

In Or Out?

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 17 September 2023

Preacher: Jonathan Chancey

- [0 : 00] Amen. Well, if you would please take your Bibles and open them up to John chapter 8. And I do ask that you actually have a copy of the Bible open. We're going to be looking there at God's Word.
- And I want you to see it with your own eyes as we walk through this passage, John 8, verses 31 through 59 this morning. We've been walking through the Gospel of John together over the past several months, and we've made our way here this morning to the end of chapter 8.
- So chapter 8, verses 31 through 59. And if you found it there in your Bibles, if you're able, let's stand for the reading of God's Word out of reverence.
- And follow along with me as I read John 8, 31 through 59. So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed Him, If you abide in My Word, you are truly My disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.
- They answered Him, We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say, you will become free? Jesus answered them, Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin.
- [1 : 18] The slave does not remain in the house forever. The son remains forever. So if the son sets you free, you will be free indeed. I know that you are offspring of Abraham, yet you seek to kill Me, because My Word finds no place in you.
- I speak of what I have seen with My Father, and you do what you have heard from your father. They answered Him, Abraham is our father. Jesus said to them, If you were Abraham's children, you would be doing the works Abraham did.
- But now you seek to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. This is not what Abraham did. You are doing the works your father did. They said to Him, We were not born of sexual immorality.
- We have one Father, even God. Jesus said to them, If God were your father, you would love Me. For I came from God, and I am here.
- I came not of My own accord, but He sent Me. Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear My Word. You are of your father, the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires.
- [2 : 32] He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.
- But because I tell you the truth, you do not believe Me. Which one of you convicts Me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me? Whoever is of God hears the words of God.
- The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God. The Jews answered Him, Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?
- Jesus answered, I do not have a demon, but I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me. Yet I do not seek My own glory. There is one who seeks it, and He is the judge.

Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word, he will never see death. The Jews said to Him, Now we know that you have a demon. Abraham died, as did the prophets.

[3 : 35] Yet you say, If anyone keeps My word, he will never taste death. Are you greater than our father Abraham, who died? And the prophets died. Who do you make yourself out to be?

Jesus answered, If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing. It is My Father who glorifies Me, of whom you say He is our God. But you have not known Him.

I know Him. If I were to say that I do not know Him, I would be a liar like you. But I do know Him, and I keep His word. Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see My day.

He saw it and was glad. So the Jews said to Him, You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham? Jesus said to them, Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.

So they picked up stones to throw at Him. But Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple. This is God's holy, inspired word for you, for your good, for your instruction this morning.

[4 : 44] Please be seated. Let's pray once more. Lord, reveal Your glory through the preaching of Your word, we pray. Would You give us eyes to see and ears to hear and hearts to understand and to love the truth that You've given us this morning in this passage.

We pray in Christ's name. Amen. Well, there are approximately eight billion people in the world, give or take a few thousand, probably, eight billion people of the world.

And out of those eight billion people, there are exactly two types of people in the world. for all of the differences that exist in the world, different cultures, different countries, different ethnicities, different tastes, different experiences, different upbringings, different generations, different income levels, different college football teams, different reactions to the Georgia-South Carolina game yesterday.

For all the diversity that exists in the world, there are exactly two types of people. you are either in or you are out of Christ.

You are either in or you are out of Christ. This is by far the most significant difference that exists in the world and it has everything to do with how you respond to the words of Christ.

[6 : 13] Sometimes I go into a crowd of people even just driving up and down Highway 17 and see the number of cars that are on the road and I wonder how many of these people are disciples of Christ.

Do you ever do that? You are in a crowd of people and just look around and wonder how many of these people around me right now belong to Jesus? See, the eyes of God, that distinction of who is in and who is out is crystal clear but to us with our limited perception, our limited understanding, our limited knowledge, that distinction is not always so clear, is it?

And so we have to ask if we don't have the eyes to see the invisible roots of faith, what do we have? Well, we have the visible fruit of how someone responds to the word of Christ.

What we see in our passage this morning, John chapter 8, is Jesus laying out for us, describing for us the difference between those who are his disciples and those who are not his disciples.

He's laying out for us those who are in Christ and those who are out of Christ. And again, the dividing line between the two is his word and how we respond to it.

[7 : 37] So how does Jesus describe his disciples first? How does Jesus describe his disciples? Well, we saw last week as Jesus preached at the end of his message, John chapter 8 verse 30, John told us that some of the Jews, in fact, many of the Jews, believed his words.

You remember that from last week. He said, I'm the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life. Many rejected, yet many believed. And so here in verse 31 and 32, Jesus turns his attention to those Jews who have professed belief and look what he says to them in verse 31.

He says, if you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples and you will know the truth and the truth will set you free.

It's a condition here. He gives them a condition, if you abide in my word, not just profess belief in my word, but if you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples.

A true disciple of Christ, according to Jesus here in this passage, is characterized by abiding in the words of Jesus. How can we look around and tell by our best judgment who disciples of Christ are?

[9 : 06] Well, disciples abide. How can we tell if we are a disciple of Christ? Well, we abide in the words of Jesus. Apparently, to Jesus, abiding in his words is a greater indicator of belonging to Christ than our initial professing faith in Christ.

So what does it mean to abide? Well, that word abide, we see it all through the gospel of John. It simply means stay there. Don't leave. Take root there for the rest of your life.

It's an important concept in the gospel of John. He's the only gospel writer that uses that word abide, and we see it time and time and time again. We saw it in chapter 5, where he said, you do not have his word abiding in you, for you do not believe the one whom he has sent.

Chapter 6, whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood, Jesus says, abides in me and I in him. Lord willing, by the time we get to chapter 15, the whole chapter is about abiding in Christ 11 times.

That word comes up in chapter 15, that glorious chapter about abiding in Christ. It is clear that in the mind of John and in the mind of Jesus, a disciple of Christ is not just someone who has heard and responded to his word once, but someone who right now, presently, is abiding in the word of Christ.

[10 : 40] In other words, here is what I think Jesus is saying here for us. What makes a Christian is not just their one time initial profession of faith in Christ, but that one time initial professing and their ongoing abiding in the word of Christ.

Let me say that again. What makes a disciple of Christ, what makes a Christian is not just that one time initial profession, but that profession paired with ongoing abiding in the words of Christ.

The genuineness of a disciple's professing is demonstrated, is lived out, is seen in their ongoing abiding. There's been a shift in thinking in cultural American Christianity over the past 200 years or so where the emphasis has shifted to where churches and pastors, we tend to place more emphasis on our professing faith in the word of Christ than we do in our abiding in the word of Christ.

And I just want to offer a humble and gentle course correction here. Jesus is speaking to those who have professed belief in his words.

And we see this here. He's speaking to those who have professed belief and he says that is wonderful. You know how I know how you're truly a disciple of Christ? You stay there.

[12 : 15] You abide in my word. The sad truth is that there are many who at some point in their life profess faith in Christ.

They will say a prayer, walk an aisle, raise a hand, do something to profess belief in the word of Christ, but over the course of time fall away.

And I'd be willing to bet that most of us in the room could right away if we asked you to think of somebody, to name somebody who fit that description, all of us in the room could think of someone who fits that description.

And oftentimes it's painful for us to think about that because these are people who we love and these are people who we grew up with, these are people who are members of our own family, people who are close to us.

It may be and our prayer would be that these individuals are genuinely regenerate, that they are genuinely born again, that they genuinely belong to God and have temporarily fallen into sin.

[13 : 18] And if that's the case, then we can know with confidence the Lord will bring them back. But our posture towards them shouldn't be one of assurance based on some past profession.

Our posture towards them ought to be one of urging them to repent and believe the gospel. It may be that they genuinely belong or it may be that whatever happened years and years ago was a false profession of faith.

We need to have this category in our mind of false profession of faith. I think of Jesus' words in Matthew chapter 13 in the parable of the sower.

Such a helpful illustration for us. The sower goes out and he spreads seeds which represent the word of God. He spreads it on different types of soil.

Some seed falls along the path. The birds come and they devour the seeds. Other seeds fell among thorns. The thorns grow up. They choke out the seeds. They prove unfruitful.

[14 : 27] Other seed falls on rocky ground. They didn't have much depth of soil. Immediately they sprang up and it looked like they were going to grow. It looked like they were going to have life.

It gave brief appearance of life but they had no root. So when the sun came out it scorched the growth and it withered away. But still others fell on fertile soil and they took root and they bore much fruit.

What does this tell us? It tells us that professing faith in Christ could be the beginning of a lifelong fruit bearing relationship with Christ or it could be a tragically short lived response.

It gives the appearance of fruit. It gives the appearance of life but it has no root and so over time it withers away. Church we long to see professions of faith in Christ.

Amen? We long to see non-believers profess faith in Christ. but we long to see that profession be genuine.

[15 : 41] Amen? And here Jesus tells us the way we know whether or not that professing of faith is genuine is whether or not it is joined together with ongoing lifelong abiding in the word of Christ.

Genuine professing is demonstrated by present abiding. We have to ask ourselves don't we? Are we abiding in the words of Christ?

Are we abiding in the words of Christ? And what does that even look like for us to abide in his word? Well Jesus throughout the rest of this passage he gives us a pretty good picture of what abiding looks like.

Look here to verse 42. He says if God were your father you would love me. Verse 42 abiding looks like love. Verse 47 whoever is of God hears the words of God.

It looks like hearing. Looks like receiving. Looks like listening to the words of God. Not just once but for the rest of your life. Verse 51 if anyone keeps my word he will never see death.

[16 : 55] It looks like keeping the word of God. Obeying the word of God. Following the word of God. You put this together I think we have a pretty good picture of a disciple of Jesus.

A true disciple of Jesus hears the word, believes the word, loves the Christ of the word and because he loves the Christ of the word he abides in that word and he keeps that word.

Does this describe you? Does this sound like you? Of course none of us abide in the word of Christ perfectly.

Right? Am I the only one that fails to abide in the word of Christ perfectly? No, I hope not. Which simply means that there's room for all of us to grow here.

How can you grow to abide in the word of Christ? What area of your life specifically has yet to submit to the word of Christ?

[18 : 03] And you know, wouldn't it be great if there was some sort of community, some sort of gathering maybe, some sort of group of people, maybe a family of people.

I'm just thinking off the top of my head right now. Some gathering of people who could help us abide in the word of Christ. Wouldn't that be great? look around at your brothers and sisters to your left, to your right, behind you, in front of you.

The church is a family of disciples of Christ. The church is a family of disciples who are gathered together to lock arms together to help one another abide in Christ.

You know, it may be that we need to kind of rethink our definition of church a little bit, how we thought about church in the past. It's not just a gathering of loosely identified individuals who happen to be in the same place at the same time, hearing the same guy speak the same message, and then we go off on our own.

The church is a family of disciples. We lock arms to help one another abide. And we need one another. So we commit to one another to say, I will gather with my brothers and sisters for worship.

[19 : 25] I will encourage my brothers and sisters. I will pray for my brothers and sisters. I will meaningfully engage in my brothers and sisters' life. I will send notes of prayer and encouragement to them.

I will help them obey. I will call them out if they are falling short, and I invite them to do the same for me. We'll gather to sing songs of worship that are preaching truth, not just that make us feel a certain way, but that equip us to abide in the word.

We'll gather and we'll sit under the preaching of the word every week. We'll make a priority of prayer gatherings. We'll make a priority of Bible study. We'll make a priority of gathering for Sunday school so that we can abide in the word together.

That's what church is meant to be. Are you abiding in his word? A true disciple of Jesus is one who abides.

Well, how does he describe those who are out of Christ? We have the whole rest of the chapter here to deal with. How does he describe those who are out of Christ?

[20 : 35] And he does so in three ways here, three descriptions of those who are outside of Christ, and it is not pretty. He says first, those who are not in Christ are slaves of sin.

They're slaves of sin. The Jews, they did not like what Jesus had just said in verse 32. He said, the truth will set you free.

And that set them off. They said, well, we are offspring of Abraham, and we've never been enslaved to anyone. How can you say that you will become free?

See, they didn't understand that the slavery he was talking about was not physical slavery. He was talking about spiritual slavery to sin.

Now, despite what you may have been told, sin, living life outside of Christ, outside of God, is not freedom. The way that the world would talk about Christianity, the way the world would talk about the Bible, is, well, that's so restrictive.

[21 : 46] I just want to live life on my terms, make my own choices, live how I want to live. Maybe I'll come to church when I want to, read the Bible when I want to, but ultimately, I call the shots here.

That's true freedom. Well, Jesus says, no. No. You are enslaved to sin. Romans 6. Paul tells us, no one is truly independent.

All of us, we're either slaves of sin or slaves of righteousness. There's two types of people in the world. They didn't understand this, so Jesus told them in verse 34, truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin.

The slave does not remain in the house forever. The son remains forever. So, if the son sets you free, you will be free indeed. Everyone who is outside of Christ, Jesus says, is enslaved to the powers of sin.

He says, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. Now, we had better understand what that means. All right? Because we all just admitted that all of us struggle to abide in the words of Christ.

[23 : 05] All of us just admitted that we fall short, that we are sinners. I'm here to confess to you, your pastor struggles with sin. Your pastor is a sinner. All right?

We'd better understand what it means to be enslaved, to practice sin. We don't believe in a perfectionist theology, that when you come to Christ, you are free from the presence of sin in your life.

We do not hold to a perfectionist theology that says that all of us here, we are in Christ. That means we don't sin. I remember in college every now and then, a street preacher, when the weather started getting nice, a street preacher would come.

He'd set up shop on the front lawn, and as students were walking to and from class, he would shout into a megaphone to everybody who walked by. And I remember, he would quote scripture out of 1 John.

He would quote 1 John 5, 18. It says, we know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning. And he would quote 1 John 3, 8, and 9.

[24 : 14] Whoever makes a practice of sinning, same language there, whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil. For the devil has been sinning from the beginning.

The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God.

He would take these verses and shout them into the megaphone to say that true Christians don't sin. He would say, I don't sin. True Christians don't sin.

And all you heathen college students on your way to class are sinners and you need to be born again. I struggled with that. I had to wrap my mind around that because I was a believer.

I had been born again, but I still struggled with sin. I wasn't equipped enough to debate him at that point, so I just ignored him on the way to class.

[25 : 17] But if I could go back, I would have told him, just would you flip like two pages over in your Bible? First John chapter 1, do you know what it says?

John says, if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar and his word is not in us. My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin.

But if anyone does sin, if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous.

The point is this, the difference between believers and non-believers. the difference between those who are in Christ and those who are out is not that they sin and we don't.

[26 : 28] It's that by the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ, we have been set free from the enslaving power of sin in our lives.

The Son has set us free and we are free indeed, which means the rest of our life on this side of glory is going to be marked by war against the presence of sin in our lives.

It's not freedom from the presence of sin in our lives. It's not freedom from the pain of sin in our lives. It's freedom from the power, enslaving power of sin in our lives, which means we now go to war against it with the confidence that we have been set free by the power of Jesus Christ in us.

It is so easy for us to be discouraged, isn't it, by the presence of sin in us lingering, coming out of us day in, day out, week in, week out.

We wrestle against these sins that we just wish would go away. We thought for sure by now they would be done and gone with. We might have grown up a little bit more and we're not dealing with this old stuff anymore.

[27 : 40] But we want to get rid of it completely. We don't know why it's still there. Can I just suggest to you, believer, that the very fact that you see it, you hate it, and you're fighting against it is evidence of the grace of God in you.

The very fact that you are waging war against it, that you're in the fight, that you're in the battle, means that you have spiritual life in you to see sin for what it is and to work by the grace of God to put it to death.

No one has been more helpful to me in understanding this than John Owen. Listen to this quote. He says, To kill sin is the work of living men.

Where men are dead, as all believers, the best of them are dead, sin is alive and sin will live. In other words, if you are battling sin this morning, don't be discouraged.

Keep battling. Follow the words of 1 John and confess your sin, knowing that God is faithful and just to forgive you of your sin, knowing that you have an advocate before the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

[29 : 07] Don't be discouraged, but continue pressing on in the fight against sin. Christ says, Everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin, but the good news of the gospel is that the Son can set you free.

The Son can set you free. Not only this, Jesus says those who are outside of Christ, they're slaves to sin, and they are sons and daughters of Satan.

I told you this wasn't pretty, right? They are sons and daughters of Satan. Jesus says in verse 37, I know that you are offspring of Abraham, yet you seek to kill me because my word finds no place in you.

I speak of what I've seen with my father. You do what you have heard from your father. So they answered him. Verse 39, they said, well, Abraham is our father.

In other words, we're Jewish. What are you talking about? We belong to God. We're children of Abraham. They're putting all of their stock in their physical lineage, in their physical heritage, that they belong to God because they're a part of the physical line of Abraham.

[30 : 27] But Jesus says, not so fast. If you were Abraham's children, you would be doing the works that Abraham did. But now you seek to kill me, a man who told you the truth that I heard from God.

That's not what Abraham did. You're doing the works that your father did. They said, oh, we only have one father. We're not born of sexual immorality.

We have one father, even God. God is our father. And here's where Jesus draws the line. Because that claim, it was not backed up.

So Jesus said to them, if God were your father, you would love me. For I came from God and I am here. I came not of my own accord, but he sent me. Why do you not understand what I say?

It's because you can't bear to hear my word. You are of your father, the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth because there's no truth in him.

[31 : 32] When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies. But because I tell you the truth, you do not believe me. Which one of you convicts me of sin?

If I tell you the truth, why do you not believe me? Whoever is of God hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God.

They claimed to be of God. They claimed to belong to Abraham. Abraham. You all know the children's song.

Father Abraham. Many sons. Many sons had father Abraham. I am one of them and so are you. So let's just praise the Lord.

Right arm. Left arm. I don't think the Jews knew that song. But they believed what the song says. I am a child of Abraham.

[32 : 33] So are you. We are children of God. We are children of Abraham. Everything is just great. Let's just praise the Lord and get on with it. But Jesus says not so fast.

You are not children of Abraham. And you are not children of God. How do I know? Your works show that you don't belong to God.

You are doing the works of Satan. Your heart shows that you don't belong to God. You are rejecting the Messiah. And your ears show that you don't belong to God because you can't bear to hear the word of God.

You know, in our day, I have never heard anyone say, but I'm a child of Abraham. But I belong to Abraham. But you know what I have heard?

Well, I've been going to this church for 30 years. My dad was a deacon. But my granddad was a deacon. I grew up in the church.

[33 : 35] I have this religious heritage. Are you telling me I don't belong to the Lord? Those things are wonderful, wonderful graces, wonderful gifts.

But that does not make you a disciple of Christ. Jesus tells us here that a true disciple of Jesus, a true disciple, a true son of Abraham, is not a matter of physical lineage, not a matter of physical birth, not a matter of spiritual heritage, but spiritual rebirth by the power of the Holy Spirit in you.

And to belong to God, to be a child of God, means the Holy Spirit has opened up your ears to hear his word. And as you hear the word, you trust and accept Jesus as the Messiah.

Your heart is changed so that you love him. And as you grow to love him with all your heart, then you go and you do his works. These are the fruits of someone who has God as their father.

But all of it, all of it, hangs on how you receive the word of God.

[34 : 49] It's our last description here. Those outside of Christ are scoffers and skeptics of the word of Christ. Jesus told them, you don't hear my words because you don't belong to God.

How did they respond? You have a demon. You are a Samaritan. Look how Jesus responds to that in verse 49. He says, I do not have a demon, but I honor my father and you dishonor me.

You know, I do not seek my own glory. There is one who seeks it and he is the judge. Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death.

Did you hear that? Did you hear that? If anyone keeps my word, he will never see death. What a claim. What a claim that he just made.

This is the same claim that he's been making all through the gospel of John. This is the same offer that Christ has made again and again and again and again.

[36 : 01] This is the offer of the gospel and he could not be any clearer. We saw it in chapter 3. As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

Whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty. That water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life. Truly, truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life.

Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life. This is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life.

I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. The bread that I'll give the world is my flesh. I am the light of the world.

[37 : 08] Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life. Just over and over and over and over again, Jesus has offered eternal life to sinners like us.

If we would only repent and believe his words. Now, the good news of the gospel is that sinners don't have to stay on the outside of Christ.

Amen? We don't have to remain as slaves of sin. The good news of the gospel is that we don't have to remain as sons and daughters of Satan.

We don't have to continue to scoff at Christ and his word. Lord, Jesus Christ offers eternal life through faith in his life-giving word.

If only we would listen and believe. He says, my sheep hear my voice. But those who don't belong to him scoff at the offer.

[38 : 17] Look how they responded in verse 52. The Jews said to him, well, now we know that you have a demon. Abraham died, as did the prophets.

Yet you say, if anyone keeps my word, he will never taste death. Are you greater than our father Abraham who died? They had no idea, did they? And the prophets died.

Who do you make yourself out to be? Jesus said, if I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. It's my father who glorifies me, of whom you say he's our God.

But you have not known him. I know him. If I were to say I do not know him, I would be a liar like you. But I do know him, and I keep his word.

Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad. So the Jews said to him, you're not even 50 years old.

[39 : 13] Have you seen Abraham? And Jesus said to them, truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.

And finally, after all this time, what he's been saying all along, they got it. This is the clearest I am statement in the Gospel of John.

We've seen it throughout. These I am statements where Jesus claims his identity to be equal. He is God in the flesh. Not just a teacher.

Not just a prophet. He is I am here to give life to the world. The Jews knew exactly what he was saying. And how did they respond? They picked up stones to throw at him and to kill him.

But Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple. You know, this is an ugly picture of those outside of Christ, isn't it?

[40 : 19] Slaves to sin. Sons and daughters of Satan. Skeptics and scoffers and murderers of the Son of God. Why? Why do we need to hear this this morning?

For one, church, we need to remember who we were before the grace of God saved us. We need to remember the ugly picture of what we were.

Do you remember what it was like to be a slave to sin? Do you remember what it was like to be sons and daughters of the enemy? To scoff and to laugh, to ridicule the Son of God?

Do you remember what you have been saved from? The result of remembering the darkness of our life before Christ ought to be gratitude and thanksgiving and praise and glory to God who saved you by his grace through his life-giving word.

Not only that, church. We need to understand this picture of those who are outside of Christ so that we might be motivated and moved to share this word with those who remain in darkness.

[41 : 38] Who do you know right now who remains outside of Christ? This is a description of them. This is a description of them.

Who do you know that needs to hear this offer of Christ? If you would come to me, listen to me, hear my word, abide in me, and you will live, be forgiven, and have eternal life.

The response for all of us this morning, whether for the first time or for the millionth time, abide in the life-giving words of Christ.

Turn from your sin and believe in the message of the gospel. Turn from your sin and believe that Christ is God in the flesh, crucified and risen for your sin and for your justification.

Repent and believe the gospel again and again and again and again and again, clinging to his word until he comes. Let's pray.

[42 : 52] Lord Jesus, we believe that you are God. That you have come to save sinners like us. We thank you, Lord, for your grace that you've poured on us who don't deserve it, who are your enemies, who belonged to the devil, Lord.

But yet you saved us by your grace. We pray that we would respond to that fact with praise and gratitude. Help us never to grow tired of that truth.

Lord, remind us again and again and again of the saving power of the gospel. that you might be glorified and that we might share that message with those who need to hear it.

We love you. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.