

# False Gospels That Stunt a Church's Growth

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- [ 0 : 0 0 ] Hey. Well, before we begin the sermon, I actually think we haven't collected the morning offering yet, so I'd actually invite the ushers forward to do that.
- It looks like the offering bag's already going by. Let's pause that for a second. Let me pray, and then we'll begin our sermon here. I thank you, God. I thank you, Father, that you have graciously given us so many things.
- This church, this people, all these resources, they come from you. They are yours, and what we give is simply returning to you for the work of your ministry.
- We thank you for this. Lord, as we prepare to hear this word preached, I ask, Lord God, that you would prepare our hearts. What we're talking about are things that are often hard to understand, hard to grasp. We often have major blind spots.
- We come here this morning sometimes looking for something that is less than what you have for us, something we think we need when you have all we need.
- [ 1 : 3 1 ] Help us, Lord God, to see clearly. Give us eyes to see, ears to hear, hearts to understand, all that you have in store for us. Amen. All right, well, as the collection goes by, I want to have a quick survey.
- How many of you were warned growing up, don't drink coffee, it will stunt your growth? Anyone else hear that? Whoa, okay, all right.
- That was actually a lot more than I expected, it seems. Word has gotten around. I was warned that very thing growing up. I think my grandma was the one who said that the most often. And so I refrained from drinking coffee, and grandma was right.
- I have grown up into a very tall boy. Or maybe I just grew tall and coffee had nothing to do with it because it turns out there is zero evidence of this at all.
- Harvard University Health insists there is no scientifically valid evidence to suggest that coffee can stunt a person's growth. Oh, I know. I'm sorry, parents.
- [ 2 : 4 0 ] I might have just given ammunition to your children. There's a lot of speculation. Harvard talks about, you know, where did this myth come from? Why did it come about? But you know what I think?
- Grandma just didn't want her grandkids to be bouncing off the walls. You know, she already knew we were a handful, and she didn't want to make the problem worse. But there really are things that can stunt a child's growth, right?
- If you go back to, you dig up old skeletons, old bones of people, or read old medical texts, you find out that people used to grow shorter than they do now.
- The idea of someone being six foot tall would have been a very unusual height even, you know, 150 years ago. People are taller than they used to be because they now have better nutrition than they used to have.
- Our nutrition has improved, among other things. Growing up physically, a big part of that is receiving what you really need, like that good nutrition.

- [ 3 : 39 ] It isn't about receiving what you think you need, such as, well, sometimes kids think, if I drink the coffee, then I'll grow up. That's not how it works. Sometimes what we think we need and what we really need are two different things.
- And I want to say that in the same way, the Bible says that it is possible for a church and for its people to remain immature. It is possible for Christians and local churches to remain underdeveloped, even childish, for years, sometimes even decades.
- It's possible that there are things that can hold us back from maturity. Now, I'm not picking on the 21st century North American church as easy as it would be to do that.
- It turns out this is a 2,000-year-old problem. It plagued even the early church, even in the time of the apostles.
- And there's evidence of it all over the New Testament in the Bible. Now, in 1 Corinthians 3, verses 1-4, this is the text we're starting with today. If you have a Bible that our ushers handed out, that's on page 953.
- [ 4 : 59 ] Page 953, 1 Corinthians 3, verses 1-4. Here's the words the Apostle Paul writes towards the beginning of his letter to the church in Corinth, the church that is probably of all the churches in the New Testament.
- The church in Corinth was the one that most resembles a 21st century North American church and all the dysfunctions that come with it. And here's what Paul writes to these believers at Corinth.
- He says, But I, brothers, could not address you as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ.
- I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it. And even now you are not yet ready, for you are still of the flesh.
- For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh and behaving only in a human way? For when one says, I follow Paul, and another, I follow Apollos, are you not being merely human?
- [ 6 : 06 ] Here, Paul identifies symptoms of immaturity, rivalry, jealousy, strife, and the church.
- In Ephesians chapter 4, BK read this morning. In Hebrews chapter 5, there are very, very similar passages that talk about growing up, immaturity, staying stuck as infants.
- And when we read those, we learn that staying stuck in immaturity results in Christians becoming unstable, emotionally volatile, overly affected by events and circumstances, quickly deceived by false teaching, listening to every voice but Christ's.
- They show poor judgment. They can't tell apart good from evil. They can't tell truth apart from lies or what's true from what's mostly true. It's a very unstable, very confusing, very overwhelming place to be.
- And I think it's fair to assume that nobody here wants our church to be that kind of church. Nobody wants to be there. People and churches characterized by years of conflict, confusion, instability.
- [ 7 : 20 ] We do not want that. And yet, somehow, it is possible to end up there even though we don't want to be there. How does a church and its people remain immature?
- How do we get stuck here? Well, last week, we talked about what we've been calling false gospels. And it's these false gospels that keep people childish and immature.
- And a church remains immature when it pursues false gospels. A church remains immature when it pursues false gospels.
- As we've learned last week, a false gospel, that's a story that is repeated to you over and over, or you've come up with it yourself, and soon you buy into it.

This story that feels, that becomes one of the scripts by which you run your whole life. A false gospel, the word gospel means good news. So a false gospel is good news that is fake.

[ 8 : 21 ] It tells you that you need something. You have this neediness for something that's going to fill you up. You're encouraged to pursue it so that you can get that good life that you've always wanted.

You toil away your life trying to get that false need met, or trying to make sure that you don't lose a thing that's meeting it. But it's just a fantasy.

And it's not going to save you forever from the very fate you're trying to avoid. False gospels are always going to stunt your growth. And they come in the form of longings and demands.

And so often they begin with the words, if only. Sometimes we direct our needs outward toward other people. And we say, if only other people would just fill in the blank.

And we fight and we quarrel and we manipulate. And we make little passive-aggressive suggestions to other people to try to make these false gospels come true. If only my spouse would.

[ 9 : 28 ] If only my children would. If only my parents would. If only my pastor would. If only. Or we finally give up in resignation and resentment. Or we direct these false gospels inward.

And we say, if only I would just. If only I could just fill in the blank. Then everything would be okay. And we lose ourselves in shame and anxiety.

Voices in our head beating us down. If only, if only, if only. Then life would be good. Or at least I'd be okay. Now the truth is that every one of us, as we learned last week, has, you know, we've all got a couple dozen of these false gospels hidden in our hearts.

Often there's a two or three that really, really have a grip on us and drive us. Sometimes we've got them in our hearts and we don't even know it. They lie dormant for years and you don't even realize it.

For example, you might not realize you have a neediness for money until for the first time in your life you run into money problems. And then you discover that was there all along.

[ 10 : 34 ] You don't realize you have a neediness for approval until you are separated from your endlessly approving family. Sometimes as we walk through the wilderness of this world, these things start to show up in us.

And they start to grow. It's kind of like a bear cub that learns how to break into your garbage bins. It feeds on this food. And it grows and it keeps coming back.

The false gospels grow and we leave our bins unlatched and we feed them. And what happens is we stay immature the more we feed them. And sometimes a church is all too willing to feed the bears.

Because when you offer to feed the bears, when you offer to meet this neediness, these felt needs in people, you're going to attract people. And you're going to attract people who are very excited to be at your church because you're feeding the bears.

And you're going to train your people at church to feed the bears. So when Paul wrote 1 Corinthians, he is concerned that one of the big concerns in this letter is that the church of Corinth is busy feeding the bears.

[ 11 : 53 ] It is enabling its people to pursue false gospels. It is promoting them. It is a place that people are coming to meet their false needs and to meet their needs at one another's expense.

To meet their needs at the expense of Jesus Christ and at the expense of Paul's sanity. You can just, as you read the text, you can see him almost pulling his hair out about all the madness that is happening in this church.

For example, there are many people in the church who think of themselves as spiritual, as led by the Holy Spirit, filled with his maturity and wisdom.

But as we've read in 1 Corinthians 3, verse 1, Paul says, I, brothers, could not address you as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ.

Paul's saying, you guys think you're spirit-led and filled and mature and you're not. What's keeping them immature?

[ 12 : 58 ] How are they stuck in the flesh? Stuck in these false needs and false gospels in this way of handling life our own way? Well, there's one particular false gospel in this passage, here in chapter 3, in the first few verses.

And this is one that the Corinthian church has been offering to its people and that they have been indulging in. Verse 4, When one says, I follow Paul, and another, I follow Apollos.

Are you not being merely human? So here is a false gospel of the glorious leader. The false gospel of the glorious leader. A dynamic, charismatic individual.

Someone to follow. Someone to pursue. Someone to praise. Someone to quote endlessly. Someone to talk about. Someone you can name drop. You can meet and shake their hands and take a selfie with them.

Right? You can invite your friends to see them. You can geek out about them. For some of the Corinthians, that guy was Paul against his will. He didn't want to be that guy, very obviously, as he writes this.

[ 14 : 09 ] And yet people tried to make him that. For others, it was Apollos. You know, this guy who's very articulate. Oh, he's so good in his speech. For others, it was Simon Peter. They all had their favorites and they argued among each other about it.

If only our leaders were more like Paul, then I'd feel better about our church. If only they could preach like Apollos, then we'd feel like we're on the right track. If only we could be led by someone like Peter, then we'd really be something.

If only, if only, if only. Thankfully, nobody thinks like that today. That's a problem left safely in the past, isn't it? People aren't looking for a glorious leader.

That never happens in church, let alone in politics. I invite you to ask, are you craving a glorious leader? Are you idealizing, let's say a celebrity pastor?

Or worse yet, one of the pastors here, right? If I'm the guy you're idealizing, you are in for a big disappointment. I can't even speak without the audio going, you know, it's, I will let you down.

[ 15 : 17 ] I promise you. We are not ideal. And the more that you idealize and glorify a human leader, it's going to keep you immature.

That's the false gospel of the glorious leader. That's what Paul's saying. But it's far from the only false gospel the book of 1 Corinthians mentions. Because it seems a Corinthian church is awash, flooded out, with false gospels.

And Paul has to confront them one at a time. The book of 1 Corinthians is him just going to one after another, after another of these things. There are at least six more that show up in the book of 1 Corinthians alone.

Let's look at these one at a time. A second false gospel, we've looked at the gospel of the glorious leader. A second false gospel is the false gospel of the sensational. The sensational.

Some of the Jewish Christians in the Corinthian church were tempted to demand the sensational. In chapter 1, verses 22 and 23, Paul says, For Jews demand signs, and Greeks seek wisdom.

[ 16 : 28 ] But we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews, and folly to Gentiles. Now we're going to get to the Greeks, to the Gentiles in a moment. They've got their own problems.

But these Jewish Christians in Corinth, they wanted to see these miraculous signs, big spiritual things, powerful encounters, powerful events, and maybe in powerful locations.

They wanted that mountaintop experience. And so many Christians, this is again, not just a first century problem. So many Christians are chasing the next mountaintop experience that they think is going to fix their problems with God, and their problems with other people, and their problems with themselves.

If only I could have that big spiritual experience, or have that next big spiritual experience, then things would be great. Finally, things would be better. There are churches who've got the band, the powerful kick drum, and the fog machines, and the laser light shows, and dynamic speakers, and you're going to show up on that Sunday morning, and they're going to really get your emotions going, and give you that spiritual high that will bring you to the mountaintop.

It's a mountaintop that can be bought if you have the budget for it. Many people feel like they need that, and they'll show up if you supply it, or they run after conferences, and retreats, and camps, and all these events chasing the mountaintop, and many people, and it's nothing against these things, and nothing against kick drums, okay?

[ 18 : 05 ] Or, you know, okay, even fog machines, all right? It's not the end of the world that a church is a fog machine, okay? But that's not what we really need. I invite you to ask, are you chasing the next mountaintop spiritual experience?

Miracles, mountaintops, these are good things, but they are God's to give in his own time. They are not ours to need and demand and crave.

Ironically, the more you chase them, the more your growth is stunted. It's a false gospel of the sensational. A third false gospel in Corinth, the false gospel of self-expression.

The false gospel of self-expression. Paul spends three chapters, chapters 12 through 14, trying to correct this. He calls it the opposite of love.

God had given the Corinthians many spiritual gifts that empowered them to serve one another and to mature the church. They're intended to build up the church. But the Corinthians took a good thing and then they made it all about themselves.

[ 19 : 14 ] In particular, in that church, they really love these dramatic pyrotechnic gifts. Oh, speaking in tongues. That's so cool. It feels amazing. It looks amazing to us to the point that their church gatherings, they would all show up and the church gatherings would fall into chaos of self-expression as everyone is just going on and on on their own and there's no order in the service.

Paul has to plead with them in chapter 14, verse 12, so with yourselves, since you are eager for manifestations of the Spirit, strive to excel in building up the church.

In verse 20, he then goes on to say, brothers, do not be children in your thinking. Be infants in evil, but in your thinking be mature.

So many times people want to discover and express their spiritual gifts because they think they need that to feel like they're something. To feel like you're not a nobody in order to be seen, in order to be heard, in order to feel good about themselves, in order to feel like they belong.

They want to teach, they want to sing, they want to perform, they want to serve, to run ministries, but not to build up the church. Sometimes we want it to build up ourselves. If only other people would just let me express my gifts, then I'd be fulfilled.

[ 20 : 41 ] And they feel very hurt and resentful if they're told no. Or if they're asked to step down from leading a ministry. Can I tell you from my own experience, the church is just not a good place to get applauded for your self-expression.

Okay? As a pastor, I get humbled on the regular. That's not what we're here for. This is just not a good place to be a vehicle for promoting and expressing ourselves.

If you're pursuing that, the more we insist on performing our own gifts, the more we remain children in our thinking. It's a false gospel of self-expression.

A fourth false gospel. And if you notice that all of these, they cut a little close to home, don't they? Turns out things haven't changed a lot in 2,000 years, as different as we are then.

A fourth false gospel. The false gospel of impressive knowledge. The false gospel of impressive knowledge. We read earlier Paul's observation that Greeks seek wisdom.

[ 21 : 57 ] And by the way, a God who is crucified is a very bad look. They were not impressed with that. It did not sound like wisdom to them.

And many of the Corinthians, they needed to feel smart. They needed to feel like they knew all the answers. They needed to get it right. And they needed to feel in control. And Paul specifically chose not to accommodate them.

He was not going to feed that bear. He writes in chapter 2, verses 1 through 5, And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom.

For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much troubling.

And my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom but in demonstration of the spirit and of power so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

[ 23 : 05 ] The Corinthians, they craved sophistication. Man, they would have loved inviting a sophisticated academic to speak or maybe a podcaster who could come and talk at their church.

And sound really good and wise and everyone would go, wow, yeah. They loved being knowledgeable themselves. They would have loved reading and mining the scriptures for cool insights, for gold nuggets that give them a rush that make them feel good about themselves.

They can go and repeat it to all their friends. You know what I learned? Ooh. Knowledge is easy to acquire. And many people are greedy for more, more, more.

Wisdom lags behind. Wisdom is slower, harder. Love takes time to grow.

As Paul warns the Corinthians in chapter 8 verses 1 to 3, this knowledge puffs up. the love builds up.

[ 24 : 10 ] If anyone imagines that he knows something, he does not yet know as he ought to know. But if anyone loves God, he is known by God.

I will be the very first to say that good rhetorical skill is helpful. I will be the very first to say that Bible knowledge and good doctrine are vital for us to mature.

But sometimes we are needy for these things and not in a good way. Not from a place of humility, but from a place of greed and accumulation.

I have learned to be wary when immature believers, they practically inhale theology texts and demand still more. Their knowledge tends to far outpace their maturity.

They are concerned far more with confidence in what they know than with confidence in the God who knows them. If only we could get our doctrine perfect, if only other people would get in line, if only we could learn our Bibles better and uncover all the little hidden nuggets, then everything would go so much better.

[ 25 : 26 ] Unfortunately, there are churches that encourage this sort of neediness. They are focused on developing the doctrine and the Bible knowledge of their members. They attract people greedy for this and they mistake the knowledge for real, genuine wisdom and love.

I've visited churches like that before. you can feel it in the air. Are you pursuing impressive knowledge, craving it?

The more we are greedy for it, the more we remain puffed up and childish. It's a false gospel of impressive knowledge. A fifth false gospel we might call the false gospel of big achievements.

The false gospel of big achievements. Some pastors are very eager for their church to make it big, to swell in numbers, big buildings, big campuses, many ministries and it attracts people who want to feel like they're part of something big.

To do big things for God. If only we could have a bigger presence, a bigger impact, then we would be getting it right. This never happens in North America, does it?

[ 26 : 38 ] In our ignorance to do big things for God, we may build his church with bad building material. Consider what Paul writes in chapter 3 verses 10 through 13.

According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder, I laid a foundation and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it.

For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now, if anyone builds on that foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become manifest.

For the day will disclose it because it will be revealed by fire and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If you want to build a house for God, it's a lot quicker, a lot easier to use wood, hay, and straw.

Readily attainable materials that you can throw together and make a house. But these are not the building materials we need. The Spirit often works more slowly and patiently than we do.

[ 27 : 57 ] For people who want churches a big achievement, keeping in step with the Spirit will probably mean slowing down, maturing, loving, teaching, shepherding God's people.

Making a big impact isn't a bad thing, it's a good thing. But needing it, that's where things go wrong. Are you needing a big achieving church?

The more we toil for it, the more immature the church remains, even if it does get big. That's the false gospel of big achievement. Number six, the false gospel of social status.

The false gospel of social status. That's something no one ever struggles with in a church, is it? Nobody here ever worries about feeling left out, singled out, worried about feeling like an outsider.

Social status was a big deal for the Corinthians too. Even in this little church in Corinth, there was conflict about social status.

[ 29 : 08 ] Conflict between the wealthy and the poor, between the noble born and slaves, between educated people and the uneducated. Paul was in particular very horrified by a communion meal that went badly.

Some people who were well-to-do showed up, brought their own food, ate it all, and then others showed up shortly afterwards without food and went home hungry and humiliated. Wow, great place.

How often people come to a church in order to build their social status, to feel welcomed and affirmed and accepted finally, to feel like an insider and no longer like an outsider.

We worry about who likes us. We worry about how other people think of us. Are they, oh gosh, what are they seeing when they look at me? Do they approve of us? Sometimes a church is not about God and what he says, but other people and what they think.

And there are churches that build their whole ministry around this craving for acceptance. Think of all the if-onlys.

[ 30 : 18 ] If only I could speak and dress and sing in a way that people would approve of me. If only people at church would do a better job of being my friend. If only people would reach out to me more.

If only I could be welcomed and accepted and loved and this can finally be the family I never had. If only. When people come to church for social status and acceptance reasons, to be loved and accepted and honored, I tell you what, it's only a matter of time before they leave.

because at some point, okay, there's not often I make a pastoral guarantee, but I'll make a pastoral guarantee here at Squamish Baptist Church. At some point, someone here is going to treat you badly.

Come to Squamish Baptist Church and get treated badly. I promise you. The Corinthian church was like that for sure. It is consumed with social status questions.

Many of the early churches were. And so Paul reminds them in chapter 1 verses 26 through 29. Consider your calling, brothers. Not many of you were wise according to worldly standards.

[ 31 : 29 ] Not many were powerful. Not many were of noble birth. Wow, he's really gassing them up, isn't he? But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise.

God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong. God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.

That last sentence is basically saying it's not about you. We're not here to boost your social status. We're not here to fill you up with approval and acceptance.

Look, feeling welcomed, feeling accepted, befriended, those are all good things. things. But some people make that the ultimate thing. Our culture hates the idea that you won't be welcomed and accepted and loved everywhere you go for whatever you do.

That's not what we're here for. The more we need and pursue these things, the more we remain stuck in immaturity. That's a false gospel of social status.

[ 32 : 39 ] And one last false gospel in 1 Corinthians. It's the false gospel of prosperity. prosperity. The false gospel of prosperity. This is a very famous one.

Churches and preachers promising health, wealth, and the American dream to their members. If only you had enough faith, then you would be healed. If only you tithed more, then God would give you more money.

If only you became rich, then you would be happy. the funny thing is that when we read about in the New Testament about the kingdom of God, we find that God does promise that his coming kingdom is a place of health, wealth, and prosperity.

Revelation 21 says death shall be no more. All things made new. I mean, the streets of the city are pure gold. How much more prosperous do you get than that? Amazing.

And the Corinthians made the mistake of thinking that all of those kingdom blessings can be true in full right now. No need for a resurrection.

[ 33 : 45 ] Paul actually explained to them that you need a resurrection because they're like, why would you need that? We can have it all right now. All God's kingdom promises for right now. Your best life now. All the blessings can be yours.

And Paul actually sets the Corinthians straight. Okay, he gets a little sarcastic here. Chapter 4, verse 8. Oh, already you have all you want. Already you have become rich.

Without us, you have become kings. And would that you did reign so that we might share the rule with you. The Corinthians believed they could have all the blessings of the kingdom without the presence of their king.

But that kingdom, we enjoy a bit of it already. But it has not arrived in full. There is so much that has not yet come. Most of the blessings will only come in full when Jesus Christ returns.

Whatever health, wealth, and prosperity we enjoy are just little glimpses of a coming kingdom. They are not a guarantee in the present life.

[ 34 : 49 ] But think of how we try to attract people into the church with these things. How many churches put up big billboards and beautiful websites families?

And on those stock images of shiny, happy families? How many churches have a culture in which it's really important to maintain a good image?

You and your family, you have to look really put together when you show up or else people won't want Jesus. Smile bigger or people are going to go to hell.

People seriously get really pressured by this. I need to look put together. This church, everyone here needs to look put together or otherwise people won't want Jesus.

And you will. You'll attract people who want a shiny, happy family church for all the wrong reasons. And you'll drive away people, by the way, who are ashamed that they just can't measure up.

[ 35 : 51 ] It's a concerning thing when I see churches market themselves as places where people can escape poverty and fix their marriages and get their kids to pay and feel good about themselves and get healthy and set their finances in order and finally have that American dream life they always aspired to have.

And then they're devastated when they find out that this is not the way things looked on the billboard. The Christian life that I'm experiencing didn't turn out the way that it looked on the website.

Look, these are all good things to have. Some of those things the church can help with even. But do you show up at church to have all that you want to become rich, to become kings, or at least a toned down Canadian version of those things?

The more we need and demand and relentlessly pursue these things, the more our growth is stunted. That's the false gospel of prosperity.

We've gone through seven false gospels in 1 Corinthians alone. And time does not permit us to list the dozens of others found elsewhere in the Bible. False gospels of entertainment, of escapism, of being right, of law-keeping legalism, of religious customs, of social and political activism.

[ 37 : 18 ] On and on and on and on it goes. What we show up at church for, what we need. As one author puts it, we have not forsaken the faith, but we may have redefined it in ways that are fundamentally different from the gospel laid out in scripture.

And a church remains immature and its people remain immature when it pursues false gospels. So how do we overcome these false gospels? What do we need instead?

Well, we spoke somewhat about this last week and we'll have, I really want to focus on this next week especially. This is the hook to come back for more. Right? Show up needy for more words of wisdom.

Look, we talk about false gospels that take root in our families next week as well as our church, as well as in our own hearts. But for now, I invite you on your own time, like, look at all the scriptures and if you miss them, you can go back on our website, look at the sermon.

I invite you, look at all those scriptures that we quoted from 1 Corinthians and I want you to notice that in every case, Paul gives counsel. Paul gives an alternative. Paul gives instructions for what to do if you're caught up in these false gospels.

[ 38 : 32 ] And in every single case, he names the false gospel, but he tells us what we actually really need instead. And each and every time, it is some variation of this theme.

It is not about you. It is about Jesus Christ. It is not about what you think you need. It is about what you already have because you're with Jesus.

It's not about whether you're in control. It's not about whether you've got it perfect or whether you know all the answers or whether you can always be there for other people or that you have the approval of other people.

It's about Jesus Christ. He's in control. It's about Jesus Christ. He's the one who's perfect. It's about Jesus Christ. He has all the answers. Jesus Christ.

He can be there perfectly for all his people. Jesus Christ. He has his father's approval. Jesus Christ, who is all the things you could never be. The pressure is off of you.

[ 39 : 34 ] That's the way it ought to be. God saved you not to make the false gospels come true for yourself. He saved you so that you can be united, connected with his son by faith, so that Jesus can be what you just can't get yourself to be.

So the pressure is off of you to play God or to get other people to play God, so that you can let go of your false gospels and rest in the true gospel and actually begin to mature and begin to grow up together as a church, as a household of God.

That's why Paul says this about what God has done for us. In chapter 1, verses 30 and 31, he says, because of him, because of God, you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption.

all those things that you were trying to get for yourself and Jesus is already there. He's already got it and you're with him, you're in him. So that, as it is written, let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.

What a word. Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord. The things you need for your confidence. He's like, you know where your confidence is? That you're belonging to Jesus Christ.

[ 41 : 09 ] He's your boast. He's what you really need. And you have him in full. You're not needy for other people to be a certain way. You're not needy for yourself to be a certain way.

You're content. And ironically, you actually kind of start becoming like Christ. You're content because the Lord is who he is. That's the good news.

He is our boast. He is our confidence. And he is our joy. And in this way, all of a sudden, we can finally start growing up.

That's how the Christian life works. Let me pray. Our God and our Father, we confess and I confess as I look at who I have been and who I am at present that we sometimes come to your church and to your gathering to make it useful for our own selves to collaborate with our false gospels to give us and fill us with what we think we need.

But like a good Father, you know what we actually need. You have something deeper and better in mind for us so that our confidence lies not in ourselves, not in other people, but our confidence lies in you, that we belong to you.

[ 42 : 50 ] It's really not about us. Lord, help us remember this. We forget, we forget, we forget. Thank you that your word reminds us of it.

I thank you, Lord, I thank you personally that you are reminding me of it this very morning.  
We need this, Lord. Draw us near to you and let our boast be in you alone.

Amen. Amen. Amen.