

Joy That Cannot Be Taken Away

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[0 : 00] Let us pray. Gracious God and Father, for us who know you this morning, prayer is not a routine, but a routine!

Father, for us who know you this morning, prayer is not a routine, but a routine is not a routine of the Lord.

And this morning we join in prayer together, asking that just as we have sung your truth, that we'd also be open to hear the word that informs and instructs our hearts.

That our joy would be full. That our hearts would have ambition for the things of eternity. And that, Lord, we would long for the day that the one who we love we would see face to face.

We ask for the power of your Spirit to work in our lives, those of us who are believers, those who are here that do not know Christ.

[1 : 29] That today would be a significant day, one for those who are believers, that our hearts would be encouraged and strengthened, that we would grow honestly to be more dedicated, more committed, more resolute, more passionate for the holiness and truth of Christ.

And that those who are here that do not know Christ this morning would have your Spirit convict them of the misery and the hopelessness of their sin and realize that there is no other remedy but to call upon the name of the Lord and be saved.

We ask this in your precious name. Amen. Well, I'm going to ask that you turn in your Bibles this morning to John chapter 16. And you who are reasonably well-versed in churchiology know that John 16 is not anywhere near the resurrection stories.

And if you were here before breakfast, that is at the 830 hour, you know that we actually looked at several of those passages where the fact of the resurrection was borne out, looking at passages in Luke and in Matthew and in Mark and reminding ourselves of the actual series of events that took place when Christ was raised from the dead.

What I want us to look at this morning is a passage that several weeks ago as I was studying and actually doing my own devotional life in the morning, I was just struck as I read this, because it was a reminder of what would someday come.

[3 : 01] Now, this is a day when we as believers celebrate perhaps with the greatest amount of affection and enthusiasm for the victory that Christ has had over sin and death.

Now, we enjoy Christmas, and I admit that, and I know you enjoy it as well, but the resurrection Sunday is the day that we draw attention most particularly to the victory that we have in the Lord Jesus Christ.

And so what I'd like you to do is turn with me to the passage in John chapter 16. I'm going to read the passage for you, and then we're going to study it together, and we're going to ask that the Spirit of God kind of drive these truths home and have a significant difference in our life.

Let's follow as I read. You look in your own copy, and I will read from mine. A little while, and you will see me no longer. And again, a little while, and you will see me.

So some of his disciples said to one another, what is this that he says to us? A little while, and you will not see me. And again, a little while, and you will see me. And because I'm going to the Father.

[4 : 03] So they were saying, what does he mean by a little while? We do not know what he's talking about. Jesus knew that they wanted to ask him. So he said to them, is this what you are asking yourselves that I meant by saying?

What I meant by saying, a little while, and you will not see me. And again, a little while, and you shall see me. Truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice. You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned to joy.

When a woman is giving birth, she has sorrow because her hour has come. But when she has delivered the baby, she no longer remembers the anguish for joy that a human being has been brought, born into the world.

So also you have sorrow now. But I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you. Now I want you to think with me just a little bit this morning as we look at this passage.

First of all, kind of recognize the background of what Jesus said. Here was Jesus speaking a little while before his actual crucifixion, and in that context, he was talking about what would come.

[5 : 10] And I think it's important for us to note here that the disciples never really understood what Jesus had to say or what he was teaching about his death before it actually happened. Now you need to recognize that Jesus, from the very beginning, made the fact of his death, burial, and resurrection something that he was very public about.

It wasn't one of these little closeted secrets that was kept away from everyone else. It was something that Jesus was very upfront in declaring. But despite all his teaching and the clarity with which he made these statements, his disciples never really picked up on it.

Now we do see that they were a little nervous and a little uncertain, but they really didn't understand what was going to happen. Probably one of the better illustrations of just how brain-dead they were on this subject is over in Luke chapter 22.

And I want you to turn there if you would. Go in your Bible to Luke chapter 22, and we're going to mark just how much they missed it. In Luke chapter 22, we are at the passage where we find the celebration of the Last Supper.

And we understand that actually what took place is that they thought they were celebrating the traditional, typical Jewish Passover. And they were kind of looking forward to this, a very important annual event in the life of the nation of Israel.

[6 : 30] And they were kind of thinking, well, we're just doing what we normally do. It's a little bit like for us, it's Thanksgiving on steroids. For a Jewish individual, it's something that reminds them of God's deliverance from the land of oppression that they've been in.

And so they were thinking about this, and Jesus in that context, remember, he breaks bread and he says, this is my body which is broken for you. Now they knew that was not part of the normal Passover meal.

And then he says, and this cup is the cup of the New Testament in my blood. Whoa, what are you saying? You would think that would kind of get their attention, wouldn't you? You would think that would be a good stop and think, what is he talking about?

But the truth of the matter is, is they really didn't connect. And if you look at Luke chapter 22, verse 24, we see that right after Jesus had taught this lesson, they're on their way out the garden, and here's what they end up talking about.

A dispute rose among them as to which of them was to be regarded as the greatest. Who are these people that are arguing about who's going to be the greatest?

[7 : 33] This is the hand-chosen, selected, the special core, the elite of the future church, and here they are, they're bickering among one another about who's going to have the first place.

Now it wasn't the first time they'd had this discussion. Incidentally, we do know from other comparative passages that they thought when Jesus came into the city of Jerusalem that what was coming next was that the kingdom was going to be established, Jesus was going to be the king, and so understandably he was going to need help in managing this kingdom, and they wanted to be certain of their order and the pecking order.

They wanted to have their place. They were not thinking at all about the coming crucifixion and what would happen. And as you look back at our text, go back to John chapter 16, if you will, again. Here he is teaching on the matter of his coming crucifixion, and we find there that they were a little put off or they were a little uncertain about what was going to happen. Look at verse 18.

It says, Now they were talking back and forth, and one of the problems with talking back and forth when Jesus was around is that Jesus knew what you were saying.

[8 : 53] In fact, he didn't even have to be around to figure out what you were saying. And anyway, here he is. They're talking, and they're kind of having this little sidebar conversation, and Jesus steps right into the middle of it and says, Hey, what's this that's going on?

What's the problem? And we find that the disciples, as they were kind of going back and forth on the matter, they really didn't understand what was taking place. Now mark what we find here in the passage, and it's going to be the substance of our study.

Jesus tells them right up front what's going to take place. Christ told them all that they needed to know well in advance. Look at the passage and mark what it says here. He says, And one of the things that I want us to kind of put back in the back of our mind at this moment is this, is that the truth of the matter is that the Bible, and God's Word in particular, tells us what we need to know in advance.

It doesn't leave us in the dark. I appreciate that. One of the things that goes with advertising is they tell you all the good things up front. They don't really tell you all the challenges and the probability of things not working out.

Am I right? The promises are all up front. The hardship and the difficulty just not out there at all. And yet God in His Word, He tells us all that we need to know to handle the challenges of life.

[10:21] And as we look here, we find that God loves His children enough, and He lets us know what to expect and how the story ends. And that's what we're looking at here in this passage. There in verse 20, mark what it says.

It says, The world will rejoice. Now stop and think with me what was actually going to take place. And you turn back in your Bible, and I want you to go there, if you would, just for a moment, turn back to Luke chapter 23.

Luke chapter 23, verse 35 and 36. And we find ourselves in this passage in the middle of the crucifixion process, and we find that there are some people that are rather happy with what's taking place.

In 35 and 36, here's what we read. It says, And so here we have a picture of many of the individuals who were standing around the cross actually finding pleasure in that suffering Savior.

It was kind of a media event of that ancient world. And individuals that were crucified provided a certain amount of entertainment, and particularly those who hated Christ, took this as an opportunity of throwing their attitude towards Him and mocking and rejoicing in what was taking place.

[11:46] Furthermore, you can imagine that when Jesus actually died, that those who hated Him is like, Finally, we are finished with this guy. You remember earlier that as Jesus had gained notoriety, and I mean he gained respect for the miracles that he'd done and for the power that he was displaying, the Jewish leaders thought, Man, we've got to do something about this guy before he completely sweeps us all away.

And they decided, Ah, the thing we're going to do is we're going to put him to death. Got to figure out a way to get this done. But they had it all planned out. They called on Judas to betray Him. And then they put together this mockery of a trial, and they led that whole thing, or they brought that whole thing to the crucifixion of Christ.

And no doubt, as they saw things working right towards that very end, there in their hearts was a growing sense of accomplishment. And man, we're finally going to be finished with this.

And this problem, this thorn in our side, is going to be wiped away and we're done. They're happy.

They're rejoicing. And Jesus says to his disciples, You have to understand that there will be people who will rejoice seeing my crucifixion come about.

He says also in that passage, He says, And you yourselves are going to weep and lament. And we find that level of sorrow and brokenness on the part of the disciples.

[13:14] Many of them fled because they were afraid. They too would pay the price with their own lives. But there were others that came and watched what took place, and their hearts were broken by what happened. I think of the passage over in Luke chapter 24, where we find even after three days out, the day of the actual Christ's resurrection, we have the story of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus.

And as they were going there, what were their spirits like? I have to admit it. I stayed up and watched the game last night. And, you know, and I didn't have my head hung down on the, I watched one of the players, you know, just hands buried, his head buried in his hands.

I mean, he was brokenhearted. And it's just over a game, right? I mean, and here were the disciples. The one that they loved had been crucified. Days later, they just say, you know, we had hoped.

And Jesus, he looks at these guys, and he says, what's the problem? Don't you know? Jesus was crucified. And in this passage in John, as Jesus is speaking ahead of time and telling his disciples what's going to happen, he says, listen, there's going to be people that are really excited at my crucifixion, and you are going to have broken hearts.

I don't want you to miss this point. At the beginning, believers may not know every part of the journey that their life is going to take, but I want you to recognize that God graciously tells us enough of how things are going to play out that even in the midst of the heartache and difficulties, we do well to remember we know how the story ends.

[14:50] And I think that's important for us to look at this morning. Don't be surprised by troubles. Don't be overwhelmed by the challenges and the hardships that you're going to suffer. I want you to recognize that life is marked by difficulties because we live in this broken world.

On top of that, if we live as believers, we shouldn't be surprised by the heartache and challenges that we face. I remember reading earlier this week that there was a student in Florida, and some of you perhaps have tracked that, that his assignment in his class, and this is verified, his assignment in his class was to take a large piece of paper and write Jesus on it and then drop it down on the ground and stand back and think for a second and then stomp on that paper.

And when the student rejected that assignment, he was at first disciplined by the administration for refusing to follow through with that assignment.

I want to tell you something. I'm very glad that there was enough of a public outcry that the university had a second thought on that fact.

But listen to me carefully. I believe it's just an early indicator of where things are going in our culture. And recognize the fact that there is going to be the day where you shouldn't be surprised if you are persecuted for your faith because all around the world there are people today that suffer for their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

[16:26] And don't be surprised if it comes here. I think today of the fact that Israel is being discredited at the very time that the Muslim Brotherhood has received millions and millions of dollars from our government.

Don't be surprised at what's coming with the debate on homosexual marriage. I am not the least bit surprised by what is taking place with the devolution of our culture. And in the face of all of this we need to recognize that there will be hardships in this life and we shouldn't be surprised by those. Troubles will come. And over in verse 19 it says here you know you're asking about all these details and I want to explain them to you Jesus says. Here's what I said and he wants to explain it to us so we understand it clearly.

Now I want you to mark the promise of lasting joy that we find here. Yes hardship is going to come. Difficulty is going to come. We're going to face some real trials but mark what we find in the passage.

It says there your sorrow will be turned to joy. I want you to look at this and just see what this must have looked like. Go back a little bit to the passage in Luke chapter 24 verse 17.

[17:36] Luke chapter 24 verse 17. And he said to them what is this conversation you're holding with each other as you walk?

Talking about the two disciples again. They were kind of sorrowful but then what does Jesus say? Mark the reality of what is going to come and that's what flows on here in the passage a reminder that Jesus Christ indeed is going to be resurrected from the dead and glorious truth of our salvation. Now I cannot fully imagine what the emotions must have been like for these disciples at this point but if you go back to that passage in John chapter 16 you have to mark the fact that they were a little concerned and uncertain about what was going to take place.

They heard what Jesus said they had trouble putting it together and the fact that he said it over and over again must have kind of amplified their uncertainty because Jesus was not the kind of teacher that said something just to hear himself talk.

When he made a statement there was a purpose for it and he was telling them yet again that he was going to suffer and there was going to be hardship in front. Now listen to what Jesus said there in verse 22 that no one would take their joy from them.

[18:53] John chapter 16 verse 22 So also you'll have sorrow now but I will see you again and your hearts will rejoice and no one will take your joy from you.

He was speaking to the very disciples that would soon be overwhelmed by the certainty or by watching Jesus Christ their Lord and Savior be crucified and it must have it would be something that would be supremely unsettling because in their minds what were they expecting Jesus would do on the next day when he came in.

Remember the triumphal entry? Came into the city riding how? Riding on a donkey in keeping with Old Testament prophecy behold your king comes unto you with meekness riding on a donkey and they thought hey this is it this is our opportunity the next thing that we know is the coronation of Christ and all of us will have our special place and our setting will be established and here he is speaking to them and says listen understand understand you're going to sorrow now but I will see you again and your hearts will rejoice and no one will take that joy from you and he was talking about the fact that after his crucifixion would come his resurrection and they would see the risen Christ and their hearts would revel in that truth and their hearts would rest in that truth and no one no one at all would take that joy from them.

I want you to imagine just for a moment how profound that emotional a joy must have been after the third day and the women came back to the disciples and say he is risen how did the adult male disciples respond?

alright no that's not it at all in fact you remember good old Thomas what did Thomas say? there are some of us here that would be Thomas's on steroids right unless I put my finger in those wounds I'm not going to believe and the rest of them pretty uncertain as to what was going to take place and yet Jesus says the day is coming that your joy is going to be full and after he revealed himself to them we find there that their hearts were just unbelievably lifted up and rejoicing you look in John and it tells us that when he appeared to them it says that their hearts were just overwhelmed with that fact so let's think about the next thing that Jesus says there and you look there and he says that your joy will be full and no one will take your sorrow from you I want us to think as we study the scriptures together of powerful reasons for this lasting joy see our joy today is not a joy just in the fact of the resurrection of Christ but all the other related facts that tie into it and are connected to that reality we have lasting joy because Christ's resurrection affirms the effectiveness of his sacrificial death

[21 : 54] I want you to turn in your Bible so you can understand this passage see this text for yourself in Romans chapter 4 verse 25 Romans chapter 4 verse 25 why do I have lasting joy I do not have lasting joy because of Tim Knoyer I do not have lasting joy in our economy I do not have lasting joy in the weather I have lasting joy in the finished work of Christ and the absolute certainty I have that the work he begun is accomplished and settled in the heavens Romans chapter 4 verse 25 it says who was delivered up for our transgressions and raised for our justification think with me about that it says that Christ was sacrificed for our sins why did Jesus die on the cross did he die because he was a sinner no he died because I was a sinner and you were a sinner and he died in my place and he satisfied my debt and what does it say he was delivered up for our trespasses!

Jesus died in my place he died in your place and it says and he was raised up for our justification if he had died and not risen again would we have any certainty that his death had accomplished anything what's the answer?

not at all not at all his resurrection verifies the fact of his sacrifice for our sins the debt of my sin has been satisfied and the way that I know it's been satisfied is Jesus rose from the dead and he's made that fact undeniable secondly we have lasting joy in Christ's resurrection because it is proof of the power that is on tap for us to change look in your Bible if you would to Ephesians chapter 1 verse 19 and then Ephesians chapter 2 verse 10 Ephesians chapter 1 verse 19 and Ephesians chapter 2 verse 10 what is it that makes me glad with a joy that cannot be taken away when I stop and think about the resurrection of Christ?

well it is this fact that his resurrection power is available to not only bring salvation to me and complete forgiveness for all of my sins but also to help me change Ephesians chapter 1 verse 19 it says and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power towards us who believe according to the working of his great might how many of you have ever found yourself kind of wondering well is it possible that I can really change to be someone different than who I am?

the fact of the matter is that Christ saved you and he has given to you the power of the gospel and the power of the spirit of God so you don't have to stay the way you are and how do I know that that power is available to me and how much power there is?

[24 : 55] well here's what it says it says verse 20 that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places what kind of power does it take to raise a person from the dead?

does anybody know? anybody ever seen that done? there are a number of you here that are part of the medical community and I have no doubt that you have watched individuals go through that process of finally slipping into eternity and when it's over it's what?

it's over it's over there is no coming back from that point and here the scriptures tell us that the same power that raised up Christ from the dead is available to us that we do not have to stay the way we are isn't that encouraging?

in the previous generation you could walk into a place like Borders or Little Professor or Barnes and Noble and there was this great big section piled with books on self-help right?

how many of you remember that? you had to walk past that to get to the religious books you know there's shelf after shelf after shelf about how to improve yourself how to help yourself how to make friends and influence people blah blah blah and you wait two years and where would they be?

[26 : 10] they'd be at the front of the store on this little old table called discount books and you could you could buy them and wait 20 years because the same idea just come back back around and cycle through remember that?

self-help is what? it's worthless but the power of Christ at work in the believer gives us certainty that we who know Christ are going to grow in grace and be different by his power I want you to look at another thing that we want to mark here and mark this fact that because of the resurrection we have confidence in our own resurrection and eternal joy how do I know what my future is?

in the near term here's what I know unless Jesus comes back Tim Kenoyer is going to die can I tell you that all of you are going to die? I mean have you ever heard the statement there are only two things that are undeniably true one is death and the other's taxes and we know the day is coming that we're going to slip from this place into eternity I love the flow of logic and I want you to turn back in your Bible if you would to 1 Corinthians chapter 15 in 1 Corinthians chapter 15 the apostle Paul wrote to a group of people who had kind of lost their confidence and their certainty in the reality of the resurrection resurrection and he wanted to remind them of the truth of the resurrection from the dead by the Lord Jesus Christ and its application to us as believers and so you look there in 1 Corinthians chapter 15 verse 14 and he makes a statement that helps you understand why this Sunday of all Sundays is the most important to us in our faith and if Christ has not been raised then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain if Jesus did not come back from the dead and the tomb is not empty then we are here as actually the most miserable of all people why would I say the most miserable for one thing because Christianity is not simply another plan for how to become a good person how many of you realize that let me say that carefully all kinds of religions in the world and I've said this many many times there really are only two different religions in the world one religion poses that men may improve themselves over time by working hard and by the way if you're a Hindu and you don't get it right the first time guess what you can get it right the second time and if you don't get it right the second time guess what you have the third and the fourth and the fifth you just keep working at it others propose that well if we don't get it right in this life well we've got purgatory to pay it off but eventually we'll get there you know what

Christianity says you can't solve your problem God sent his son the Lord Jesus Christ to die in your place and he is willing to save you from the absolute hopelessness of your situation if you will admit that you're a sinner and need Christ as your savior and here is the apostle writing and saying listen if Christ did not raise from the dead we've got no hope we've got no hope but then look at what he says in verse 20 but in fact Christ has been raised from the dead the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep for as by a man came death by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead do you know why we die we die because sin entered the world when Adam and Eve sinned they brought upon all of us through their federal headship the consequences of sin and beloved every one of us today you are in the process of going on that journey to the grave it's a fact but here's what it says just as through Adam death came upon all of us so also in Christ

Jesus the power of the resurrection and the certainty of the resurrection is ours to hold on to and to be confident in now look at what it says in verse 22 for as in Adam all die so also in Christ shall all be made alive but each in his own order Christ the first fruits at his coming then those who belong to Christ over the years as a pastor I have buried many people who over time became my friends and I'll tell you there is a profound difference between doing the funeral service for someone who knows

Christ and someone who I have no confidence of where they will spend their eternal destiny and when I am at the graveside at the committal service for those who know Christ I take great pleasure in the absolute certainty I have in the resurrection of the dead from the grave and why do I have that confidence because Jesus Christ arose from the dead isn't that right anybody that will fire us up is like bring it on

[31 : 18] Jesus I'm ready there's one other thing I want you to think about this morning as you think about the cross and you think about the empty tomb I want you to go in your Bible to Acts chapter 17 because I'll tell you what for those of us who are here today and know Christ the fact of the resurrection and the power of the empty tomb just makes us fired up and it gives us ambition!

By the way it also ought to give us a passion for godly living do you understand that?

If Jesus rose from the dead we're going to see him again and if we're going to see him again we'd like to be tuned up and ready for his coming would you agree with that? We ought to be living like that but I want you to look with me at Acts chapter 17 where the apostle preaches a sermon to a bunch of people that are mildly entertained by the concept or the thought of the resurrection in Acts chapter 17 we find Paul in Athens and he is preaching in the Agora in the open marketplace and as he'd come into that city he'd been really kind of fired he was put off to see so many idols they really they just they bothered him and he took advantage of that and he ended up having this opportunity to preach and the sermon kind of flows with this nice quiet dignity but it really gets down to the zinger and if you're wondering how apostolic preaching or how

Jesus preached I want you to know that he was not one to kind of dodge around the subject and avoid making people upset we have the idea I think that Jesus is preaching was this kind of you know kind of warm lukewarm just kind of flowers in your hair type of deal for my age and generation nothing really biting but here is Jesus kind of putting it on and look if you will down there to Acts chapter 17 verse 30 and 31 the times of ignorance by the way who was he addressing people who did not think they were very ignorant and he says the times of ignorance God overlooked now notice the tense when did God overlook it in the past but now he commands all people everywhere to repent mark what follows because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man who he has appointed and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead what's he saying the day is coming that

Christ Jesus himself will be the one who judges mankind earlier this morning I was reading I was reading in Revelation chapter 4 and 5 and Revelation chapter 4 is that it is just I tell you I was listening to some of you Revelation chapter 4 the glory of God the Father and Revelation chapter 5 the glory of God the Son do you know who is going to be the judge of the whole earth who will bring condemnation on those who have rejected

[35 : 22] God's Son as their Savior it will be Christ the one who hung on the tree and bore my sins the one who hung on the tree to bury your sins if you reject him it will be he with nail scarred hand who will condemn you for all of eternity for refusing the gracious and tender appeal of Christ to your soul I spoke of it earlier this morning but I want to touch on it again when Jesus was in the garden praying before the cross do you know what he was doing he was saying Lord if there's another way remember what it says in the text if it be possible here's what he was saying if there's any other way to work this out let's try that one and it wasn't the infinite debt of my sin against the infinite holiness of

God demands either Tim Kenoyer spend eternity paying that infinite debt with infinite suffering or I trust in the infinite sacrifice of Christ as being satisfaction for all of my sins now the purpose of preaching beloved truthfully is to put you on the spot of saying yes or no to God do you understand that here's the truth God sent his son to pay the penalty for our sins because God's holiness cannot overlook the offense our sins are against him and God in his perfect wisdom sacrificed his only begotten son for my sins and for your sins and it is righteous it is true and it is imperative that we with humility confess yes I stand condemned before a holy

God and I believe Jesus Christ died for my sins and I accept his work as satisfactory and finished let's bow our heads in prayer beloved I want you to think with me this morning as your heads are bowed and you who are here today as Christians that you're praying and saying Lord work in us the gospel is glorious the gospel announces to lost mankind that there is no hope apart from Christ and the gospel bids you this morning to confess your sins where you are and call upon the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved it is profoundly simple and profoundly humbling God you're holy and I understand that I stand condemned before you as a sinner but I believe the record of scriptures that

Jesus died for my sins and I admit that I stand condemned and I thankfully receive the finished work of Christ in my place and on my account and if you're here today and this morning the spirit of God is putting that part of truth on your heart

I would encourage you to not delay but to respond to it in faith yes I need Christ I need salvation through him I'm done trying to do this on my own and this morning I trust him as my savior if that's the fact of your heart I would ask that you humble yourself just quietly slip your hand up where you are just slip it up and say pastor that's me I need Christ as my savior I'm not going to put this off if you're here and that's the prayer of your heart just share that fact with me father God we are thankful for the glory of the cross we're thankful for the power of the empty work of Christ and we rejoice in that we want to live for your glory we ask this in your precious name amen John's going to come and lead us as we close and let's stand together as we do and as we're singing this song if the spirit of

God lays a matter on your heart that you need to care for might be calling you be part of our fellowship be obedient to the Lord in matter of baptism might be that you need someone to review the issues of the gospel with you