

God's Wisdom: Christ-Centered Preaching

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Preacher: Brady Owens

[0 : 00] All right, so we're in 1 Corinthians 2, verse 1 through 5 this morning. And before we read it, let's just see if we can remember where we've been and what we're talking about here.

If we were to narrow down the problem of the Corinthians to one word, what one word would you use to describe the problem of the Corinthians?

Yep. Okay, I'm stubborn. These are good words. Think about the problem from outside of the church, looking into the church.

You obviously pride, and these things are at the root of this. But just at the surface level, as you look at the church, the word division is the word that we probably should think of, right?

I'm of Paul, I'm of Cephas, I'm of Apollos, I am Christ. And that's that surface level from the outside looking in. That's just sort of what we see. Now, as we get into it a little bit more, we understand that those divisions are there because the Corinthians believe the gospel is not powerful enough, that God by his Holy Spirit is not powerful enough to save people with just the good news.

[1 : 33] You need something else instead. Remember, one of the things we've talked about is that for them, how an idea is presented means that if it connects to me emotionally and I'm entertained or I'm thrilled by this presentation, then the information is true.

Let me give you a modern example. We all know of the sort of stereotypical idea of a child who is told when they're young by their parents either something good about them or something bad about them, right?

And the parent can say something really negative and bad about this child, you know, call the child that they're dumb or stupid, and they can do it in such a way with such emotional force that that kid can grow up thinking this and believing this all because, not because of the truth of it, but because of the emotional force, right?

You can see the same thing happen to a lot of kids who are told good things as well, although in our minds typically we see this, right? Well, that's the problem of the Corinthians.

They believe that the emotional force of the way something is said determines the truthfulness of it. And so they want Paul and they want all their preachers, all the people that are going to be leading their church, they want them to be people of emotional force to bring this truth in.

[3 : 03] And because of that, they, and because that's the case, everybody follows somebody different because each person connects with people in different ways. That's why they go after different pastors there.

Paul is trying to tell them, listen, that kind of wisdom is useless. You need God's wisdom. And God's wisdom has a powerful gospel.

That's the first thing we talked about. God's wisdom has his choice of who's going to be saved.

That's the second thing we talked about. And then today, God's wisdom also has Christ-centered preaching.

And so we're going to talk about what Christ-centered preaching is from our text today. And that's a part of what God uses to help destroy the divisions among us. And so let's take a look, verses 1 through 5 of 1 Corinthians 2.

And it reads this way, And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

[4 : 10] And I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. And my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

Now again, it's interesting that the end verse of this has those two little words, so that. He's telling us why it's important to understand and believe the things he's written.

Why it's important to do things the way that he's done them. Why it's important to understand and to understand because we want our faith resting upon the power of God and not the wisdom of men.

Okay? And so, he's going to talk about preaching, and I call it Christ-centered preaching. And I want to talk about two things about it. One is, what's the message of Christ-centered preaching?

In other words, if we're going to be centered on Christ as we preach, what is it we're talking about here? And number two, the manner. The manner has to do with sort of the attitude that is there when we do this.

[5 : 22] So, let's talk about the message of Christ-centered preaching. Two things about it. One, it's a message connected to the Old Testament. It's a message connected to the Old Testament.

You can see that in verse 1, where he says, And when I came to you, brothers, I did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech and wisdom, but he did come proclaiming the testimony of God.

Do you see the logic of that? Right? That's what he proclaimed is the testimony of God. Now, we need to talk about this phrase, testimony of God, because that is meaning the Old Testament there.

But I need to sort of chase a little tiny rabbit. Okay? We're going to chase a little tiny rabbit, and the rabbit is called textual criticism. Has anybody ever heard the phrase textual criticism?

Textual, like the text? Textual criticism. It is a scholarly discipline of historians.

[6 : 26] And this is what it does, okay? How many of you are familiar with the old ancient work called The Odyssey by Homer? Right? It tells the story of Odysseus, who's trying to head home after the Trojan War, gets captured by Cyclops, and all this sort of stuff, and all the gods of the Greek pantheon are a part of this book, and this kind of thing.

Well, so there are only so many copies of that book in existence, and I'm talking about in the original language and really old copies. We don't have the originals.

All we have are copies. And let's just say that one day you discovered another copy that nobody knew about, like it was in your basement, you know, like your grandpa had it, and so you find it, and you open it up, and you go to the authorities.

The authorities verify it's the right date, it's the right paper, it's the right hand script, it's the right everything. Odysseus' name is not Odysseus.

Odysseus. Instead, his name is Chuck. Well, now all of a sudden, as you compare the two ancient documents, every time you see Odysseus and Chuck, that's called a variant.

[7 : 48] There's a variant in the manuscripts, and so you start counting up the number of times that Chuck is used, and you get a bunch of numbers because Odysseus is used a bunch as well.

So you see that there's a difference between the manuscripts. Well, this is a long tradition that people have done in all kinds of historical settings, and we're able to...

what the original would have been. Obviously, Chuck is not original, right? It would be. The same discipline is with the New Testament as well.

They do textual criticism with the New Testament. Now, let me give you a couple of thoughts here. Number one, the more manuscripts you have, the better you can tell that the original that was there, the autograph.

With ancient documents, such as Homer's Odyssey and Iliad, such as the works of Plato and Aristotle and some of these guys, the number of manuscripts you have for these kinds of older documents are in the teens, you know, like 13, 14.

[9 : 05] Some of them are even in the single-digit numbers. There's just not a lot of them. With the New Testament, both in Greek as well as the other languages, we have 20,000.

20,000. Now, here's why I'm telling you this. The reason I'm telling you this is because in our verse right here, the word testimony is a textual variant.

The vast majority of manuscripts have the word testimony, but the oldest manuscripts have the word mystery. And for our ears, testimony and mystery don't sound anything alike at all, but listen to both words in Greek.

Okay? In Greek, testimony is martyrion, and mystery is mysterion. Martyrion, mysterion.

As a matter of fact, the second letter is the exact same letter. We just say them differently because of certain pronunciation things, but it's the same letter. There's no Y in Greek.

[10:14] It's an epsilon. It's like U-shaped sort of letter in both words. And so because of that, you can tell that it'd be pretty easy for somebody who's copying this to this to get a couple of letters wrong and therefore introduce a variant.

But here's the thing. This variant doesn't change any theology. Because here's what you have. The testimony of God would be what?

It would be the witness of God himself, what God has told us. And so that refers to the Old Testament. Paul's saying, listen, I've come to you with declaring the testimony of God.

What is it that God has told us? Well, you look at all the Old Testament. You can go back to Genesis and Exodus and Leviticus and all of these things. And so that's one way of understanding it. But what's the mystery of God?

Well, Paul uses the word mystery in several places in his writings. And the mystery of God is always about how Christ was there in the Old Testament and talked about and prophesied.

[11:16] And yet nobody understood very well. And that mystery has now been revealed because of the apostles pointing back and showing us. So in other words, either word refers back to the Old Testament.

Does that make sense? And so I think it's important that you understand that there is this textual criticism thing because I don't want somebody on the History Channel coming up and introducing you to this concept because what they're going to say is, oh, you can't trust the Bible.

But it's like, oh, yes, you can. I think we've just demonstrated that like, okay, we don't know precisely which one. And there's a way to try to figure out like the likelihood.

We have probabilities of which one is most likely. And most people think it's the word testimony because it's in most of the manuscripts. But here's the deal. We have everything that was originally written.

Scholars tell us we have 110% of the Bible. 110% of the New Testament documents we have. That means that we have more than what was originally written, but we have everything that was written.

[12:20] And they can tell this from all these different languages. What Paul is saying, though, getting back to that, is that Paul is saying he came proclaiming the testimony of God, the mystery of God, what God has given to us prior to that time.

That's what Paul came to preach. Which means, then, that preaching the Old Testament is a good and right and necessary thing because even Paul was preaching the Old Testament.

And the message of Christ-centered preaching then connects back to the Old Testament. Another reason that I say that it connects to the Old Testament is in verse 2 where it says, For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ. Now, Christ is not his last name. It's actually Jesus the Christ is the way you sort of understand it because it's a title, right?

And does anybody know what the word Christ means? It means Messiah. In Greek, it's Christ. In Hebrew, it's Messiah.

[13:28] So everywhere in the Old Testament that you see Messiah, that you see anointed one, because that's the literal meaning of the word, everywhere that you see anointed one, this is talking about the Messiah.

So here's what happened in the Old Testament. The Messiah was prophesied to Adam and Eve in the offspring of the woman who would crush the head of the serpent.

The Messiah was promised in the seed of Abraham who would inherit all the land. The Messiah was promised to the line of Judah, right?

In that one of his offspring would have the scepter, right? It was, the Messiah was promised to David because he said, one of your descendants will sit on the throne forever.

And all through the prophets, you get things such as the stump of Jesse or the sheep of Jesse. You get the servant of the Lord who is coming. You get this testimony in Isaiah that says, the Spirit of the Lord is upon me and has anointed me.

[14:30] Those are the words that Jesus quotes about himself. You see in Daniel that the Ancient of Days gives kingdoms to one like the Son of Man. All of those are prophecies of the Messiah to come.

So when Jesus is called the Christ, it's taking all of this massive information about the Old Testament, wrapping it up in one word and saying, this man is the fulfillment of the Old Testament.

Because in the Old Testament, what we have is we have promises made waiting to be fulfilled. Waiting to be fulfilled.

Okay. So the message of Christ-centered preaching connects back to the Old Testament, takes all the things that are there and brings them forward and it's all about Jesus Christ. That's why we're preaching through Leviticus.

Because Leviticus is about Jesus. It's about Jesus. I know, right? I agree with you.

[15:33] Okay. The second thing about the message of Christ-centered preaching is that it's about Jesus and his crucifixion. Right?

You look at verse 2 again and Paul says, for I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. And one of the things to understand about this man Jesus is that he really lived.

He really existed. We have, how do you know, let me ask you this. How is it that we know that George Washington lived?

Do we have his body? Do we have DNA evidence? Do we have a video? Maybe a cell phone selfie or something like that.

The only thing we have are words. We have words. We have documents. Right? Documents that he wrote.

[16:39] Documents that people wrote about him. We have words inscribed in different places. You know, there might be a tombstone where you get words about George Washington. There might be a plaque that was put up not long after his death where his name is written.

All we have are words. How do we then know that Jesus existed? Words. Words. Documents. That's how you do history. That's how we know historical figures existed because of the documents that we have.

Josh McDowell, who's an apologist, said that we have more evidence for the existence of Jesus than we do of Napoleon. Than we do of Napoleon.

I think that's a fascinating claim. The point is this, that not only did Jesus exist, but crucifixion was a common thing. Crucifixion was a Roman form of execution.

You can go look it up in all the dictionaries and find this, and crucifixion was common. Crucifixion was done in several different ways. The Romans borrowed crucifixion from the Assyrians before them, and it was a form of execution for non-Romans.

[17:55] And so, they would use it as a terrifying force in order to control other nations that they had taken over. My point in telling you this is that when we preach Christ-centered sermons, when we share the Christ-centered message of the Bible with others, we're talking about real historical happenings.

Not fairy tales, not Gilgamesh riding on some wild in order to try to cure the world of the flood. We're not talking about some God that's born underneath a rock that ends up sprouting a rainbow out of his nose that the world then pops out of for some reason.

We're not talking about something fanciful. We're talking about real historical happenings. The man Jesus really lived, he really died, and he died by execution, and we know that without the Bible.

But the Bible in the New Testament comes along and tells us why, tells us who he was, helps us to know that his death was the substitution for us before God, that he took our punishment that we deserve.

That's what his death did. His death also tells us and communicates to us that he took our place like the lambs in the sacrificial system. Right? His death was then the curse for us.

[19:26] He became a curse for us because we have sin. And Christ-centered preaching then takes all that's in the Old Testament and all of who Jesus historically is and all that's explained about him in the New Testament and brings it all together and we make sure that all of that information stays connected and either spoken or undergirding the way that we're talking and thinking about who Jesus is.

In other words, everything we say is aimed towards that. So we might be talking about, say, something in the Proverbs that tell us that we should keep the heart with all vigilance for from it flows the things of life.

But in that, we've got to be sure that as we're talking about that, that is grounded upon everything about who Christ is. I'll give you another way of thinking about this.

If we start talking to husbands and telling husbands you need to listen to your wives and we tell wives that they need to submit to their husbands, if we just say that and then we say, so, work and do a better job.

Even though we said it right out of the Bible, that is not true preaching or true gospel Christ-centered preaching. We say, husbands, you ought to love your wives as Christ loved the church.

[20 : 51] There you go, part of it, because Christ loved the church. He's given you the example, but also your failure is covered in His blood and He's empowering you to be able to do this. Right?

We don't tell you to just do this and not do a better job. We say, do this and God will empower you to do this. So, we want to preach Christ-centered as best we can, which means we're taking the gospel to everyone.

And here's the thing, we can see and understand why we would preach the gospel to lost people, but why do we preach the gospel to saved people?

Three words you can write down. Discouragement, disobedience, and devotion. Discouragement, disobedience, and devotion. We preach the gospel to Christians because we tend to get discouraged.

And when you preach the gospel to Christians, it helps us to not be discouraged. Hebrews chapter 12, verse 3, says this, consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself so that you may not grow weary and lose heart.

[22 : 07] When suffering comes our way and we know we've got to handle that suffering in the way that God has told us to, count it all joy when you encounter trials of various kinds, there's a part of that where that suffering that makes me just want to go, like, why?

Why should I? And then, I preach the gospel to myself and I remember what Christ did upon the cross. And not only, not only does that, that then do some things for me that we'll talk about in a second with disobedience and devotion, but also, it encourages me because if he went through that for me, why can't I go through this suffering for him?

It empowers me to do that. Disobedience. As Christians, let me ask you something. How many of you, how many of you, once you got saved, you have never, ever sinned again?

We all know that we've sinned. Well, how are we supposed to deal with that? The same way, the same way that we dealt with it before we were Christians.

We run to the cross. We run back to the cross and we look at it and we go and we remember and realize, oh, it's already been paid for.

[23 : 26] You know, the Bible speaks about Christ dying for our sins, plural, and Christ dying for our sin, singular. It speaks about both.

On one hand, he dies for our sin, which is the root problem. Right? Think of the root of a tree. How does that, how does that tree function? How healthy is that tree?

You get down to the roots and the soil and you can kind of see. And you can tell that it's not healthy usually because of the fruit that comes out. You get some apples on there, you get some oranges.

We had an orange tree in our backyard and those oranges, like I mean, the meat and those oranges were so just dried up and nasty and the skin of the orange was wavy.

It wasn't all plump and juicy, nothing like that. So we knew there was a problem with the tree itself. That's the root of it. The fruit of it is also there.

The sins we commit are the fruit of the sin root we have a problem for. And he's died for both, which means that anything that you're going to do from this day forward that's a sin is already covered in the blood.

[24 : 37] So we need to preach the gospel to remind ourselves your sin's covered. Romans chapter 8 verse 1 is a great verse to memorize because Paul says this, there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

What a great message. I've got this sin I can't lick. I've got this sin that I can't seem to get away from and I find myself discouraged. I find myself angry that I'm committing this sin.

I don't want to do this before the Lord. Lord please help me. And one of the first things I need to know is there's therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. I need to preach the gospel to myself.

I also need to for devotion. Right? For devotion that's the idea that how am I going to have the ability to obey? Well, in Hebrews chapter 8 verse 8 through 10 speaks about the new covenant and

when we take the Lord's Supper when we take the juice one of the things I always say is that his blood purchases the promises of the new covenant.

One of the promises of the new covenant is I will put my law into their minds so they're going to know it and I will write them on their hearts so they'll do it. Matter of fact you can go look at Ezekiel chapter 36 verse 26 and it talks about how the law written on the heart is so that you will do it.

[26 : 01] So we preach the gospel to Christians because they need to be reminded that you can't do anything in your own power it's all by the power of the Lord working through you and those that power working in you was purchased by his blood.

So we need to know the gospel as Christians as well. Does that make sense to you guys? I feel like this is a really important point that often gets left out of most preaching is that the gospel message is not just for lost people.

You and I need it as well. Sure, sure.

Yeah, yeah. Okay. Let's take a turn to the second and talk about the manner of Christ-centered preaching and again just two things here.

Yes? Romans 8 verse 1. Under manner of Christ-centered preaching just thinking about sort of I guess you could say like the attitude verse 3 you find this that you know well verse 2 Paul says he decided to know nothing among them except Jesus Christ and him crucified then he says and I was with you in weakness in fear and much trembling.

[27 : 43] Now this is Paul's experience of weakness fear and trembling. weakness is the idea of humility fear and trembling now Paul uses those two words together a lot in some of his writings he talks about in 2 Corinthians that the church needs to receive Titus with fear and trembling he talks about in Ephesians 6 that slaves need to obey their masters in fear and trembling he talks about in Philippians 2 that Christians are to work out their own salvation in fear and trembling and if you go trace it back into the Old Testament you're going to see people who as they approach God are approaching God with fear and trembling that just concept is just all over the place and the idea behind it is an idea of fearing the Lord having a healthy fear of God even as a Christian I should fear God because he's not he's not just simply a friend who sticks closer than a brother he is holy holy holy the Lord God almighty he sits upon a throne the foundation of justice and righteousness he will by no means clear the guilty like I mean there's so much about him that's fearful and frightening years ago we were read and also watched the movie of the Chronicles of Narnia the Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe and in that first book of C.S. Lewis there's this scene where the

Penveses Penveses how do you say the last name Pevensies the children Pevensies they've gone through the wardrobe into this magical land of Narnia they've met the talking beavers Mr. and Miss Beaver they're in their home and the beaver is saying listen we've got to get you to Aslan and they're going like Aslan who's Aslan they're saying well he's he's the one who created this place he's a lion oh he's a lion oh is he safe and the beaver responds oh no he is not safe but he's good and Aslan stands for God and stands for Jesus Christ in C.S. Lewis' books so that's who God is is God safe no but is he good yes Paul is saying that as I come to preach to you I'm coming with this humility and this fear and trembling because who God is and what God has done has affected me can you imagine

Paul like he remembers every time he gets up to preach the gospel when he got saved I know that I do right and when did he get saved when he got knocked off the horse with a bright light and Jesus starts talking to him okay I'm going to have a little bit of fear and trembling you know and not only that but he's got people whose souls are on the line so what I'm saying is that this has impacted him the gospel has made a difference in his life to try to preach the gospel without it being affecting you without having this healthy fear I mean that's think about the think about the Corinthians they're more concerned with that emotional power that comes in than they are of God what would it be like for somebody who was preaching the gospel all the time who didn't have that fear and trembling I think eventually you would recognize it you'd see it you'd know it the second thing about the manner of Christ centered preaching is that we're to depend upon the

Holy Spirit you can see in verse 4 he says that my speech and my message were not implausible words of wisdom so he's not going to trust the world's means he's not going to do the things the way the world does them because he wants to be sure that things are seen to be Christ but he's not coming this way he's not trusting in that he doesn't want the gospel to be robbed of its power and then he goes on to say but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power in demonstration of the Spirit and of power he wants it demonstrated that as he preaches everybody can recognize that the Holy

Spirit has done the work if you write a check you're supposed to show your driver's license license to demonstrate that you have the right to be a signature on that check now nobody nobody asks you for your driver's license anymore and nobody takes checks hardly anymore but you understand the point you have to demonstrate you have to prove it you have to show it

Paul is saying that he wants to speak in such a way but in demonstration of the Spirit and power I want to demonstrate that what I'm saying comes directly from the Lord the effect of what I'm saying on you is directly from the Lord I don't want to do anything that would hide that truth that would make it look as though it's because of my emotional power and force there are people today who would either they're lost and they want something or there are people who Christians who go this way who say things like this that you know listen if we're going to share the gospel with people and they say to us things like well you know can you prove to me that God exists or you know prove to me that Jesus really is God there's a moment right there where we could depend upon the Holy Spirit or we could depend upon the world's ways and if we go and we start trying to prove [33 : 39] God's existence or we start trying to prove that Jesus is God using what it is thereafter because when somebody says to you well prove to me that Jesus is God they're basically asking you the same kind of question that would be this prove to me Bigfoot's existence they want a physical thing to be proved with physical evidence but you can't prove an immaterial being with physical evidence evidence that's like saying prove to me that what you have for me is love give me physical evidence of the existence of your love you can't you can't do that give me physical evidence of the existence of laws of logic you can't do that but that's what people want and when we take up that challenge and say oh sure sure rather than depending upon the Lord and the Holy Spirit to convince the person then we're doing that same thing another person would say something like this they would say listen

I'll believe in Jesus but you need to you need to prove to me that this works in life you know is this going to make my life better because there's a lot of people who will walk away from the faith because they say it just didn't work for me and I'm just kind of going like you want me to tell you that trusting Jesus is going to make your life better I mean when you trust Jesus you're supposed to expect suffering right Jesus said no one can follow me if he doesn't hate his father mother sister brother no one putting his hand to the plow and looking back is worthy for the kingdom of God blessed are those who are persecuted for my namesake I mean following Jesus is not a bed of roses it's not easy as cake and no what's easy as pie it's not it's just not so Paul wants to make sure that we're trusting in the Holy Spirit because the Holy Spirit is the one who makes application of all these things he's the power that's there and now let's talk about that for a second because we don't like to talk about the Holy

Spirit very much in this day and age and if we do talk about him we don't talk about him right the Holy Spirit is God the Holy Spirit he he is not a force he is not just a wispy entity right charismatic churches will talk about the Holy Spirit and they almost will talk about him to the exclusion of Jesus but one of the roles of the Holy Spirit is to glorify Jesus in John's gospel he says in Baptist churches we have a tendency to push the Holy Spirit into the corner and we don't want to talk about him but we're okay with him being there just so long as he's quiet you know but the Holy Spirit is he he is vital he is the one who brings the power to these things I mean think about his power throughout the Old Testament right he's the one who hovered over the face of the deep at creation he is the one who empowered these prophets to speak forth the truth of God he's the one when it says that God breathed into man the breath of life that's the spirit of life it's his power that enlivens and brings about he is the one he is the power who brings about all of these things he comes upon the judges like

Samson and empowers him to do the things that he does and you come into the New Testament Mary Mary birthed Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit Jesus preaches by the power of the Holy Spirit Jesus does miracles by the power of the Holy Spirit all of these things are because of the Holy Spirit so as we preach we depend upon him to move in hearts we don't depend on other things to convince people but we depend upon him I'll give you an example a couple of bad examples of the opposite of this there was a church in Victoria that they were trying to plant a new church and they were going to start with using a small group ministry and so they're going to have this small group that meets and you know gather people around and they decided that they were going to serve alcohol in their small group now I don't I don't think it's a sin to drink alcohol but you shouldn't have alcohol in your Bible study okay

I just I just don't think that's a good thing now by itself not a big deal it's it's when the leader was challenged that you begin to see the cracks because somebody said I'm not sure this is a good idea why in the world would be serving alcohol at a Bible study and he said well we want people to come and join our church and get saved and so to do that we've got to do something to draw them well maybe and maybe not but the point is is that his trust is not in the Holy Spirit his trust is in a creative way to try to draw people I'll give you another one a lot of churches at Halloween for youth groups will put together what they call these hell houses a hell house is a place that has scene after scene of people dying in some sort of way and if they're

[39 : 13] Christians going off to heaven and if they're not Christians being dragged off by these demons screeching off to hell get to the end you get to have a choice between heaven or hell and it's one of these things where you kind of go like you don't feel like that the gospel itself is enough that you've got to do this now that's not to say that no one's ever been saved by going through one of those things but it is to say that that is not the way we ought to be doing things I mean God will use God will sometimes come in and use something that we would find completely faulty because God is God but we can't go with what worked for them and say now that's the thing to do we have to look at the word and say do we trust that he has given us the instructions about how to do this Paul could have used all kinds of ways to encourage and get people to believe the things he's believing but they would have believed it because of something else besides conviction the Holy

Spirit that's a fine line it's hard to determine that right because that can happen in a lot of situations the point is is that we want to be sure that as we go forward and we're looking at how we keep out divisions we want to be sure that we are putting Christ and the Holy Spirit front and center and we're trusting that and that demands that demands that we spend time in prayer right if it's the Holy Spirit who convinces and convicts people then there ought to be more time in prayer than there is in creativity with trying to come up with some sort of draw we need to be praying that God works in we need to be praying first of all that the preaching itself that that preacher is clear right it's got to be clear what's being preached if it's not clear then how can they understand and believe right so it's got to be clear there's got to be power in the preaching that power doesn't come from rhetorical force or from funny stories or from hard hitting whatever that power comes from the Holy Spirit using the word that's where the power comes from and just understanding so that those who are hearing it have conviction they're converted and they commit their lives to Christ that's that's what we want so we got to pray you got to pray for me you should be if you've got family that go to other churches you should pray for their churches as well and their pastors that that the same thing is happening there that we want to see happen here and that is that we are having this Christ centered preaching but the other thing is this it's something you should demand as a member of this church you should demand that the preaching be this Christ centered so if for some reason I go weird and do weird things and I'm not very clear you know and I'm walking away from the things that I'm saying then you got to hold my feet to the fire because you should demand such a thing because you need it the community needs it and so with that it's all about making sure is it accurately interpreted right you take that passage today I hope that you can you could go back and look at my outline on the sheet you've got and you can look at the verses that I pointed to and I tried to keep in the logic of the text and point to why

I'm saying what I'm saying so you could go back and verify if I just say random things that you can't verify how do you know it's accurate right we got to demand that the gospel is clear in every sermon got to demand that the gospel is both for sinners and for saints and you got to demand that it's verse by verse I remember growing up listening to preaching where one Sunday we were in the Old Testament in the Psalms the next Sunday we were out of the book of Revelation the next Sunday we were out of Genesis the next Sunday we were out of Matthew and then Luke and then we were out of Romans and then we were you know every Sunday was someplace different and the problem with that kind of preaching is that we we can't follow the logic that's happening in Romans chapter three because you haven't preached chapter one and two to get us there so that we grasp that and so preaching really needs to be as much as possible verse by verse it doesn't mean you can't have an off sermon but it means that the the diet the steady diet needs to be verse by verse and I would even say this that if for some reason God were to take you away from Medina okay he's not going to take any of you away from

Medina but maybe some of your children grandchildren they're going to be looking for a church this these are things to be looking for is this how they preach if they don't preach verse by verse then

don't go there if they preach verse by verse then do they think the gospel is for sinners and saints or just for sinners because there's some people that preach verse by verse that just think the gospel is for sinners and they don't ever talk about the gospel to the saints and then do they do they trust in the Holy Spirit for this and ask for prayer and are wanting us to be praying all the time these are things to look for in a pastor in a church and this is the kind of church we should be