdom. That stands. God destroys it.

Without. So much as lifting a sword. And. The Israelites. Who think that they can be saved. By the Egyptians. Are shown. That God doesn't need anything.

He doesn't need to lift. A single sword. In order to deliver them. So he destroys. The wisdom of the wise. By his own power. That's how. That's how Paul knows.

That the gospel is the power of God. Because. God destroys. The wisdom of the wise. In the gospel itself. And then he goes to verse 20. And he talks about.

You know. Who's the wise man. Right. Where's the one who is wise. Where is the scribe. And there he's talking about a Jew. And where is the. Debater of the age.

[21 : 23] He's talking about a Greek. There. Right. Has not God made foolish. The wisdom of the world. Well how is it. That he's made. The wisdom of the Jews. And the Gentiles.

Look foolish. Look at verse 22. For Jews demand signs. And Greeks seek wisdom. What. The Jews are after these signs.

We already talked about them. Right. So. When. Jesus fed. The 5,000. If you read in John chapter 6. What you're going to see. Is you'll see. That after that happened.

They tried to come. And make him king. Okay. They're like. Dude. This guy is like Moses. Let's get him. Let's make him king. And. He'll.

He'll destroy Rome for us. Because the Jews. Were looking for. A Messiah. Who would be an earthly king. That's what they were looking for. But Jesus was not planning to do that.

[22 : 21] Right. But. The feeding of the 5,000. Was a sign. It was meant to point to something. But the Jews. Had a preconceived idea.

In their mind already. Of what they wanted. So in other words. To reach a Jew. You would think to yourself. Like I said earlier. You got to do a sign. And Paul is saying. No.

To the Jews. We don't give a sign. We give the preaching of the gospel. That's your sign. And for them. It's a stumbling block. They're going to trip over it. Because. They just can't see.

But the Greeks. Right. They seek for wisdom. That's this idea of philosophy. Think. Think to yourself. Socrates. Plato. Aristotle. Right. They are examining the world.

They're trying to. To make statements. Of truth. Based upon what they observe. And think about the world. They're. They're using logic. And reasoning. To try to reason their way.

[23 : 15] To understand something. And you could think to yourself. That there's some people. Who might say. Well you know what. If we just give them a good reason. To believe. Then maybe they would believe.

And Paul's going like. No. No. We're not. We're going to preach the gospel to them. Which the Greeks thinks. They think it's foolish. Because think about this. They've already had all of their pantheon.

They know what Zeus does. And how debauched. That. That. That God is. And they're going like. You want us to believe. That there's a God. Who takes on flesh. Dies. And rises.

I mean. It just sounds foolish to them. But it is in that preaching of the gospel. That what he says. He says. That. That it is to. The Jews. A stumbling block.

And folly. To the Gentiles. They're not going to just believe this. They're not going to just grab this. And go with this. Because God uses this.

[24 : 11] To shame. To shame. The wisdom. Of. The wise. I think that that's. Instructive for us. Because I think that there's a lot of people. Who believe.

That if they can get. Just the right arguments. They could. Persuade. One of their family members. Who doesn't believe. To believe.

Because they've got just the right argument. Or they can answer. Just the right. Criticism. Or they can. Deal with. Just the right. Objections.

In other words. They think that it's an educational. Effort. That this person. That I love. That I want them to come to Christ. All they need is to just be educated. If they just knew the truth. Then they would.

Trust and believe. And Paul is saying. No. That was the Greeks. Just because. They see. And know all the things. Doesn't mean. That they will actually believe. And sometimes.

[25 : 09] We think to ourselves. Well maybe. If something miraculous. Would happen. And this is going to be. You know. Our Christian friends. That are a little bit more. On the charismatic side. You know. A little bit more fantastic.

In their worship services. And you know. The gifts of the spirit. And stuff. Things that they. Do. That I think are not correct. But that's okay. That's okay. You know. The goal is.

Is that. There's so many of us. That lean this direction. Anyway. Because we will pray. In such a way. For a miraculous thing. To happen. Because we think to ourselves.

Man. If that would just happen. They would get saved. If the healing of that. Would happen. They would just get saved. But I want to remind you. Of the story. That Jesus told.

About Lazarus. And the rich man. The rich man said. Send Lazarus back. Because I got five brothers. And. And. And if. If somebody were to rise.

[26 : 01] From the dead. And go tell them. To change their ways. Then they would not come here. And. And Jesus. In the mouth of Abraham. In that story. He says something. Very very fascinating.

He says. If they will not believe. Moses and the scriptures. They wouldn't. Believe it. Even if somebody. Rose from the dead. The miraculous. Is not going.

To persuade somebody. The wisdom. Philosophy. Is not going. To persuade someone. All we. I know.

But. But we don't see that. For some reason. As. As the church. As a whole. And we. We lean. On so many things. To try to persuade people. All we've got. The only thing.

We've got. Is preaching. The gospel. It's all we got. It's all we got. The way.

[26 : 57] That this works out. Sometimes. Without thinking about. Going too deep. In some of these other things. Is. Y'all know who. Dr. Charles Stanley is. Right. A famous.

First. First Baptist Atlanta. Is that where he was? I think he's retired now. But anyway. Famous. Southern Baptist pastor. Had a son. Named Andy. Andy Stanley.

Became a pastor. Andy Stanley. Said this. He. He made this statement. That the foundation. Of our faith. Is not.

The Bible. But the resurrection. The foundation. Of our faith. Is not the Bible. But the resurrection. Now. I disagree. With that statement. Very. Vociferously.

I don't know. What that word means. It just sounded good. I disagree. With that statement.

Completely. Now. There's a little. Kernel of truth. In that statement. But it's not entirely true.

Because how do we know.

[27 : 54] About the resurrection. There you go. I mean. Just that alone. Helps us to understand. That that is not a full. Nuanced statement. And you might think.

To yourself. Well maybe. He just misspoke. Or maybe. What's. What's going on here. What he goes on. To talk about. And he didn't do this. Just once. He has done this. In several different.

Sermons. That he's done. And here's. Here's what he says. If. The Bible. Is the foundation. Of our faith. Then we've got a problem. Because the Bible.

Has got lots of problems. Because the Bible. Says that God. Created the world. In seven days. And we know. That God. Has used evolution. To create this world. Oh yeah.

So. So. So. Here's what he's doing. He's looking at the culture. Around him. Even the scientific culture. He's looking at all these people. Who. Who are sold. On that particular thing.

[28 : 51] And he's willing. To let that go. In order. To preach. The gospel. Or the resurrection. Because that's really. The important part. Not the rest of this. I think that that's the same thing.

As. As. The Greeks. And the Jews. Accommodating the culture. And selling out the gospel. We. We need to understand. That in the end.

The gospel. Will put to shame. The wisdom of the world. And there are going to be. All kinds of people. Come one day. When. When. All of this is over. And the Lord comes back.

They're going to find. That. He's not going to say to them. Well done. Good and faithful servant. Because they haven't been faithful. To the gospel. They haven't trusted. In God's means.

In God's ability. To save. They've trusted. In their own ability. In their own thinking. In their own wisdom. And so then. That leaves. Then.

[29 : 47] The question. Well then. What. What are we going to do? And you'll notice. That verse 21. Starts with another four. And this four here. Is. Is where we get this idea.

That. Preaching the gospel. Is a pleasure to God. He says. For since. In the wisdom of God. The world. Did not know God. Through wisdom.

In other words. He's saying. That it was God's idea. To keep the world. From discovering him. By their own wisdom.

It was God's idea. To make it. So that the Greeks. Couldn't philosophize. Their way. To God. So that the Jews. Couldn't find miracles. And signs.

All the way. To God. So that nobody. Could use. Their way. Of thinking. To get to God. The only way. To know God. Is to come. On his terms. And he did that.

[30 : 43] In his wisdom. Right. And why does he do that? Look at verse 25. For the foolishness of God. Is wiser than men. And the weakness of God. Is stronger than men. Because he wants them.

To understand. The point. He wants them. To understand. Why this is happening. Right. He wants people. To recognize. That he's the one. That changes hearts. Think about this.

If I could. If I could persuade. The most ardent. Atheist. If I could use. All kinds of arguments. And that seemed. To be the thing. That made them.

Change their minds. And become a Christian. Then we really. Would be. Confused. About the power. To do this. And the ability.

To do this. You might begin. To think. Well. You got to be. As studied. And as degreed. As a pastor. To be able. To engage. Like that. But God.

[31 : 36] Says no. No. It's going to be. Through the foolishness. Of what is preached. It pleased God. Through the folly. Of what we preach. To save those. Who believe. It pleases God.

To do this way. Now why? I'll tell you why. Because. Gideon. Think about Gideon. The story of Gideon.

Gideon goes. That the Midians. Were coming against them. Right? So he. Gets the army together. And they go. Down there. And God says. To Gideon. You've got what? Too many.

Guys. Tell everybody. Who's afraid. To go home. So they go like. Okay. And they go home. So he's still got some left. And there's still too many of them.

So he tells them. To go do what? Do you remember? Tell them to go take a drink of water. And some of them. Go down to the streams.

[32 : 32] And they put their face. In the streams. And some of them. Cup the water. And bring it to their face. And so he sends all the people. Who put their face. In the stream home. And all the ones. Who cupped the water. And drank it.

He kept them. He had 300 men. Then. He gave every one of them. A lantern. And a trumpet. And said.

Now go surround. And when you hear Gideon yell. Hold up and smash the. The lanterns. You know. Bring up the fire. And then blow the trumpets. This is terrible.

Military strategy. But why did it work? Because God. Did it. And the reason.

God tells them why. He tells them why. He's doing it this way. So that they would not begin to think. That this was something that they did. God is pleased.

[33 : 27] With the folly of preaching. And to save. By this. Think about what preaching is. It's a monologue. It's a. It's a time where another person's quiet.

And I got to tell them something. I mean preaching doesn't have to happen. In a building behind a pulpit. With a tie. Right. You all can preach. Because what preaching is.

At its core. Is. Is the newsie. Right. The newsie on the street corner. With the paper going. And yelling out the headline. That's what preaching is. Is it's.

It's telling people the news. And so you can preach. At your home. You can preach. To. To. A. A. A family member. To a co-worker. All it is.

Is sharing the gospel. It's telling the gospel. It's giving that news. Right. And God is pleased. To save. By the foolishness of that. So that people understand.

[34 : 24] That it is God. Who changed that heart. It's God. Who saved that person. Jonah. When he's in the belly. Of the fish. He makes this statement. He says. Salvation belongs.

To our God. He's the one. Who's in control. Of all of this. As a matter of fact. What he says here. Is he says that. In verse 21. That it pleased God.

Through the folly. Of what we preach. To save those. Who believe. For Jews demand signs. Greeks seek wisdom. But we preach. Christ crucified. A stumbling block.

To Jews. And follies to Gentiles. But to those. Who are called. To those. Who are called. Do you see what's happening here? You got Jews and Greeks.

Over here. You got Jews and Greeks. Over here. Okay. These Jews and Greeks. They're stumbling. Over the gospel. There's one gospel.

[35 : 19] It's preached. To both groups. This group is stumbling. Over it. This group thinks. It's folly. They're not believing. They're perishing. This group is being saved.

They're made up of Jews. And Gentiles. And Greeks as well. But the difference. Between the groups. Is that this group is called. And this group is not.

That's the difference. And what does it mean. To be called. Well we've already looked at this. Right. We've looked at this idea. Of called. And you can think back. To Paul. He talks about being called.

To be an apostle. Which was not just. To be an apostle. But it was his salvation. Call as well. Right. What does it mean. That God calls us. To salvation. This is an old thing.

That pastors. Used to talk about. All the time. But nobody talks about it anymore. We've kind of left it off. It's that quickening. Of the Holy Spirit. Right. Matter of fact.

[36 : 15] In John chapter 16. Jesus is. Having his final say. With his disciples. And they've gone to the garden. And he's still teaching them. And he talks about the Holy Spirit.

Coming once he leaves. Right. And here's what he says. About what the Holy Spirit's job is. A part of that job. When he comes. He says in verse 7. Nevertheless I tell you the truth.

It is to your advantage. That I go away. For if I do not go away. The helper. That's the Holy Spirit. Will not come to you. But if I go. I will send him to you. And when he comes.

He will convict. The world. Concerning sin. Righteousness. And judgment. Concerning sin. Because they do not believe in me.

Concerning righteousness. Because I go to the Father. And you will see me no longer. Concerning judgment. Because the ruler of this world. Is judged. In other words.

[37 : 10] The goal. Or the job. Of the Holy Spirit. While he's here. Is to convict people. Of these things. But only being convicted. Of these things. Can they. Then see the problem.

With it. And be saved. In other words. God is the one. Who initiates salvation. By calling someone. To salvation. That's what Jesus says. In John chapter 6. When he says. No one can come to me. Unless the Father. Who sent me. Draws him. We don't. As humans. We don't get to decide. When we. Want to be saved. We don't. Kind of listen. To everything.

And kind of say. You know. I've given it. Some thought God. And I think today. Is going to be the day. No. We're pressed upon. From the inside. I don't know about you. But I remember sitting. On the tailgate of my truck. Going like.

Well God. I want to be saved then. I mean. I knew all the truth. Right. I knew all these things. I grew up in a pastor's. Pastor's home. And I knew the gospel. But I wasn't saved.

[38 : 05] Until that moment. As I'm. As I'm. Thinking through. The ramifications. Of all these things. And the Lord. Is convicting my heart. By the Holy Spirit. In that moment. I thought to myself.

I better get saved now. Or I might not ever. I was like. Yes. Yeah. Because. What happens. Is that he calls us. Externally.

Through human instruments. When somebody. Shares the gospel. But he also. Calls us. Internally. As the spirit. Convicts. And father. Draws us. To salvation. And the reason.

That this group. Won't listen. Is because God's not. Drawing them at that time. Now he might draw them later. We don't know. But at the moment. Of that particular message. He's not drawing them. But he is drawing them.

That's why we can sit. In a church service. And I could preach. And one of you. Would be super convicted. And you'd be like. Man the Lord. Just met me right here. In this. And another one of you. Go like. Yeah.

[38 : 57] That wasn't your best sermon. Because the Holy Spirit. In that moment. Is drawing this person. But not that person. Because he's got a plan. For how he's going to deal.

With this person. Throughout their life. And I've got a brother. Who's 56 years old. Who's been out of church. For 30. 40 years. Right. And now. All of a sudden. For the last year and a half. He's been going back to church. Why is that? Because that was God's plan. For him. But all those years. Were they wasted? No. But the Lord just didn't call him. In those days. Why? I don't know. God is mysterious that way. But the point is. Is that. We need to trust. In the gospel. Because God doesn't save. In any other way. And the Holy Spirit. Doesn't use anything else. To draw people. To call people. To himself. He delights. In the preaching. Of the word. And so. Because of this. We just got to be sure.

[39 : 51] That we. That we make sure. That we accentuate. The idea. That we need to preach. The gospel. Right. We need to be sure. That if it's me. As your pastor. Somebody else.

Or somebody comes. As a guest speaker. And they're preaching. You need to demand. That make sure. The gospel is preached. I want to hear the gospel. Right. Not just. Not just at the end of the sermon. Saying. Now listen. If you want to get saved. Come here. Not just that. But to say. Listen. This. The gospel. For you. As a believer. You need to hear it. Because you need to remember.

You know. Here are these things. You're supposed to do. And if you fail to do them. You have forgiveness. Because of what Christ has done. And because of what Christ has done. You have the empowerment. By the spirit. To be able to do it. I need to hear that every time. I hate to hear. Listen to sermons. That just tell me what to do. And then just leave it. That. It's.

[40 : 45] It's soul sucking. Right. But we need to be sure. That the gospel is preached. Which means we got to know the gospel. And. And the other thing is this. When you feel tempted. Somebody says to you. You know.

Well. You got to prove it to me. I want you to remember. What Charles Spurgeon said. Somebody looked at Charles Spurgeon. And said. Mr. Spurgeon. How do you defend the gospel? How do you defend the Bible?

He says. The same way you defend a lion. You just turn it loose. You just turn it loose. The Holy Spirit uses the word of God. And the gospel.

So. I might be. I might be sharing the gospel with someone. And they ask me this crazy question.

Well. Didn't Constantine write the Bible? And I'm just going like. Uh. Uh. What? Like.

You know. In the moment. Sometimes I'm caught off guard. By these questions. I don't know how to answer it. My hope. That this person is saved. The thing that the Holy Spirit uses. Is not my answer to the Constantine question.

[41 : 44] But it's the gospel. And I got to get off that question. And get back to the gospel. And answer that question. I mean. And not answer the question. But preach the gospel. Because that's what the Holy Spirit uses. Right?

But. But also. That is. That's the way. We're disciplined. We're disciplined by the gospel. I had a way of thinking about life this way. Like a Greek. Or I had a way of thinking about life this way.

Like a Jew. When the gospel comes in. I have to change the way I thought. I now have to look at the world. The way God looks at the world. The Bible. Ought to guide. My every thought.

And I need to think. Like the Bible. Tells me to think. Not the way. I was raised to think. Right? Well. The final thing I would say is this. If. If.

If preaching. Is a pleasure to God. If the preaching of the gospel. Is a pleasure to God. It ought to be a pleasure to us. And if something is a pleasure to you.

[42 : 44] You find yourself. Even when you're sick. Like my wife. Wanting. To be. Under the preaching of the word. Organizing your life.

Around. The preaching of the word. Structuring your thoughts. By the preaching of the word. If it's a pleasure to God.

I want you to think about this. If we're preaching the gospel. And it's clear. Every Sunday morning. We're preaching the gospel. The way. The way the scriptures teach us to. If that's what's happening. Then one thing that you can know.

