

Seeking and Saving the Lost

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[0 : 0 0] Happy New Year. It's good to see all of you this morning. Turn in your Bibles, if you would! please, to Luke chapter 18. And if you're using the pew Bible in front of you, it's on page 878.

Luke chapter 18. We're picking up our series in Luke and hope to finish this off by the end of May. So we're kind of in the last leg, as it were, the final week of Jesus's life in ministry.

And we're kind of making our way from Jericho up to Jerusalem. And we find ourselves this morning in Jericho, which is about 15 miles away from Jerusalem, as Jesus sets his sights on this final objective. This morning, one of the questions that we're going to find that Jesus asks is found in chapter 18, verse 41. And it goes like this. Jesus asks the blind man, what do you want for me to do for you? What do you want for me to do for you? If Jesus were to ask you that question this morning, how would you answer? What do you want for me to do for you? How would you fill in the blank?

What is the deepest longing of your life? What is the thing in your heart that if Jesus can help to provide resolution to that thing, whatever it is, how would you answer that question? What do you want for me to do for you? And of course, at the end of our passage, we'll find the mission statement of Christ that he's come to seek and to save the lost. I think we're really experts when it comes to answering this question, at least from a superficial level. I mean, we've just come through the Christmas season. And so even at a very early age, we've kind of conditioned ourselves to answer this question, what should I do for you? Or what do you want for Christmas? Create your list and give it to me, and I'll make sure that I am helping to provide whatever is on that list. We condition ourselves or even our children, our culture is conditioning us, even at an early age, how to fill in that blank, as it were. Matter of fact, I was fascinated to find that millions of children, even around the world, in as many as 200 different countries, will follow and track Santa Claus online through the North American

Aerospace Defense Command Santa tracker. You aware of this? At least 100,000 children actually even call into the hotline, where is Santa right now? And they'll have an answer. Mall Santas. Maybe you're acquainted with them, or even have taken your kids to sit on Santa's lap, to give him their list, to take a picture.

[3 : 2 3] Not saying that that's wrong, just something we do to condition ourselves to think about how to answer this question. As many as 18 million children will go see Santa Claus in the store. And millions of children and adults around the world will write to Santa each year. Either a personal letter, the USPS says that they've received as many as 23,000 physical letters this past year to Santa Claus.

They've created even a way to create a letter online so that in France, about almost 2 million children or people will write a letter to Santa. In Canada, about 1.3 million. And here in the States, about 1 million children and adults will write a letter to Santa. We've conditioned ourselves to answer this question. What would you have for me to do for you? And maybe I'll need to graduate this illustration a little bit so that we can all maybe resonate a bit with the tension of this. How many of you have experienced or maybe even participated this past year in having given or received a gift that wasn't quite exactly the way you wanted it to be? It wasn't the right color. It wasn't the right brand.

It wasn't the right kind. It didn't have the right features. And so it really wasn't what you asked for or what you wanted. And so you're a little frustrated.

And the registries that we have that not just that I need something fill in the blank, but I need a specific kind of something with certain features. Like I want the 12 cup coffee machine and not the 10 cupper. I don't want the kind that heats.

I want the thermos kind that sits and stays warm inside. I want the kind with the reservoir. Not that you have to fill with the pot itself, but you detach the reservoir. You know what I'm talking about, right?

[5 : 37] And so when Jesus would ask us this question, what would I have you? What would you have for me to do for you?

Not only is there a blindness in our own heart to what our true need is, there is this affection for things that are completely other than what Jesus intends to give to us.

The things, by the way, the things that actually meet our deepest need. The things that will fill us up in a way that nothing can actually fill up other than Christ.

So in our time today, I want to help us be able not only to answer this question, what would I have for you to do for me? But to understand from Jesus' perspective, what he came to do, the very purpose that Jesus came to fill.

That is what we're going to find in our passage today. Two purpose statements of Jesus. And then two examples of individuals who surprisingly get to enjoy the benefits of what Jesus has come to do.

[6 : 57] And they participate. They enjoy the experience, the blessing of that purpose of God for their life. Now this is significant for us, especially at the beginning of a year.

We're heading into 2025. And my guess is there's a number of pressures and challenges and distractions, maybe frustrations and problems, maybe even joys and things that are thrilling you.

Those good things and hard things. Those great things that you're celebrating. Those things that you're grieving. Whatever it might be. It is so significant for us to enter this year, 2025, being able to answer this question.

What would you have for me to do for you? So we have a lot of ground to cover, but I want to do it in a little different way. So please bear with me. My goal this morning is just to draw out some of the statements in the text today.

We're not going to have time to dig in and to develop the specifics of every word or phrase in this pretty extensive passage. But I want to just draw out for us and think about and meditate on and digest some of the things that are taking place in this passage.

[8 : 20] So we can really appreciate how to answer this question. It is the quintessential question of 2025. It really is the ultimate question you could ever answer.

What would you have for me to do for you? So if you're with me in Luke chapter 18, beginning in verse 31, we're going to see that Jesus, this first purpose that he will explain to his disciples is that Jesus came to provide a way of salvation.

Jesus came to provide a way of salvation. You and I need salvation and rescue. But maybe not the rescue or the deliverance or the help that you think you need.

Jesus came to provide a way of salvation. We're going to see what that looks like here, beginning in verse 31. It says, And after flogging him, they will kill him.

And on the third day, he will rise. But they understood none of these things. This saying was hidden from them. And they did not grasp what he said.

[9 : 51] Jesus came to provide a way of salvation. He does that and accomplishes that through his obedience. That's what we're going to see first. He accomplished that through his obedience.

Now, it's not spelled out explicitly here in the text. But I want to draw your attention to two statements right at the beginning that help us understand what it means that he's going to Jerusalem.

What's the big deal? Well, Jesus says, we're going to Jerusalem. Why? Because we need to accomplish something. There's a destiny. There's a purpose to fulfill.

That purpose is to accomplish all the things that were spoken about by the prophets. And Jesus, throughout his ministry, has conditioned his heart and spoken the words and ordered his life in obedience to God the Father to carry out his will.

He does this through obedience. We see Christ's obedience in these statements. And these events in Jericho, by the way, probably happened on a Friday, okay?

[10 : 58] And it was the Friday before Good Friday. So we're talking about just a week away. Jesus is in Jericho. And in just seven days, he's going to die.

He's going to be on the cross. Good Friday has happened. That's why we're in this last week, this Passion Week, as it were, he's here. The moment has come. And Jesus is wanting to help describe his disciples what is about to go down in Jerusalem and why it matters.

So Jesus is there. And Jesus would spend the night on Friday with Zacchaeus. Jesus and a band of disciples.

This massive crowd of pilgrims would make their way up to Jerusalem on Saturday. On Sunday, likely Jesus would ride into Jerusalem.

And that would be his triumphal entry. And then the rest of the week would happen. And on Friday, he would die. So what Jesus says here is significant. These are kind of the parting words that we're beginning to hear from his mouth.

[12 : 01] We're beginning to really understand what his life in ministry was all about. But Jesus cares to convey to his disciples what's about to happen is not a surprise.

Jesus knows what his future holds. And Jesus, being a man on a mission, we see that he's been making his way to Jerusalem now for at least six months.

We find, going all the way back to Luke chapter 9, some statements that Jesus will make about his future. In Luke chapter 9, verse 22, he tells his disciples the first time, The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed and on the third day be raised.

Then a few verses later, after his transfiguration, we find in verse 44, Let these words sing down in your ears. The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men.

But they did not understand the saying. It was concealed from them so that they might not perceive it. And they were afraid to ask him about this saying. And from this time in Galilee, we find that Jesus begins to set his face towards Jerusalem.

[13 : 20] He understands what's ahead of him. He recognizes what God's will is for him. And it's to finally and ultimately arrive in Jerusalem to be the Passover lamb and to be killed for the sins of the world.

We find in Luke chapter 9, verse 51 and 53, When Jesus, the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem.

He sent messengers ahead of him who went and entered the village of Samaritans to make preparations for him. But the people did not receive him because his face was set towards Jerusalem.

Then in Luke chapter 13, verse 22, He went on his way through the towns and villages, teaching and journeying towards Jerusalem. Jesus knew the objective. Jesus aligned his heart in life to carry out that objective because Jesus alone is the way of salvation.

So why did he go? Why did he do this? Why didn't he just run away? Because Jesus was committed to the will of God. Jesus aligned his heart and life in obedience and submission to the Father.

[14 : 37] So that we find in Philippians 2, 8, Being found in the human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Jesus was not a victim of tragic circumstances. Jesus boldly and clearly and obediently made his way to Jerusalem, knowing that that's the will of the Father.

Jesus was fulfilling God's plan. The plan that wasn't just hidden from Jesus. It was open to Jesus. But it was a plan, as we see here in our text, a plan that had been laid out by the prophets before Jesus even became a man.

It's a plan, a master plan of God the Father going all the way back into the Old Testament. Notice verse 31, it says, Everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished or will be fulfilled.

This in the Greek is a divine passive, which means that it is something that God himself will do. He is the divine actor.

[15 : 54] He is the one who initiates. He's the one who puts his plan into action. And when God is putting his plans into action, you can count on the fact that they will happen. Jesus knew what he was doing.

The prophets knew what he was doing. And ultimately, this way, this way of salvation would come not only through the obedience of Christ, but it would also be accomplished through his sacrifice.

His sacrifice. Obedience and sacrifice. We find that in verse 32. He will be delivered over the Gentiles.

He will be mocked and shamefully treated and spit upon. After flogging him, they will kill him. And on the third day, he will rise. Why?

Why such a gruesome and tragic death? The reason for the sacrifice is to help us understand that salvation is not free.

[16 : 57] Salvation is not free. Salvation is costly. It cost Jesus everything. It cost his life.

It cost his dignity. It cost shame and rejection from the very people who he came to save. It was in accord with the prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 53 verses 4 to 5, which says, Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.

Yet, we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities. Upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace.

And with his wounds, we are healed. Jesus' costly, sacrificial death was to demonstrate the cost of your sin and my sin.

Sin demanded something costly. It demanded the life of our Savior. Salvation that our minds cannot grasp without the power of God.

[18 : 13] Notice how clear the statements were that Jesus had said now three times. And notice what the response is from the disciples. The disciples are hearing this. And how do they respond?

This three-fold response that we find in verse 34. But they understood none of these things. This saying was hidden from them. They did not grasp what was said.

Why would Luke share this three times to drive home the point? The way of salvation is clear when the Lord allows you to see your need for salvation.

You see, the expectation, the blindness of the disciples, they're followers of Jesus, they're hearing his teaching, but they're still blinded to the real purpose that Jesus has come to resolve in them.

They're blind to the real need that they have. They're thinking about something physical. They're thinking about something superficial. They want Jesus to come and to be the Lord and to overcome the Roman Empire.

[19 : 25] They want deliverance from their physical oppression. And Jesus came to give them something greater, something better. They could not see it. And that is often the case for us.

We're like the disciples. We're blinded by our own thoughts, our own perspectives of what our real need is. And Jesus has come to meet our deepest need.

And only with Jesus' help can we really begin to understand how to come to appreciate and discover what that really is.

We need the Spirit's help to open blind eyes like the disciples, to open our eyes, to open our minds, to see what is my true need.

Because Jesus came to resolve our deepest need. In the next two accounts or narratives, we find some examples. Some examples of how to enjoy and experience what Jesus has come to offer.

[20 : 32] We find in verses 35 to 43 that this blind man's example of faith. Surprising example of faith. Notice with me in verse 35.

As he drew near, speaking of Jesus, to Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging. And hearing a crowd going by, he inquired what this meant.

They told him, Jesus of Nazareth is passing by. And he cried out, Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me. And those who were in front rebuked him, telling him to be silent.

But he cried out all the more, Son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus stopped and commanded him to be brought to him. And when he came near, he asked him, what do you want me to do for you?

He said, Lord, let me recover my sight. And Jesus said to him, recover your sight. Your faith has made you well. And immediately, he received his sight and followed him, glorifying God and all the people when they saw it, gave praise to God.

[21 : 43] The blind man's example of faith that begins, by the way, with a plea for mercy. He pleads for Christ's mercy. That's how it begins.

Jericho was about 15 to 17 miles away from Jerusalem. It was a massive climb up this steep hill, weaving its way up to Jerusalem.

This blind man, he sits in the dust by the roadside. He's expecting the generosity, the pity, you might say, the compassion and generosity, you might say, of the crowds that are making their way to Jerusalem.

Jerusalem would have experienced or swelled about two to three million in size during the Passover event as all these pilgrims are required to come. This is one of the three pilgrimages that were required for every Jewish male in the first century.

Here he is, this blind man, sitting by the road, asking for pity and mercy from the crowds. And Jesus, surrounded by this crowd of people, has gained their attention in some way.

[22 : 58] They know, he knows that this crowd is dense. He knows that the numbers of people that are traveling in this concentrated bunch must have something to do with the central figure of that group.

And so, so this blind man asks some members of the crowd what's going on. And he comes to, to know that Jesus of Nazareth is passing through.

Now he's heard about Jesus, about three years of ministry have taken place, and he recognizes what Jesus can do for his problem. And so he says, Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me.

This word for mercy is the word for pity, for compassion, to extend help for the consequences of sin. In some way, this blind man came to understand and to know that whatever he was asking for from Jesus was not something that he deserved.

He needed mercy. He needed the compassionate heart of Christ to see his situation and to help provide some resolution. But what's significant about this statement, Jesus, son of David, is that in expressing the identity of Jesus in this way, he's not just identifying Jesus as a descendant of David, but using the title of Messiahship.

[24 : 21] He's come to recognize that Jesus is something more than just a significant figure. Jesus is the embodiment of the one that they were waiting for, the Messiah himself.

And by addressing Jesus as the son of David, he was affirming his faith in Jesus as Israel's Messiah. This blind man had a unique perception.

This is the first time that Luke addresses and uses this title in his account, in the gospel account of Luke. This is the first time we see this title, son of David.

It's an uncommon title that's used anywhere in the gospels. Son of David. It's only used in two other situations earlier in Christ's ministry and used by the gospel writer, Matthew.

And maybe not surprisingly, it was a pair of other blind men who recognized Jesus as the son of David early in Jesus' Galilean ministry and cried for help.

[25 : 31] Jesus, son of David. Very similar to what we find here in Jericho. It was also a Canaanite woman, a Syrio-Phoenician woman, who when she sees Jesus, says, Jesus, son of David, my daughter is severely oppressed by a demon.

Will you help me? This title, son of David, helps to identify Jesus as more than just a descendant of David, but this blind man understood the significance of who Jesus was.

But notice the response of the crowd, and this is important for us to see. Those who were in front of him rebuked him. Be quiet. Shut up.

Be still. You're distracting this situation that's going on. You're kind of a nuisance. Keep it closed. But what does he do?

This man cries out all the more. He was undeterred by the crowd. He doesn't listen to the crowd. He overcomes the crowd in any way that he can.

[26 : 40] He screams out and says, all the more. Jesus, son of David, have mercy. He was undeterred. And in that respect, he helps to demonstrate the example of moving back even further in Luke chapter 18, where Jesus says in verse 1 that he encourages men to always pray and not lose heart.

and then he uses the example of the woman there who's pleading for mercy from the unjust judge and he's encouraging, Jesus is encouraging persistent faith and asking for help from God.

And here we find the results of that kind of persistent faith. Jesus is willing to receive. Jesus, son of David, have mercy and Jesus is more than willing to demonstrate that mercy.

And so we move into the next several verses beginning in verse 40. And this blind man receives Christ's healing because of his emboldened faith.

He receives Christ's healing. He experiences what Christ has to offer. Notice, Jesus stopped and commanded him to be brought to him. Now just notice that for a moment, will you?

[27 : 55] Jesus, this fourfold response, he stops, then he commands, then he asks the man to be brought and then he heals. Jesus was not put out by this distraction.

This distraction was actually by design to call attention to the means by which or the way in which we enjoy in experiencing the true healing that God has to offer.

This way of salvation. Jesus draws the crowd in. He wants them to take notice. He wants them to have this physical portrayal and demonstration right up close and personal.

He forces them into the process of this healing that's taking place. Jesus stops. He waits.

He pauses. This deliberate waiting in yielding and allowing the crowd to settle down and to even part the way and perhaps somebody in the crowd or maybe the crowd in general is helping to guide and to steer This blind man as he made his way to Jesus and they're all going to be part of this process of seeing this object lesson that Jesus wants them to learn.

[29 : 20] Here's how you enjoy this way of salvation. It happens through faith. Jesus is drawing the crowd out for that very reason.

Jesus capitalizes on this opportunity. while the question in verse 41 may seem so obvious it may even seem a little absurd Jesus asks it anyway what do you want me to do for you?

Well Jesus isn't it obvious? Isn't it clear? Well I wonder maybe it's clear to us because we've read the story but the blind man could have said any number of things he could have said Jesus would you fix my economic situation?

Jesus would you fix my standing in the community? Jesus would you give me a better place to sit so I don't have to be on this dusty road?

Jesus I want the people around me to be more empathetic now he doesn't ask for that he goes to Jesus and he has this eye for mercy and he believes two things about him he believes that he's the Messiah and he believes that Jesus can fix his blindness and Jesus is more than happy to comply Jesus is more than happy to resolve his vision problem but he gets more than he bargains for Jesus says recover your sight your faith has made you well you are looking for something physical but because of your faith in believing who I am there is so much more to offer you your faith has made you well this is the word has saved you you're enjoying the fruit of salvation because your faith has let you see who I really am your faith has saved you and now true faith leads to true transformation notice immediately verse 43 he recovers his sight and follows him that's important he follows him you remember in our journey through the gospel of

[31 : 49] Luke that following Jesus is really the emblematic of those who are with him and true disciples of Christ and that's what this man does he's found the answer to his deepest issues Jesus has saved him faith has led to transformation not only in following after him but also in glorifying God and as a result of him glorifying God it's interesting it says in this final phrase in verse 43 when they saw it speaking of the crowd they gave praise to God now this word of seeing and blindness is now essentially kind of placed on the crowd too there needs to be some sight which they have to experience as well at least at this point their sight is temporary their sight is superficial now we move to the example that we see in

Zacchaeus in verses 1-10 of chapter 19 we see in this next passage the example of repentance in Zacchaeus' life look with me it says he entered Jericho and was passing through and behold there was a man named Zacchaeus he was a chief tax collector and was rich and he was seeking to see who Jesus was he was small in stature so he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him for he was about to pass that way and when Jesus came to that place he looked up and said to him Zacchaeus hurry and come down for I must stay at your house today so he hurried and came down and received him joyfully and when he saw it they all grumbled he has gone in to be a guest of a man who is a sinner and Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord behold Lord the half of my goods

I give to the poor and if I have defrauded anyone of anything I restore it fourfold and Jesus said to him today salvation has come to this house since he also is a son of Abraham for the son of man came to seek and to save the lost Zacchaeus his example of repentance begins with his seeking heart Zacchaeus is seeking after Jesus we see that there in verse two he was seeking to see Jesus the crowd wasn't going to get in his way Zacchaeus the name ironically means righteous it means clean it means innocent or pure which as far as the crowd was concerned Zacchaeus was the furthest away from being righteous he was the furthest away from actually embodying that name in their minds tax collectors as you know we've worked our way through the gospel of

Luke tax collectors are almost always attached to sinners those tax collectors and sinners lumped all together and because of his occupation and essentially turning his back on the nation of Israel and turning his back on the blessing of Abraham and essentially being in league with the Gentile oppressor he Zacchaeus in the minds of the people of the first century he had abandoned or rejected all the things that should be true about those who were of Israel he had given it up he had sold himself out as it were for wealth and he had enjoyed wealth to the max we find that he was wealthy he was rich but here he is the seeking little man and so you can imagine what he might be doing he's on his tiptoes perhaps trying to look over the crowd but because of his short stature he couldn't catch a glimpse of him and maybe you can maybe even kind of see him kind of hopping up and down see if he can catch any glimpse of the savior but he gets this master plan that this master plan he sees this tree ahead on the path he's going to climb that tree and he's going to catch his glimpse of the savior he's desperate to see he's not going to allow the crowd to get in his way much like the blind man will not allow the crowd to get in his way of catching a glimpse of

Jesus so Zacchaeus does the unthinkable of the day he runs ahead that's an undignified way for a man of his stature to respond and then he adds more to that by actually climbing a tree and perhaps even his legs are dangling over the path as Jesus and the rest of the crowd is passing through he's going to do whatever it takes so he can catch a glimpse of Jesus however temporary however short lived it doesn't matter he wants to see Jesus Jesus is the center of his affection in the sense that he he's got to lay his eyes on Jesus and then Jesus does with Zacchaeus what he does with the blind man he stops he takes notice he looks up he calls him by name

[37 : 45] Zacchaeus come down hurry for I must stay at your house today a glance has now become a guest now this extended stay now would have been temporary becomes a personal visit becomes a close encounter it becomes a face to face interaction a one on one kind of interaction that he's having now with the savior no longer an outsider no longer on the fringe so what does he do he he receives this word it says he hurries down he comes down he receives him joyfully he explodes with joy because things are better than he ever dreamed but notice the reaction now of the crowd who was a seeing crowd for the blind man and now a seeing crowd again but now their glorifying turns into grumbling they don't like what

Jesus is doing they're not interested in that kind of interaction they don't think that Zacchaeus is fit for this kind of help and what we find in the remaining parts of this passage this morning is that while it seemed like Zacchaeus was seeking for Jesus now the the script flips and we find that it's actually Jesus who's seeking for Zacchaeus Jesus is the seeker not Zacchaeus notice Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord behold Lord the half of my goods I give to the poor I have defrauded anyone of anything I restore it fourfold and Jesus said to him today salvation has come to this house since he also is a son of Abraham for the son of man came to seek and to save the lost something radical happens in Zacchaeus heart this shift has taken place true faith has produced true change again

Zacchaeus moves from being a taker to a giver from being a hoarder to a sharer from being a thief to one who distributes but most importantly one who moves from serving self to serving God and Jesus knowing his heart identifies what's really going on today salvation has come to this house true repentance has happened there's been a shift of heart that's happened because of a new perspective of faith and that's what must happen for every believer who truly places their faith in Jesus there must be a shift of heart in action and life Zacchaeus' response demonstrates outwardly this inward change that's taken place Zacchaeus again which means righteous forms a contrast to the earlier story about the rich young ruler who celebrated his own righteousness remember and Jesus said hey you want to be a follower of me sell your stuff and follow me and he went away sorrowful well guess what

Zacchaeus being a rich man demonstrates where true righteousness comes from he saw in himself a need he saw in himself the wickedness and ungodliness of his heart he recognized that he wasn't those things and he pursued relationship wanted to see Jesus Jesus comes to his house and he celebrates with joy and because of these example we see that Jesus has come to seek and save the lost that's our second purpose Jesus has come to save sinners and so this morning as we come to our elements we come to understand that what we are celebrating this morning here at the beginning of a new year is an expression of interest and focus for us this do in remembrance of me this is how it all begins for us it doesn't just begin here it continues as

God wants to continue to cultivate a relationship with us that's not meant to be static but dynamic always moving always growing always increasing and deepening with God let me just in a couple of moments I wanted to share a few points of application what do we do with this message first we need to overcome the crowd if you're going to see Jesus and you're going to enjoy what he has to give you have to overcome the crowd now what is the crowd for us well it's the noise that bombards us every day we've got to silence the noise we've got to silence the crowd as it were like the blind man we have to run ahead of the crowd like Zacchaeus we've got to find a way to get around the crowd and to focus our energies and to listen to God quiet our hearts to quiet the crowd to remove the distractions and to seek him what are those voices that interfere with us listening to

[43 : 31] Jesus well I wonder if you can fill in the blank for yourself but I wonder if entertainment I wonder if social media I wonder if YouTube and gaming and movies and binge watching certain shows whatever it might be I wonder if that's the noise and in pastor can or last week I appreciate the noise of our phone that is this constant distraction to us second is in our own life are we seeking Jesus quiet the crowds seek for Jesus are you looking for his mercy are you enjoying his salvation are you doing what it takes to find him is he the center point of your focus is he the one thing for you this morning as you begin this new year is Jesus kind of that central theme of your life the prioritization the things that everything else stops for so that you can have him and finally are you asking for the right things sometimes our own blindness gets in the way what we think we need gets in the way of what we really need

I wonder if we need to ask Jesus to kind of clear the noise away from our hearts and minds so we can focus and center our attention on the things that we really need the deep down things Jesus came to seek and to save the lost so whether things are good or bad whether it's joy or sorrow celebration or pain are we attached to things that are superficial or are we attached to things that are eternal is Jesus the center of affection I like what the psalmist says one thing I've asked of the Lord and that will I seek after that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life to behold the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple I wonder if for the month of January!

focus our attention on the one thing and I wonder if we can ask Christ to help us to devote our attention to pursuing him I want to pray I'm going to ask the men to come forward and we'll observe communion together Father thank you for this passage today for the reminder especially at the beginning of this year of what you came to do you came to seek and to save the lost you came to fellowship with your people that only happens through faith and forgiveness that come through Christ Father I pray that you would center our attention on you today and God that this new year we would be the kinds of people who exalt the one thing that you came the one purpose that you came to resolve in our lives

Lord we praise you for your patience with us thank you that if we confess our sin that you are faithful and just to forgive our sin and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness thank you that you came to overcome the crowds as it were and to help to resolve our blindness Lord I pray that you would help to open our eyes and draw our attention to you in Jesus name amen