

Jesus and His Kingdom

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[0 : 00] All right, please turn with me in your Bibles to Mark chapter 10. Mark chapter 10. Yes, that's right. You heard it. It is not Romans. We're in Mark. So let me just fill you in on a few reasons why this is so.

So it's March. The thaw's kind of already set in. And yeah, I know a lot of whoo, right? Hopefully the rains have ceased. But anyway, as many of you may not know, we've got a Shepherds Conference coming next week or this coming week.

So one of the things that we're going to do this morning, we're going to pray. But I'm going to be away a couple of times in March. I've been asked to preach at Daniel Henderson's church in Chewinigan, Quebec. And it'll be my first time I've preached in French. So I've been brushing up on Dewey Lingo, getting my French debut just perfect, ma. We'll see how that goes. It could be the last time I'm ever allowed in Quebec again.

Two of the things that I want to call to your attention to pray. But Romans 7 is an incredible chapter which leads into an even more incredible chapter of Romans 8.

And I really think that teaching should all be together. So next week we have Stephen Jans is going to be here preaching. If you do not know Stephen Jans, he heads up Miller College of the Bible at Sunny Bray Camp.

[1 : 44] That's where it's heard. So he's a great speaker. So I invited him to come speak to you. I did tell him that we're getting back from the Shepherds Conference, hearing some of the greatest preachers in the world.

So he's got a lot to live up to. So he's excited for that. And just to get to know you, he's been a tremendous friend and blessing in ministry.

So I'm going to ask you to pray for that. The other thing that I want to pray for is, so Pastor Glenn from The Rock reached out.

I don't know if you've seen him lately. He's actually torn both his rotator cuffs. And he's got a sciatica nerve happening at the same time. So I ran into him just the other day. He did not look good.

So he's asked us to pray for him as he is going in for surgery on Friday. So he asked that we would pray for him to give him strength.

[2 : 43] So during that time, I know Pastor Dave is going to jump in there for another sermon. And perhaps, David, it all depends what calendar, if it fits together.

And we're also going to hear from Dave and David here as well. So one of the things that Glenn did tell me about a couple of weeks ago, and it's now confirmed, and they'd love for us to join them.

Athletes in Action is going to come out and run some sports camps. So they're going to be doing it at Brennan Park. They're going to be running all-day activities. It is to be for outreach.

So our encouragement just isn't to send our kids, but to make sure our kids have an opportunity to bring their friends for some full-on soccer camp action.

So those are two things that I thought we'd pray for, just ongoing ministry opportunities for evangelism. Just praying for Glenn just as he's going under surgery, and the Lord would be kind, and there'd be no complications, and that he'll be able to press forward very soon.

[3 : 48] Dear Lord, Holy, Heavenly Father, we thank you for the God that you are. We thank you, just as we get into this text, and as we're coming up on Easter, it's good to move back to the Gospels just to prepare our hearts of what exactly went on those months and weeks before you were crucified for us, O Lord.

So we just thank you for this passage and the lessons that you give to us through it. Lord, lift up Pastor Glenn. Let's lift up just even that church body.

I pray you'd bring healing and a relief of the pain that he's been enduring, O Lord. It's been debilitating. I pray that the surgery goes well. His rotator cuff is repaired, and he's back to full strength.

Until that time, I pray for your hand of mercy and grace upon that church, just that he's going to be away for a bit. I give you thanks for our relationship, and just even to be able to go over there and have some of our pastors preach and edify them through your word.

And Lord, we just ask you that just as we start to make these plans for this evangelism camp that will happen in late July. I pray that we would be willing participants and joyful in using our gifts to bless this community.

[5 : 10] And we pray for its success, and I mean success in how you intend it to be. That, A, the gospel is shared, and I pray that for those who are here, may they come to a saving knowledge of you, O Lord.

So I just pray for their team as they kind of take the lead on the organization, and we get to come in and strengthen them in that process. So Father, I ask you these things, your most gracious, holy, and heavenly name. Amen.

All right, so when we come to Mark chapter 10, it's kind of an interesting story that we're getting into, and it's some of the more memorable stories, but one of the things that I'm convinced of is that sometimes we get a false understanding or a misreading of what is going on in this text.

If you did not know, the text that we're going into is repeated in Matthew, and it's repeated in the book of Luke. And what's interesting, it's in the same order.

Now, you need to understand that each gospel writer had a purpose for putting the teachings that they do at the specific times that they do in the text.

[6 : 28] And in case you did not know, you can essentially divide the life of Christ into three sections. The first part, which is generally believed to be the first year and a half, is Jesus Christ circling the region of Galilee, and we call that the period of revelation, where he's teaching, he's conducting a lot of miracles, and he's building up near Capernaum.

So very evangelistic, big crowds, he's revealing who he is. Then the second part begins with Jesus pulling his disciples away from the crowds, and we call this the time of preparation.

Because Jesus is going to reveal, if you know Mark 8, and it happens in all the gospels, that Jesus essentially asks them a question. Who do you say that I am?

And he's hoping that they get it right, because there's no plan B. Right? He's got to make sure before he goes to the cross that these disciples understand who he is.

And then the third part, which I call the fulfillment part of the New Testament, is the Passion Week. That whole week leading up to Jesus Christ.

[7 : 48] What's interesting in Mark 10, we now find Jesus. He's now left Galilee, and he's on a road to Jerusalem. He's essentially on his way to be crucified.

And the cross is now in view. If you're familiar with the chronology, he's already fed the 5, 6, 20,000 people. And if you remember, they wanted to elevate him to king, which he would not have.

We also have that Jesus, like I said, has revealed himself to the apostles. The transfiguration has now occurred. And now Jesus is on the move from Galilee to Jerusalem.

And here's the thing. Jesus is not wandering aimlessly. Jesus is moving deliberately towards his execution.

And as he walks towards the cross, we note that he keeps defining the kingdom of God with increasing clarity.

[9 : 00] And here in Mark 10, he confronts one of the most dangerous illusions in all of religion. It's the illusion that you can do something to inherit eternal life.

It's the illusion that you can improve yourself. You can moralize enough. You can give enough. You can clean yourself up enough. You can become religious enough.

Now, make no mistake. The illusion that Jesus Christ is clarifying 2,000 years ago is the same illusion that exists today.

It exists here in Squamish. It's alive in our churches. It's alive in our God-fearing homes. It's alive in moral people.

But it's a deadly illusion. And it's deadly because it keeps people close to Jesus, but not surrendered to Jesus.

[10:03] Right? I am pro-Jesus. I love Jesus. But are you surrendered to Jesus? Jesus. This morning, we're going to see two kinds of people approach Christ.

One group brings nothing. The other group brings everything. Yet only one receives the kingdom and the other one walks away.

And what's interesting is the difference between them is not intelligence. It's not sincerity. It's not morality. And it's not even religious devotion. The difference is this.

And it's, as Dave Nannery pointed out in his sermon, one comes empty-handed. And the other refuses to let go of what's in his hand.

A lot of people think this passage is primarily about money and about children. Not true. It is about the writers building up a contrast between those who come to him who have nothing to give and those who think they've got everything to give or at least something to give.

[11:15] And ultimately, it's about the impossibility of saving yourself. And here's the thing. If we, unless we understand this, we will misread everything Jesus Christ says here.

Mark places these accounts, as do Matthew and Luke, side by side with great intentionality. Children, as we know, contribute nothing.

And yet we have a ruler who appears to contribute everything. And then Jesus says something that stuns his disciples. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.

To which the disciples respond, then who can be saved? In fact, that's the right question. And what we're going to read is that Jesus answers it with one of the most important statements in the Gospel of Mark.

It simply is, With man it is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God. This saying, these words of Jesus Christ, becomes what's known as the theological center of this passage.

[12:38] That salvation is impossible with man. It's impossible. It doesn't say it's difficult. It doesn't say it's unlikely.

It doesn't say it's rare. It says it's impossible. Which means the only people who enter the kingdom are those who stop trying to earn it.

So this morning, I want to show you four movements in this text. The first movement is, we need to understand that the kingdom must be received, not achieved.

Number two, moral achievement cannot save you. Number three, self-salvation is impossible.

And the fourth, probably the most difficult point, is following Christ will cost you everything. But it will give you more than you ever imagined.

[13:44] So as we walk through this text, I want you to ask yourself one honest question. Do I come to Jesus as a child or like this rich young ruler?

Because as we're going to see, both kneel, both come to Jesus respectfully, yet only one receives the kingdom.

So let's begin in verse 13. So this is under the first heading, the kingdom must be received, not achieved. Verse 13, and they were bringing children to him, and he might touch them, and the disciples rebuked them.

Now Mark tells us people are bringing children to Jesus, but Luke clarifies this and says that they were actually infants. They were babies. They were not moral examples.

They were not future leaders. They were not impressive candidates for discipleship. They were helpless dependents. And the disciples' response is to rebuke the parents.

[14:55] Why? Why would the disciples not be all right with this? And it has to do with this ancient world and how they viewed things.

So first of all, a child had no status, no rights. They didn't contribute anything maybe other than a gagagoo-goo. And they had no spiritual significance in the minds of the religious elites.

In other words, children were socially insignificant. In a culture driven by honor and status, children were at the bottom.

And this is why this moment matters. Notice in verse 14. But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant. This word indignant is not a lazy or a lesser word. It is actually a strong word. Jesus isn't just angry.

[15:59] He is very angry with the disciples. How dare you stop them from coming to me?

In fact, this is the only time in Mark's gospel where Jesus is described this way towards his disciples. Even with many of the other issues we see the disciples doing, Jesus does not become

angry with them.

But with what they are doing on this moment, he is angry. Why? Because they are blocking the very picture of the gospel.

Let the children come to me. Do not hinder them. For to such belongs the kingdom of God.

Now notice carefully what he says. First, he does not say that the kingdom belongs to the intelligent. He does not say it belongs to the discipline or the morally accomplished.

[17:02] He says it belongs to such as these. Meaning those like them. Then verse 15, he says, Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.

In case you are missing this, this is what is known as absolute language. Shall not enter.

He doesn't say they will struggle. He doesn't say they probably won't. He says shall not enter. So the obvious question is what does it mean to receive the kingdom like a child?

Here's what a lot of people think, but this isn't it. It does not mean childlike innocence. The fact of the matter is, Scripture teaches that there is total depravity.

Psalms 51, Romans 3 speaks to it. It's not because they're morally pure or they're emotionally simple or there's this sentimental sweetness to them.

[18:19] The fact of the matter is, children are not morally neutral. The fact is, a child are born of Adam. Amen? Just as we are.

But what Jesus is highlighting here is three different things. One, they are dependent. Two, they're helpless. And three, they are unable.

As we all know, a child contributes nothing to their survival. They earn nothing. They achieve nothing. They secure nothing. Absolutely everything is provided.

And this is the picture Jesus wants. You see, to receive the kingdom like a child means you come with no leverage. There's no resume.

There's no bargaining power. There's no claim. You simply come empty-handed. And we see that that word receive is critical.

[19:20] Fact is, you do not build the kingdom. You do not negotiate entry. You do not earn access. You receive the kingdom.

You see, religion says do, achieve, improve, merit. But Jesus says, receive, receive, receive.

And if you do not receive it like a dependent child, you shall not enter. So that is the foundation Mark lays before introducing us to this rich young ruler.

Jesus essentially places these helpless infants beside a morally accomplished ruler in a very intentional way.

Because there's a contrast coming. One group has nothing and the kingdom belongs to them. The next man appears to have everything and walks away without it.

[20:28] So the question I ask before we move on is, do you approach God as a dependent or as a contributor?

Or to put it in another way, do I come empty or do I subtly believe I bring something of value?

Because if you do not let you do not come like a child, you shall not enter. Now watch what happens next, verses 17.

And right here we're going to learn part two, sorry. The illusion of moral achievement. The illusion of moral achievement. Starting in verse 17.

It says, as he was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him, good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life? Now Mark has given this man a level of urgency.

[21:31] Notice that he runs. He's running to Jesus. And if you know anything about the culture, adult men do not run in public, especially if you were wealthy.

It was considered to be undignified beneath their status. So this man runs up and then he kneels. He's demonstrated public humility.

From the outside, he's the perfect model seeker. He's eager. He is respectful. And he's spiritually concerned.

And he absolutely asked the right question. What must I do to inherit eternal life? Now I'm sure you're picking up the assumption in his question.

Because it begins with what must I do? You see, he's assuming that eternal life is achievable, it's attainable, and it's earnable.

[22:35] Well, he's not asking who to trust. He's asking, what do I do? What do I have to perform?

And this, my friend, is the pure definition of religion. Now what's interesting is that Jesus does not immediately give this man the sinner's prayer, right?

Sounds like the perfect guy. Hey, let me tell you about this story and lead you in prayer. Jesus asks him a very simple question. He says, why do you call me good? Why do you call me good?

No one is good except God alone. Now some people say, look at that, Jesus is denying his deity. That's not what's going on here. What Jesus is doing is he's exposing this man's shallow theology. In Jewish thinking, good is an absolute sense belong to God alone. But what Jesus is doing, he's forcing the issue. He's basically saying, do you understand what you're saying?

[23 : 45] Do you understand who you're talking to? Do you understand what goodness actually means? Because most people, when they think good, they think in relative terms, right?

I'm good because you know your neighbor is bad. Right? We always think in that. I'm good because my brother is bad.

Or then when you look at your sister, my sister is good and I am bad. Right? There's always these frame of references. But that's how men think.

But Jesus thinks very differently. Jesus is thinking about absolute holiness. And that's why in verse 19 he says, you know the commandments.

And if you're familiar with the commandments, you know that he's listing the second table of the commandments, which are the relational commandments, right? Do not murder. Do not commit adultery.

[24 : 46] Do not steal. Do not bear false witness. Do not defraud. Honor your father and mother. Why does he do this?

It's because the law itself exposes self-deception. The law doesn't save, but it reveals. And Paul says in Romans 3 that through the law comes knowledge of sin.

Now notice how this man responds in verse 20. Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth. Now many of you here, he's got to be lying.

He's got to be lying. Jesus is going to drop the bomb on him. But he doesn't. The text doesn't say that he's lying. It is very likely that he is innocent of those things.

And from an external perspective, he is indeed moral. Kind of like Paul in Philippians 3 when he writes, As to the law, I am or was blameless.

[25 : 57] Meaning he was externally upright, socially respectable, religiously disciplined. And this leads us to this incredible verse.

Take a look at verse 21. And Jesus looking at him, loved him. Jesus isn't irritated by his statement. It's not mocking him. It's not harsh. It says that Jesus loved him. But then Jesus exposes him. You lack one thing. Go sell all that you have and give to the poor. And you will have treasure in heaven.

And come follow me. Now some people think that's a universal command of poverty. It is not a universal command of poverty. What this is, is a perfectly aimed arrow right at this man's true God.

[27 : 00] You see, Jesus doesn't confront him with adultery or murder or theft. He confronts him with idolatry. Which is why when Jesus quoted the Ten Commandments, he didn't start with the first one.

You shall have no other gods before me. See, the man believed he kept the law. But the law begins with worship.

And eventually his wealth was his functional savior. Money represented security, identity, power, control, status.

Jesus simply says, you want eternal life? Then let go of what you trust for life and follow me. And Jesus offers, you shall have treasure in heaven. You see, Jesus is offering him something far greater.

[28 : 06] But this man's hand is so tightly wrapped around his idol, he can't let go.

So, verse 22, it says, disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

Now, it should be noted that this man would have been on the caravan heading to Jerusalem for the Passover. So, he's a part of this group of people.

So, he's religious and wanting to do all these things right. And we see that he's not angry. We see that he's not argumentative.

He is a man who's full of sorrow. Why? Because he understands perfectly what Jesus is asking of him.

[29 : 05] And he refuses. Remember, he knelt. He ran. He asked the right question. He hears the right answer. And yet, he walks away.

Make no mistake, this is one of the most tragic moments in the Gospel of Mark. Here is a man who genuinely wanted eternal life, but not at the cost of dethroning himself.

You see, this is the illusion of moral achievement. He thought he lacked a spiritual supplement. But Jesus showed him that he lacked surrender.

He thought he needed an addition. Jesus demands replacement. And this danger is revealed that you can be moral, disciplined, sincere, and religious, yet still be ruled by another God.

You can be close to Jesus, but still worshipping something else. You see, this passage is not primarily about money.

[30 : 06] It's about lordship. The issue is not wealth. The issue is what you cannot give up. Let me ask you that question in a different way.

What is the one thing? What is the one thing? If Jesus touched it, you'd walk away. What is the one thing?

That if Jesus touched it, you would walk away. Because whatever that is, that is your God. Whether it be your status, your children, your achievements in life.

You see, until that is surrendered, the kingdom cannot be received. Now notice what happens next here.

Jesus turns from the man to the disciples, and he says something that shocks them. And this brings us to the impossibility of self-salvation.

[31 : 09] Listen, my third point. Verse 23. And Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, How difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God.

Notice that this man is walking away, and Jesus is not chasing him. Jesus is not lowering the bar for him. No, no, no, no, no. Come back. Come back. He does not clarify.

He didn't really mean it that way. He lets him walk. Instead, he turns and he intensifies the lesson. How difficult. Now, why does he say this? Well, if you belong to first century Judaism, wealth was commonly interpreted as a sign of divine blessing.

If someone was wealthy, you assume that God had favored them, God had rewarded their righteousness, and God had prospered their obedience.

[32 : 16] So in their eyes, this guy's already got it going on. But then he says, yeah, the rich struggle to enter the kingdom.

And they're saying, wow, for those who look favored, blessed, and rewarded by God, and it's difficult for them, what hope do I have?

What hope do I have? That's why Jesus, in verse 24, it says, and the disciples were amazed at his words. This is shaking the foundation of their understanding.

But Jesus said to them again, children. How difficult it is to enter the kingdom of God.

Notice he widens the scope. It's not just the wealthy. It is difficult for all to enter the kingdom. Why? Because human pride always resists dependence.

[33 : 22] And because self-sufficiency is the default posture of our hearts. Then Jesus said something that explodes their category.

Verse 23, 25, sorry. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of the needle than for the rich person to enter the kingdom of God.

Let's be clear. A lot of people say that Jesus was talking about these two entrances into Jerusalem, and one was called the needle's eye. That's false.

That's a myth that came out. Jesus is specifically talking about one of the largest animals they know of, and the smallest hole that they can think of, which exists in a needle.

Jesus is using absurd impossibility language. It is a vivid picture of impossibility.

[34 : 20] It's not difficult for a camel to go through the eye of a needle. Right? BK, do you think I can get this camel through the eye of the needle?

Ah, it's improbable. What do you give me? Ah, one in a million. Ah, maybe one in 10 trillion. No, never. It's never going to happen. So here's this rich person, which they've looked at in their culture as being wealthy, and because they were wealthy, they were blessed, they had favor from God, they had everything going for them.

And Jesus says, not a chance. So when Jesus teaches this parable, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of the needle than a rich person to enter the kingdom of God. It said, and they were exceedingly astonished, and he said, and they asked him the right question, then who can be saved? Who can be saved?

This person, they look perfect. They had everything going for them. If they can't be saved, what about us?

[35 : 39] See, if the moral person, the blessed person, the wealthy person, the disciplined person cannot secure it, then who? And this is when Jesus pronounces, in verse 27, Jesus looked at them and said, with man it is impossible, but with God, for all things are possible with God.

You thought you could be saved? Jesus Christ is simply stating, salvation is impossible with man. Impossible. You cannot achieve it, improve into it, moralize your way into it, donate discipline, or earn it.

It's not merely difficult, it is impossible. You see, because the problem has never been behavior. The problem is the heart.

And here's the truth. Hearts do not regenerate themselves. Spiritually dead men do not raise themselves. Blind people do not give them sights to see, and slaves do not free themselves. So when Jesus says, with man it is impossible, they know this is true. But not with God. He's declaring that salvation is a divine act.

[37 : 10] And God must do what you cannot do. God must open blind eyes. God must grant repentance. God must give faith.

God must replace the heart. And that is why the children receive the kingdom. Because they are the picture of helplessness.

And this is why the ruler walks away. Because he's still attempting self-salvation. What Jesus said was a death blow to his religious pride.

You cannot cooperate yourself into the kingdom. You are rescued into the kingdom. The fact is, and I think we know it's all true, if salvation were even 1% human effort, oh, we would boast in that 1%, wouldn't we?

It's all me, this 1%. But Jesus removes all this type of boasting. With man it is impossible.

[38 : 28] So now we've got the disciples processing this. They're thinking about this. And Peter speaks up in verse 28.

This brings us to the fourth and final point of my sermon. Which is the cost and reward of following Jesus Christ. Verse 28. Peter, the brash one, kind of the leader of the apostles, began to say to him, see, we have left everything and followed you.

Now he's not bragging here. And a lot of people think he's bragging. What it is, it's bewilderment. You see, Peter is processing what Jesus just said.

He said, if it's impossible with man, if wealth cannot save, if moral achievement cannot save, then what about us? Are we like the biggest losers around?

Because we left everything. We left our job, our family, our homes, our income, our security, we did this. And he's not bragging.

[39 : 33] He's asking, does that matter? And here we have Jesus answering with solemn authority. Truly, I say to you.

If you've got an old King James version, probably says truly, truly, truly, right? It wants to drive this point, wants emphasis. Jesus. But when he says that, this phrase introduces something binding. He says, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands for my sake and for the gospel.

Notice the order. For my sake and for the gospel. You didn't leave for minimal improvement, for better self-esteem or religious affiliation.

It is Christ and Christ alone. You see, this is the good news of the kingdom. Now, listen carefully in verse 30.

[40 : 34] It says, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time which will happen with persecutions and in the age to come eternal life?

Now, make no mistake, this is not prosperity theology. It's not saying, hey, give \$10 and you'll get a hundred. What Jesus is describing is the reality of the kingdom belonging.

You see, when you leave one family for Christ, you gain the family of God. When you lose worldly security, you gain eternal inheritance. When you surrender earthly treasure, you receive heavenly

treasure.

But Jesus puts the statement in there, it says, with persecutions. You see, Jesus refuses to romanticize discipleship.

You gain brothers and sisters, but you do gain enemies. You gain a spiritual family, but you inherit worldly opposition.

[41 : 44] salvation. You gain eternal life, but you do have present suffering. Grace is free, but following Christ costs everything.

Not because you purchase salvation, but because salvation dethrones your idols. The rich ruler walked away because he would not surrender.

The disciples stayed because they did. And let's be honest, we know they weren't perfect, they weren't flawless, but they were true. And then Jesus ends with a kingdom reversal.

Verse 31, but many who are first will be last, and the last first. I think we know in this world, the wealthy are first, the powerful are first, the impressive are first, the self-sufficient are first, and the kingdom, the dependent, the surrendered, the empty handed are first.

The ruler looked first, but he left last. The children looked last, but they belong first.

[43 : 06] This is the upside-down nature of the kingdom, and this is the final warning. you can appear first in the world, but be last in eternity. You can appear last in this world, and be first in the kingdom.

And then Jesus declares, with man it is impossible, but not with God. So here's my question to you.

Are you trying to enter the kingdom holding on to something? Maybe it's your morality, your discipline, your theological knowledge, your reputation, your wealth, your control.

Because here's the fact, you cannot receive the kingdom until your hands are empty. For salvation is impossible to achieve, but it's entirely possible with God to give.

life. And only the people who receive it are those who stop trying to earn it. My advice, come like a child, go like the disciples, do not walk away like the ruler, because in the end, many who are first will be last, and the last first.

[44 : 30] So in conclusion, the only appropriate response is not self evaluation. The only appropriate response to Jesus Christ is worship.

Worship for a God who saves the helpless. Worship for a Savior who calls the empty-handed.

Worship for grace that does the impossible.

And may I add humility, deep humility, because the only reason any of us belong to the kingdom is not because we were wiser than the rich ruler.

It is simply because God was merciful to us. With man it is impossible, but not with God.

My prayer is that truth would crush your pride. My prayer is that it would silence your boasting. And last, I pray that it causes you to adore the one who does what no man can do.

[45 : 41] Let us pray. Dear Lord, Heavenly Father, we thank you for the king that you are. Father, the reality is the gospel, the true gospel, strips us of everything.

There is no room for God number two, God number three. there is only one God allowed when you rule. Father, I pray as we come into communion we would be thinking these things.

Where are those areas where I have allowed the God of self-rule to condemn me, to raise me up in my own status before you?

So, Father, just as we come into this Easter season, I pray that we, that these stories of Jesus on the way to the cross would both convict, inform, and lead us to true grace.

In your name we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.