

# When Your Religion Turns to Ashes

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[illegible]

Thank you.

The lyrics are exactly the text that we're going to be looking at tonight here in Philippians chapter 3. Now, if you're just joining us, we've been in a series the last several weeks called From the Ashes.

And we've been looking at a lot of different stories, Old Testament and New, where along the way, life didn't quite go as planned. And you end up in the ashes.

And yet God is there with you. He is still in control. He is still working His plan. Now, most of the examples that we've looked at have been kind of physical suffering.

[ 2 : 06 ] For example, Joseph and all that he went through, Naomi and all that she went through. We looked at Job and his loss of everything. But some of these are not just physical circumstances.

Some of the ashes are spiritual ashes. That is, along your faith journey, you end up in places that you don't really know what to do.

For instance, Jonah and his coming into the ashes of his view of God and really understanding who God is. Tonight, we're going to look at one that is another part of our spiritual journey and some ashes, if you will, that we must, we must enter into.

And let me assure you of this, family, I am not going to let my feeling bad keep me from preaching good news. All right? I don't care how bad I feel.

The news that I have for you tonight is the good news of the gospel. And I'm going to preach it with everything I have because I am passionate about what God has for us to learn tonight.

[ 3 : 13 ] Are you all with me? All right. Let's do it. So I apologize for the voice. And if that's annoying, well, suck it up. All right, here we go. Philippians chapter 3 and verse 1, please stand if you're able to do so as we honor the reading of God's Word.

Philippians chapter 3 verse 1, finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord. I write these things to you or to write these things to you is no trouble to me and is safe for you.

Look out for the dogs. Look out for the evildoers. Look out for those who mutilate the flesh. For we are the circumcision who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh.

Though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also, if anyone thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more. But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.

Indeed, I count everything as lost because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For His sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish in order that I might gain Christ and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith, that I might know Him and the power of His resurrection and may share His suffering, becoming like Him in His death, that by any means possible I may obtain the resurrection from the dead.

[ 5 : 22 ] This is God's Word. Pray with me tonight. Pray for me tonight. And let's ask God to teach us from His Word. God, thank You for this time now to be under the authority of the Scripture.

I'm so thankful in moments like this that it doesn't have anything to do with the authority of the man who's standing on the stage, but the authority of Scripture that is proclaimed.

Lord, I pray that just through any distractions that might be in the room tonight, we would listen intently to what the Spirit is saying and that we would experience the freedom of the Gospel that is found in this passage.

Oh, how I pray that when tonight is over, we would all be in these ashes, that we might experience the fullness and surpassing knowledge of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

And I pray it in His name. And all God's people said, Amen. You can be seated. Amen. It's a frequent topic just about every day in the news.

[ 6 : 35 ] It's the main topic in almost every political debate. And it's an ongoing stress for many of us on a daily basis. I'm talking about financial hardship, economic struggle, trying to make ends meet, living paycheck to paycheck, always feeling worried about money.

In fact, a recent study was done of the top 10 things that people worry about the most. And four of the top 10 all had to do with finances.

Number one was money. Number three was the economy. Number eight was job stability. And number nine was housing cost. Now, my guess, if that survey was done today, we would include in that gas prices.

Amen? The reason that's the case is because money is a security. And when that security no longer feels secure, it creates a crisis for people.

They don't really know what to do. There's a sense of unknown. Tim Keller, in his book, Counterfeit Gods, gives several examples of how people responded during the 08-09 economic crisis.

[ 7 : 49 ] For example, the CFO of Freddie Mac hung himself in his basement. The CEO of Sheldon Good, a real estate company, shot himself behind the wheel of his car.

A French money manager who managed the wealth of Europe's royal families, lost \$1.4 billion in Bernie Madoff's Ponzi scheme, and he slit his wrist and died.

A Bear Stearns executive who learned he would not be hired by J.P. Morgan after they purchased the firm, jumped from the 29th floor of his office building.

A Korean businessman who lost \$370 million in investments, according to his wife, stopped eating, went on a drinking binge, until he finally took his life.

The Faith Family examples and stories like this are tragic, but they're not uncommon. And they tell us something about the human condition that is, listen to me, I want you to lean in on this.

[ 8 : 54 ] When you put your hope in something to make your life secure, and that thing is no longer secure, it gets lost or it gets taken away, it sends you into the ashes.

Let me say that again. Think about this. When you put your hope in something to make your life feel secure, and that thing is no longer secure, it gets taken away from you, it's lost, that will send you into ashes.

And maybe for you it's not money, but I guarantee you it's something. There is something that you look to in life to make your life feel secure. It might be for you relationships.

You look to relationships to feel secure, and when those relationships fail or end, it puts you in kind of a relationship crisis. Maybe for you, you look to your health to give you a sense of security.

And when your health gets impacted, it sends you into a health crisis. Maybe for you it's a job or your vocation that gives you security, and when that gets threatened, you have a job crisis.

[ 10 : 06 ] Some people will look to their abilities or their skills or their gifts to give them security. And when they're no longer able to perform, it sends them into a personal crisis.

It might be family or your children, and then they grow up, and you're an empty nester, and that loss of security sends you into a midlife crisis.

Why? Why all of those kind of experiences? Because when you put your hope in something to make you feel secure, and that thing gets threatened, it sends you into the ashes.

You may feel confused. You may feel lost. You may feel hopeless. But you find yourself in the ashes. And there's another area that a lot of us look to for security.

It's called, you ready? Religion. Religion. That is a system, or a tradition, or a denomination, that has certain rules, or norms, or practices that are meant to make you feel secure before God.

[ 11 : 13 ] And somewhere along your faith journey, if you're like me, you experienced something that challenged everything you were taught. That challenged the system you were brought up in, and you experienced, and if you're like me, a faith crisis.

You thought things like, but I was raised to, and my parents said, and the preacher I always listened to used to say, and you begin to feel your religious system turning to ashes.

And what I want you to know, Faith Family tonight, even though that can be a painful thing, it is a necessary thing. Amen? Even though that can be a painful thing, it is a necessary thing.

I have experienced it. I know some of you have experienced it. And that is exactly what the Apostle Paul is describing here in Philippians chapter 3.

Look at verse 4. God, teach us tonight, I pray. Though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also, if anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more.

[ 12 : 26 ] The Apostle Paul here in Philippians 3 is talking about his religious accomplishments. Now, why is he doing that? Well, he's writing to a group of Christians that are being influenced by a religious group known as the Judaizers.

And what the Judaizers taught was that if you want to feel secure before God, if you want to have confidence before God, what you need to do is yes, have faith in Jesus, but you also must follow the law.

And specifically, circumcision is what they would advocate for. So, yes to faith in Jesus, but also following the law. That is, checking all the religious boxes.

And if you can check off all the religious boxes, then you can have confidence, you can feel secure before God. And the Apostle Paul completely understands this argument.

In fact, he was raised in the same religious tradition they were, or at least quite similar. And that's why Paul is saying, listen, listen, listen. If anybody could feel secure before God, if anybody could feel confident before God based on their religious system, oh, no one would be more secure than me.

[ 13 : 47 ] No one would have more confidence than I do. verse 5. Circumcised on the eighth day of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews, as to the law, a Pharisee, as to zeal, a persecutor of the church, as to righteousness under the law, blameless.

In other words, Paul is saying, listen, let me tell you how secure, how confident I could have been before God. First, I came from the right family heritage. I'm a true Israelite.

The people that were chosen by God. I have the right pedigree. Secondly, I have the right social status. Listen, I wasn't just from any tribe. I was from the tribe of Benjamin.

The tribe of Benjamin was the tribe from which the first king of Israel came, King Saul. Thirdly, I've got biblical knowledge.

I am a Pharisee that is educated in the law. We know from the book of Acts he studied under Gamaliel. That's like taking art class from Picasso.

[ 14 : 55 ] I mean, it doesn't get any better than that. Fourthly, religious activity. I mean, I was zealous. I was passionate. No one was more committed than me.

And finally, morality. When it came to the law, I was blameless. I mean, you would have a hard time finding any debt in my armor.

I was as committed to being a moral, clean living according to the law person as you could find. Here's the point. Are y'all with me tonight? You hanging with me?

I'm gonna trust you on that, alright? Hey, I'm giving you everything I got. It wouldn't hurt if you gave me some in return. Alright, here we go. Paul devoted his life to finding security before God in the things that he did and no one did it better.

That's the point he's making. In other words, trying to tell Paul how to find security before God through religion would be like telling Tom Brady how to win a Super Bowl.

[ 16 : 01 ] I think he knows and I think he has more rings than you do, right? And that's what Paul is saying. Don't tell me how to find security before God.

Don't tell me how to find confidence before God in the things that you do. I have far more security than you would ever have if that's the right category.

And the reality is, Faith Family, if we're honest, every one of us has experienced this kind of thing in our upbringing. It's been a part of your story.

I know it has in one way or the other. We're about to find out. How many of you, show of hands, were raised Catholic? Okay, quite a few hands.

You're not afraid to admit it. That's good. So for you, you are supposed to take part in Mass, say your Hail Marys, go to confession.

[ 16 : 55 ] You had these things that if you did those things, you could leave feeling a little more confident about yourself. I went to the Eucharist and I said my Hail Marys.

Okay, I can feel a little more secure. How many of you, you know, these people won't raise their hands, but how many of you like me grew up Baptist? Okay, there's a few of us, all right?

Bless our hearts. You remember the rules, right? Don't smoke, drink, or chew, or date girls that do, right? She's a sweetie. That was the whole youth group like checklist.

If you did all that, you were a good Christian. In all seriousness, and my upbringing was this. Did you walk an aisle? And if you walked an aisle and you can remember something that happened way back then, then you can feel secure.

Or did you get baptized? And was it by immersion? Which we believe the Bible teaches. And if you were baptized by immersion, then you could feel a little more confident before God.

[ 17 : 56 ] How many of you were raised Lutheran? Okay, maybe that's the most so far. That tells me a lot about faith family. I know that much. And so for you, you learned your catechisms.

You probably went through confirmation as a Lutheran. And you learned to distinguish between good wine and bad wine. Amen? But you had your system as well.

And if you did those things that the Lutheran church taught you, whew, you could feel a little more secure and confident before God. How many of you Presbyterian? Like no one, all right?

Three, a few. You were likely sprinkled as a baby. And no doubt, you memorized the Institutes of John Calvin. Right? And so you had your checklist down.

Now, I didn't include this. I may have some pictures for it in the morning. But how many of you grew up like Pentecostal or some type of charismatic background? Okay? You've got yours as well.

[ 18 : 56 ] Right? You need to have a prayer language. You need to speak in tongues depending on how crazy of a charismatic you were a part of, whether they required that for everybody or not.

But if you could do those things that other people couldn't do, there would be a little sense of confidence and security before God. how many of you didn't grow up in any religious background?

Show of hands. Okay, a few of you. You still had things that you would look to. Things like, well, but I prayed. I mean, I would occasionally pray to God or I would give money to charity or I would help other people.

Here's my point. Whatever background you come from, all of us seek confidence and security pray before God in what we do.

Every one of us. I was baptized. I went to my priest. I prayed. I gave to charity. All of us have that in us.

[ 19 : 58 ] And the more of those things I have, the more confident and secure I feel before God. In John Steinbeck's book, Travels with Charlie, he talks about an experience where he was visiting a church in Vermont where the preacher was preaching on repentance.

And this is what he writes. Listen closely. Quote, The service did my heart some good. I mean, it had been a long time since I had heard such an approach. It is our practice now, at least in the large cities, to find from our psychiatric priesthood that our sins aren't really sins at all, but accidents that are set in motion by forces beyond our control.

There was no such nonsense in this church. Oh no, the minister, a man of iron with steel eyes, a delivery like a drill, opened with prayer and reassured us that we were a pretty sorry lot.

He was right. We didn't amount to much to start with and due to our own efforts we had been slipping ever since. He spoke of hell, not that mush, mush hell of the soft days, but a well stoked, white, hot hell.

served by those who put their hearts into their work. I began to feel good all over. He put my sins in a new perspective.

[ 21 : 20 ] Where they had been small and forgotten, this minister gave them some size and bloom. Now listen, what does he do next?

what is his response to that conviction? I felt so revived in spirit that I put five dollars in the plate and shook hands with the minister and as many of the other in the congregation as I could.

in other words, I felt so convicted I did something to make me feel okay. I put a little money in the plate.

I shook as many hands as I could so that I could feel a little bit of confidence before God. That's what the apostle Paul was saying is that these Philippians are being influenced by a group saying if you want confidence before God, if you want security before God, you're going to find it in what you do regardless of what religious or irreligious backgrounds you come from.

But Paul's going to turn now and say this, everything, God help us, everything I based my confidence on, everything I based my security on before God came to ashes.

[ 22 : 51 ] Look at what he says in verse 7. But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.

Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For His sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish in order that I might gain in Christ and be found in Him not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law but that which comes through faith in Christ.

The righteousness from God that depends on faith. This is Paul in his religious ashes. His entire system, everything he grew up in fell apart.

And he came to see that the entire religious system and faith family, every religious system, every religious system is complete and total rubbish.

That's the best amen y'all gave all night. The Greek word here for rubbish is this. It's skubalon. That's the Greek word for rubbish.

[ 24 : 05 ] And if you don't know what it means, it means dung. If you don't know what that means, you have an emoji on your phone, it will show you. In other words, the Apostle Paul is saying, and this is literal, this is in the Greek, the Apostle Paul is saying that there came a point in his life where his religious system turned to...

That's literal. I'm not trying to just mess with you or be funny. That is what Paul is saying by rubbish. If you don't like ashes, take that image.

But that's what Paul is saying. He came to understand, faith family, that any system, any system, any system that puts confidence in the flesh, any tradition that finds security in what you do will keep you from experiencing the freedom of the gospel and the surpassing knowledge of Christ.

And I mean anything. I don't care if it's Catholic or Baptist or Lutheran or Pentecostal or you weren't even a part of a religious tradition. Anything that points you in the direction of you will keep you from Christ.

It must turn to ashes. It must if you're going to experience the freedom of the gospel. And that's hard to say.

[ 25 : 30 ] It feels uncomfortable for us. I mean listen, I was raised with Southern Baptist tattooed on my forehead metaphorically, right?

I mean everything was got to be Baptist, got to be Baptist, got to be Baptist. And I came to be set free from Baptist. That doesn't mean I'm not thankful for a heritage.

It doesn't mean I'm not thankful for an upbringing. It doesn't mean that I'm not thankful for people that invested in me. but I came to the point of realizing that it's not about following the Baptist way.

It's about finding my confidence in someone else. And when I came to those religious ashes, Jesus set me free.

And I want us to do some soul digging. Because I think most of us believe this based on your applause. But I also think you're still struggling with this.

[ 26 : 39 ] So I tried to think in preparation for this message of some practical ways to dig this out of us. So follow with me as I'm going to give just a few examples and be real and be honest with me tonight.

Here's first example. Imagine you have a good day. I want you to be picturing this in your mind and thinking how you would respond emotionally. Imagine you have a good day. You start by reading your Bible in prayer.

You work really hard at your job that day. You help somebody during the day. You share your faith with a co-worker. You give some money to a friend in need. You have the best evening laughing with your kids at the table and you end your day in prayer.

When you lay your head down on the pillow at night, how do you feel before God? Be honest. You feel good. What a good day. I got to give and I got to share and I got to help people and laughed with my kids and did a really good job at the company.

You feel a little more confident before God. Do you not? And then the next day, you stub your toe getting out of bed and you cuss. It's probably a Christian cuss word.

[ 27 : 53 ] Like, that blame it or something like that. You yell at your family at breakfast. You're running late for work so you get a speeding ticket. You had an opportunity to pray with someone but you selfishly refused.

You lost your temper with your kids. You decided you'd go to bed early without praying. And you lay your head, you lay your head on your pillow.

How do you feel in terms of security and confidence with God? Pretty crummy, don't you? I want you to compare those two days. Why on the good day did you feel a little more confident before God?

And why on the really bad day did you feel less confident before God? Answer is because deep down you really think your confidence comes by what you do.

The gospel answer is you shouldn't feel less confident on the bad day and more confident on the good day because it isn't about you. It's not about how good your day was.

[ 29 : 00 ] It's not about how bad your day was. It's not your righteousness that gives you confidence before God. Sorry, I got a little loud.

Example number two. No show of hands, no show of hands. How many of you struggle with guilt and shame? God can't love me like the Bible says he loves me because I did fill in the blank.

Some of you struggled with that. Is it possible that the guilt you feel towards God is because you have confused the gospel with behavioral management?

In other words, the reason you feel guilty is because your confidence comes from what you do. I can't feel confident before God.

I can't feel secure before God because, listen, I did that. Where is your confidence coming from? Where is your security coming from?

[ 30 : 07 ] It's coming in your righteousness, not Christ's. Are you starting to see this? I mean, it's one thing to pick on Catholics and Baptists and all of that, but when you start digging into the depths of the soul of how you approach God and why you approach Him based on certain ways, you begin to see, listen, you are more of a Judaizer than you think.

You want faith in Jesus, yes, but it's still something else, right? You know, like having a good day for God. Doesn't that count?

Example three. For those of you that have been a part of church for a long time, I want you to take away all the years you've gone to church, all the conferences you've attended, all the small group Bible studies you've been a part of, every mission trip you've participated in, every Christmas and Easter that you've attended, every quiet time you've had, and every evangelistic opportunity you have seized, and let me ask you this, without all of that activity, is there any relationship with God?

God? if all of that was stripped away, would there be anything there? Lastly, who do you think you are coming in here tonight?

What gives you the right to sing to God? Who do you think you are to partake of holy communion here in just a few moments?

[ 31 : 41 ] Why do you think you can sit here with any confidence whatsoever? Here's what I'm driving after in your heart, faith family, please listen.

You must, and I must, identify whatever it is that gives you confidence before God. Are you listening? And if it is anything, and I mean anything you do, it must become ashes.

It must become ashes. Here's why. Notice it on the screen. Because you will never experience gospel freedom until you give up religious security.

You will never experience gospel freedom until you give up religious security. In fact, the apostle Paul is so serious about this.

He is so concerned about this kind of thinking. Look at the warning he gives in verse 2. Look out for the dogs. Now that's what he's calling the Judaizers.

[ 32 : 51 ] Look out for the evildoers. Look out for those who mutilate the flesh. In other words, Paul is saying those that teach you or any teaching that comes to you that points you in the direction of confidence in anything you do, you need to beware.

It is like wolves. It is like dogs. That teaching of putting confidence in the flesh will threaten your soul.

Oh, Philippians, beware of the dogs. Beware of those that come at you with any system or any teaching that puts confidence in what you do.

Here's how he'll say it in Galatians 1 verse 8. If we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preach to you, this is strong language, let him be accursed.

As we have said before and now say again, if anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one received, let him be accursed.

[ 34 : 00 ] Faith family, are we in agreement that the apostle Paul has no room whatsoever for any religious system that puts confidence in what you do? Why?

Why is he so passionate about it? Why is he so serious about this? Why do I get to scream it and get so into this? Here's why. A theologian and one of my former professors, Dr.

Tom Schreiner, writes the following, listen closely, quote, Legalism has its origin in self-worship. Are you listening?

Listen, if people are justified through their obedience to the law, whatever law that is, Catholic law, Baptist law, irreligious law, whatever it is, then they merit praise, honor, and glory.

Legalism, in other words, means the glory goes to people rather than God. even if you have just a little bit of what you do, then that means just a little bit of glory goes to you and God will not share His glory.

[ 35 : 22 ] He will not. And so it will be abundantly obvious that any confidence you have before God will have nothing to do with you.



Amen? So what is that? Paul shows us this new approach in verse 8. Look at it again. In being found, I'm sorry, verse 8, Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.

For His sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish in order that I might gain Christ and be found in Him. Here's the key. You should underline this, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith, that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and may share in His sufferings becoming like Him in His death.

Listen, God met Paul in his religious ashes and He set him free. And some of you will leave tonight mad at me, but some of you will leave tonight free in Christ.

And when your system of righteousness, whatever that is, comes crumbling down, then you will experience the freedom of the gospel. Again, verse 9, that you realize, are you listening, faith family, your confidence before God, your security before God is not based on your righteousness derived from any law, but the righteousness of Christ in God.

[ 37 : 12 ] What makes you confident before God is not anything you do, it is everything Christ has done. And only what Christ has done.

And are you seeing the freedom of that? it means now when you have a really, really sucky day, can I say sucky? I just said sucky, right? You have a really, really bad day, and you blew it big time for Jesus.

You're not any less secure before God. And you shouldn't feel any less confident before God. Why? Because it isn't your righteousness.

It's His. And it's His righteousness that makes you feel secure. And part of the reason why some of you go through a faith crisis, a guilt crisis, a shame crisis, a pride crisis, is because you're putting your confidence in you.

And so if you do something wrong or you do something good, your security rises and falls based on that. but if you put it in Christ and Him alone and His righteousness alone, it will always be secure because it's going nowhere.

[ 38 : 30 ] That's the best golf clap I've ever heard. I feel like I'm at the Masters, right, and I just hit it on the green. Mercy.

Faith family, the beautiful thing, the beautiful thing. I've told you that in the ashes comes beautiful things, right? We've seen that. Sometimes that's physical circumstances, sometimes that's spiritual circumstances.

Here's the beautiful thing that comes from religious ashes. You ready? Knowing Jesus. Knowing Jesus.

Listen, the big shift that took place in my faith crisis when all that Baptist upbringing, which again, I can be thankful for and I can seek to honor, but I don't find my identity there.

It is not my source of security. Thank you, Jesus. And when I realize that, here's the shift that takes place that Paul is talking about. Notice it on the screen. You realize the Christian life is not about doing for Jesus.

[ 39 : 38 ] The Christian life is about knowing Jesus. God's and if you get that, you will be set free for the rest of your life. Many of us are religiously exhausted because we're carrying the burden of finding security in what we do.

And Paul is saying, burn that down. and realize it's about abiding in the vine.

And if you will abide in me, I will produce fruit in you. It changes everything. Well, how do we start this new journey as I close?

Maybe some of the most beautiful words, and there are many beautiful words that Jesus spoke, but these may be some of the most beautiful. Look at it on the screen. This is Matthew 11 verse 28.

Jesus hears the context as he's talking about the burden of Phariseeism, the burden of the law, the Pharisees trying to add the whole find confidence in what you do.

[ 40 : 51 ] And Jesus says, hey, here's a different approach. Here's the only approach. Come to me. All you labor and are heavy laden, and I'll give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart. I hope this next phrase is like a breath to your soul and you will find rest for your souls.

For my yoke is easy. You know why? Because faith family, you don't have to carry it. he's carrying it for you. My yoke is easy.

My burden is white. Do you want the freedom of the gospel? Do you want the freedom that comes when your religion turns to ashes?

Here's what you must do as I close. Number one, you must come to Jesus. Turn from your religion. Turn from your Catholicism. Turn from your Baptist heritage.

[ 42 : 00 ] Again, I'm not saying you can't respect those things. I'm saying stop finding your identity and security in any of those things. Turn from that and turn to a person.

His name is Jesus Christ. Faith family, notice this on the screen. Amen. Religion is an invitation to a system. The gospel is an invitation to a savior.

Religion says come and follow these rules and you can feel good about yourself. Jesus says just come to me and I'll carry your burden for you. I'll be your security.

I'll be your confidence for you. Second, come to Jesus. Second is receive Jesus. When you come to him, you receive his life. That is his righteousness.

He gives you his life in place of your sin. What a deal. It's no longer I who live, it's Christ who lives in me. Christ is my life.

[ 42 : 59 ] Look here at 1 Corinthians 1 verse 30. And because of him, you are in Christ Jesus who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption so that as it is written, let him who boast, boast in the Lord.

Who else would there be to boast in but Christ for he has become our righteousness. Thirdly, is learn from Jesus. What I am presenting to you, faith family, you are not going to get overnight.

Amen? You're going to have to transfer schools from the school of Pharisees, school of Catholicism, school of Baptists, school of Pentecostals.

I don't know what school you came up in, but you're going to have to transfer schools and learn from Jesus. And as you walk with Jesus and as you learn from Jesus, you will experience the freedom that Jesus gives.

My burden is light. But we got a lot of unpacking to do. Just even in the example of the good day, bad day, I think reveals that there's more baggage there than we realize.

[ 44 : 20 ] of truly learning to live in His righteousness and not our own. Lastly, is rest in Jesus. When you come to a person and not a program, when you realize it's not about your life, it's about His life, when you learn to let Jesus live His life through you, you're finally able to rest.

You don't have to perform anymore. You don't have to carry the burden anymore. You can rest in Jesus. So here's what I'm asking you to do.

Faith family, I am pleading with you. And all the way that I have felt tonight, I do not care. I care deeply that you get this. And so here's what I'm asking you to do.

Lose your religion. Lose your religion. Burn it to the ground.

Spiritually, not literally, right? Burn it to the ground spiritually so that in the ashes of your religious tradition, you will finally discover the freedom of knowing Christ.

[ 45 : 39 ] The economic crisis of 08 and 09, and we might even add the pandemic of the last few years and other examples that I could give us show us that if you put your confidence in this life, it will eventually turn to ashes.

And that is why the gospel invites you to find your confidence in the life of another. A life that has already been through the ashes. A life that is pleasing to God in every way.

A life that by faith can be your life. life. And when you learn to put all your confidence in Christ, you will finally be secure.

And all God's people said, Amen. Let's pray. Lord, thank you for just giving me the strength to get through tonight and to preach what I believe is such an important message.

I mean, it's the heart of the gospel. And Lord, you know the reason why I have such a passion about this is not only my own journey and all the religious baggage that I was brought up in, but I know that there are people here at Faith Family that are still carrying things that deep down they still think this has at least a little bit to do with them.

[ 47 : 05 ] And we've got to burn that down. God help us burn that down. so that we would stop living in shame and guilt.

So we would stop living in pride. And that we would just rest that Jesus is enough. And in him we have all the confidence in the world. So I don't know the heart and life of each person in this place tonight, but God, I know you do.

I don't know how they feel when they lay their head down on the pillow at night and think about you. But God, I pray that anything in our lives that we are putting confidence in outside of Christ and Christ alone would be turned to ashes.

that all that we have gained would be considered loss compared to the surpassing knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord.

And it's in his name we pray. Amen. Amen.