

Christ our Advocate

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[0:00] This thing is growing. There's people who are coming in. We can just switch this off. Thank you, Eunice. There's people that are coming in. People are hearing about this.

It's getting a bit crowded. In fact, people are coming from all different places to come and gather in this place. They're coming with different experiences. They're coming with completely different backgrounds. They're coming with different theology, different preferences to the way they even go about faith.

And the problem is as people come in, they come in with their different theologies. And some of the things that they are starting to teach is starting to compromise a gathering, compromise the people that are there.

They're starting to believe in different things. They're letting the world seep in to the church. And even though the reputation is growing, there are problems that are growing as well. What am I talking about?

Of course, I'm talking about the early church. I'm talking about the early church. I'm talking about the letter that John writes to in his old age. He's hearing about a church and he's saying, look, you guys are growing.

[1:05] You guys have people coming. You have friends coming and you have friends inviting their friends who are coming. And you have friends who are inviting their friends who are inviting their friends. You have second, third, fourth, fifth generation Christians now.

But I got to tell you guys, John says, hey, I was with Jesus. I was actually rubbing shoulders of my walk to them. I knew him and I wish I only wish you would know him too.

And if you did, my joy would be complete. And so then he says, that's my, that's what Gabriel talked about two weeks ago. John just saying, I wish you would know him. And not just know about him. Not just hear from your friends of your friends about this Jesus guy. I wish you would just know him. And then he goes into what we did last week was he starts to tell people about Jesus, about God. He says, God is light. And in him, there is no darkness at all. And if you say you have fellowship with him whilst you walk in darkness, then you're actually lying. And then you're not practicing the truth. And you actually make God out to be a liar because the truth is we are all sinners.

[2:03] God is light. And in him, there's no darkness at all. He is completely pure. We have compromised him. The people here have compromised him. And John's saying, confess. And that's where we landed last week.

And we've lost the art of confession within the church, which is saying, actually, God, I'm far worse than I realized. That's what Keller said about the gospel, right? I'm far worse than I realized, but I am far more loved than I ever dared dream.

I talked about pick and choose Christianity that we had, which is we love the God that gives us purpose and meaning. We love the God that makes us feel warm and fuzzy and loved. But we forget that actually this is a holy God.

We can't approach this God without something needing to happen. And that is confession. And if we confess, he is faithful and just to forgive our sins as cleansers from all unrighteousness.

This pastor, John, then pushes it a bit further into this next chapter here. And he's saying, hey, I tell you the reason why I'm reading this. And this is where we're going to go from. And it's one John two.

[3:03] If you are taking notes, if you are reading your Bible, then I would invite you to get this. And as is custom, we treat this book seriously. We treat, we realize that this book is the one that is perfect for any circumstance in our lives.

It gives us life. It gives us guidance. And so can I invite you to stand for the word of the Lord? Father, we thank you for this word.

Jesus, we thank you that you are the word became flesh and Holy Spirit. Would you use this to bring encouragement, to bring conviction, to rebuke, to guide us. We give this time to you.

One John chapter two. My little children, I'm writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the father, Jesus Christ, the righteous.

He is the propitiation for our sins and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. And by this, we know that we have come to know him. If we keep his commandments, whoever says I know him, but does not keep his commandments is a liar.

[4:05] And the truth is not in him, but whoever keeps his word in him, truly the love of God is perfected. By this, we may know that we are in him. Whoever says he abides in him or to walk in the same way in which he walked.

This is the word of the Lord. Thank you. Please take a seat. So John saying this, my dear children. So he's, he's, he's saying, man, I love you guys so much.

I wish you would know him. And I'm writing this, my dear children, my little children, because I love you. And so that you won't sin. He's saying, Hey, look, we're all sinners.

And I'm writing this to encourage you so that if you say you're with God, if you say, you know, God, can you have a life to show for it? And can you not sin? But the problem here is this. We all sin.

We all sin. And what is sin? What did we say sin was? Sin was simply just us saying, God, I want to go my own way. I want to choose my way. I don't trust in you. And I'm just going to do what I think is best.

[5:06] That's essentially what sin is. And then John, knowing as the pastor, knowing what his people are like, knowing what we're like, he says, look, I'm saying this to you. So you won't sin.

But the truth is, even if you did sin, then there is a solution. This is what I said last week. I said, Christianity is the only religion that takes sin very seriously, but also offers a morally satisfactory solution.

Christianity is the only religion that takes sin very seriously, but then offers you a solution. And that's what he's actually talking about. And that's what we're going to look through in this next little passage here. Because he's saying, hey, even if you do sin and that there are consequences to sin, there are consequences.

Let's say I come up to you and I wouldn't because you're a lot bigger than me. But if I come up to you and I punch you in the face, providing I can reach, and then I hit you in the face and then I say, sorry. And then I confess.

Now, there is a consequence to me doing this. Okay. So, so I say sorry, and I repent, but there is a consequence. This is just, well, maybe not me particularly, but he will be bruised and that face will hurt for a while.

[6:10] And there's the consequence. So every sin has a, has a short term consequence, but also has a long term one. And scripture tells us that when we make actions that are basically our own way, it leads us down a path that ultimately leads to death.

Okay. And so therefore the Bible here is saying, and John is here saying, look, I'm writing these things because I really hope you don't choose your own way. But even if you do the consequences that will come, especially the long term consequence of the end, where, because if you choose your own way, one way here, eventually it will lead you to a place where you're not with God and it leads to death.

But we have a solution. And what is that solution? And here it is. It starts off with this. But if anyone does sin, this should give you encouragement. This should give you comfort. If anyone does sin, we have an advocate.

And the advocate is Jesus Christ, the righteous. We have an advocate with the father. And I was talking to some people who are in the law profession here because who are much smarter than me. And I was like, Hey, tell me more about what it means for someone to be an advocate. So I asked Julian first and I said, Hey, Julian, what does it mean to be an advocate? And then I asked Nathan, who has forgiven me and we're talking once again.

[7:20] So side note, he's not here today because he's running the marathon. I'll tell you the real reason why Nathan's here. A couple of months ago, he was not part of this gathering yet. And I'm saying this because he's not here.

So it doesn't embarrass him. He was, um, yeah, I've lost my thought. Just because now he was telling me why he's coming to the gathering. And he's saying, actually, I feel the Lord calling me to become a leader.

That's actually why he's here. Cause actually he feels as though the Lord is challenging him. Now, if you know, Nathan, he's a super laid back kind of guy, super easygoing, not the person who wants to be at the front doing anything.

And yet he was saying, the Lord is calling me to be a leader. And I know that the gathering needs leaders. So it seems right to me that I would come and exercise that gifting. That's that mission statement too.

So that's actually why he's here. And just a side plug, as we continue to grow and we need more midweek groups and we need more things. Cause we're running more things. What do we need? Leaders. Leaders.

[8:19] And if you're sat here going, I wonder what God's challenges for me this year, then be like Nathan, be like Nathan and heed God's call to be leader. We need leaders. Okay. Anyway, that's a small plug. Nathan, I hope you're hearing, listening to this.

That is, that is me paying back completely now. Okay. So I asked Nathan, what does it mean to be an advocate? And Queenie, I actually asked, I was talking to Abraham and I asked him to, and the word advocate comes from to call to one's aid, to ask for help.

And this advocate, at least in court, for example, is essentially your defense attorney is your legal proxy. The one who stands in your corner, who completely understands you. And then completely understands the circumstances that you're in and completely understands what you did and is standing in your corner and is advocating for you.

An advocate has their client's best interests at heart. It is, you can please correct me if I'm wrong, Queenie, in this. And then this advocate, whatever they're able to attain for you in court becomes yours.

Whatever they're able to attain, it becomes yours. And can you imagine having Jesus being the one standing in your corner? Whoever is a sinner here, whoever has made mistakes and you've had to defend yourself, doesn't it give you comfort that Jesus is standing right next to you and is advocating for you?

[9:38] There's an interesting element to this that actually Tim Keller talks about. When you imagine Jesus standing next to you, advocating for you, sometimes you have this idea of Jesus standing next to you, going, hey, look, God, this guy is bad.

He's a bad egg. He's done some things. He's done some things. He's done some things. He's not paid. He's not paid his taxes properly. Or he's done this. He's cut a few corners. But let's just let him off.

Let's just let it slide. Let's just forgive him. You have this image of that's what Jesus is trying to do. But actually it's not that because it's not Jesus, the merciful. It's not Jesus, the persuasive.

It's Jesus, the righteous. Why is that? Last week, the verse was, if we confess our sins, he is faithful and let him remember. Just wait.

If we confess our sins, the first thing that you think of is someone who is gracious, merciful, who's going to forgive you. But no, it's he's going to forgive you. Because he's faithful and just.

[10:40] This changes the changed my mind of what Jesus, the advocate was doing as he's standing next to me. He's not saying, hey, God, this person's with me. I know he's made a mistake. I know James always makes mistakes, but let's just let him off because we're loving and we're gracious.

And that's it. No, he's appealing to God because he's the righteous one. What's he saying? He's saying that he's saying, God, according to your law, James deserves death. I'm here to tell you as his advocate.

That death has been paid. That price has been paid. I have died that death. And therefore I'm appealing to you, not because of your mercy, not because of your grace. I'm appealing to you through justice.

And that's different because he has a case. This defense attorney has a real case. It's not just come on. Let's just let it slide. That isn't that. Tim Keller says, actually, there's nothing more infallible than justice itself.

And that's the thing that should give us comfort. That actually Jesus is advocating for us, not trying to kind of pull wool over the judge's eyes. He's saying, look, according to your law, the right way is

to condemn this person to death.

[11:45] Yet my case is not on his righteousness, but on mine. That's what Jesus is saying. That's why we have an advocate who is Jesus Christ, the righteous.

You see, any defense attorney, they can have your best interests at heart. They can do as much as they can to defend you, understand your situation. But if you lose the all the liability, as you said, goes on to you.

The defense attorney goes home and pours a glass of wine and it carries on with their lives. Jesus, as the advocate says, this case is on me. We're going to win this case and it's going to be the right way.

And it's going to be fair because of my righteousness, because of what I did. That changes the game people, because we might sit here going, well, we're not that bad. We've not murdered anyone here. We've not done anything too terrible here.

But here. Well, when we look at some other people, we are actually demanding that kind of justice onto people. Are we not? When we look at the people who have done really bad, we're the ones who are crying out for justice for these things.

[12:51] And sometimes we don't even turn that onto ourselves because we're not doing the serious ones per se. I watch a film when we were flying to California. We had lots of time, 16 hours. I watched the equalizer one, the equalizer two and the equalizer three.

Has anyone watched the equalizer? Well, if you've watched any Denzel Washington movie, it's basically the same. He does the same thing. There are some really bad guys. And even as a follower of Christ, who should be about grace and mercy, I'm like, kill that.

Kill those people. Demanding justice. And of course, Denzel Washington kills all of them. It doesn't matter. And then you feel, ah, I'm at ease now.

There's something inside us where we just want justice. We just want justice. So therefore, if we spin it back onto us, shouldn't it bring you comfort that our advocate, our defense attorney is actually appealing on behalf of us for justice as well.

God, I've paid the price for my client here. So therefore, according to your law, he must go free. What is that? What is that?

[14:00] That is the term in verse two, propitiation. Propitiation. It's a long word. And if you're like me, you're just skimming those passages. We're kind of just like, oh, Jesus Christ is the advocate of the Father from the Father and the propitiation for our sins.

And you just completely just skim over it because it's just, it's hard to understand. But the truth is actually, it's very simple. The propitiation for our sins simply means actually the propitiation means to satisfy or to appease the wrath of God against sin.

That's what propitiation is. It's saying, hey, this person deserves death. And we, because of justice, this person needs to die. There needs to be a death. And so therefore I'm going to be the one who dies.

That's what Jesus says here. Who's heard of that word propitiation? Put your hand up if you're brave. There we go. A couple of brave people.

J.I. Packer has this question for every Christian in the world. He says, does your Christianity have space for propitiation? Does your Christianity have space for it?

[15:02] Because we like the purpose. We love the meaning. We love the comfort. We love the encouragement. But does your faith have space for propitiation? Which is, hey, you acknowledge that you have a debt.

And then you acknowledge that someone paid your debt. If you're sitting being a Christian, you want to, I don't know if I have the life and the joy that I see other people having. Maybe the next question is actually, do I truly understand propitiation?

Because imagine if you owed someone a million dollars. And so I owed Josh Shum a million dollars, let's say. And then someone comes in and pays him all that money. And then lets me off the hook completely.

Who's my favorite person in the world right now? The person who pays Josh Shum. That's essentially what Jesus did. If we don't have a theology of propitiation, then maybe that's why we don't have the gratitude and the joy.

And we're still trying to figure our lives out because we don't truly understand the fact that we were in debt. That we deserve death. And yet someone died that death. J.I. Packer was also the one who

was asked, hey, if you were to sum up the New Testament, the whole New Testament from Matthew to Revelation in three words, what would it be?

[16:09] I want to turn this on you just for a second. Turn to the person next to you. And again, if you don't really know the Bible, then you can say, well, my three words would be, I don't know. And that's fine. Those of you who read the Bible for a little bit longer, if I want us to reflect on this, if we were to think about what is the New Testament talking about?

What would be three words that would sum up the whole book for you? Okay, three words to describe what it would be for you. What would it be? Because there's no real right answer here necessarily. But can we have a go at that?

Because I think it's important. Have a go. Let's go. 60 seconds. Do it. Right. Okay. Let's gather some answers. Tony, Queenie and Gracie.

That's a powerhouse trio right there. Queenie, three words. How would you describe it? Grace, forgiveness, and forgiveness. Grace, forgiveness, and resurrection. That's great.

Grace, forgiveness, and resurrection. Mel's looking at Paul and going, why didn't you think of that? Mel, what did Paul come up with? Propitiation. Propitiation times three.

[17:15] That's it. Oh, my goodness. Stick to cricket. Stick to cricket. All right. We're going to go for one more. Further. Oh, everyone's avoiding eye contact.

That's the best way. That is the best way. Kara. Can I give it a go? Kara. What's yours? I love you. That is so nice. That is so good. That is so good. I love you.

Okay. J.I. Packer, the one who asked, does your Christianity have space for propitiation?

His one is adoption through propitiation. If you think about the faith, if you think about what the whole New Testament is trying to say, and of course, summed up probably in one chapter, which is Romans 8.

It's, hey, you were orphans. You have no father, but you've been adopted in through propitiation.

That because Christ died for you and took on what you deserve, you now have what he has, which is life.

[18:17] And you are now co-heirs. You are now children of God. Adoption through propitiation. That's cool, right? That's cool. I hope that helps us understand what the gospel truly is.

But then the passage carries on. He says propitiation for our sins and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. And this is Nathan's reflection because he, and I've got his permission to share this story.

He was in criminal court one time and he was waiting for his case. And in the courtroom was chaos and mess. There were criminals everywhere. This is the story he shared with you, right? And there's criminals everywhere.

And there's one guy who's been caught for shoplifting for the 11th time. There's another who's been gambling. There's another who was charged for sexual assault the third time.

Drugs, violence. And he was sat in that courtroom and he was just so down. And you would be because you're just surrounded by just the depravity of man in the world.

[19:16] We don't often see it that much, or at least it's everywhere, but it's just hidden. And sometimes we just choose not to look at it and we choose not to see it. But Nathan, for him, he was sat in that courtroom and he was looking and he saw all these people in his heart just sunk.

But then it reminded him of something in this passage that Jesus Christ is our advocate to the father. Jesus Christ, the righteous one, but not just for our sins, but for the sins of the whole world. Does your Christianity have a space for other people other than you? Because we can go, Jesus, thank you. You love me. Thank you.

I'm part of the family. Thank you that I'm a child of God now that you've forgiven my sins. And we can stay there. And if we're honest, often we stay there. That God, you love me. And I'm so grateful. But when you realize when you're faced with the darkness that surrounds us in this world, and you look at the people who need in your eyes, need saving the most without remembering that actually you're one of those people. You realize that Jesus is the propitiation for our sins, not just for us, but for the whole world that changes the way you see the faith that changes the way you live in the way you walk.

[20:25] It has to, you have no choice to. That's why we gather. And then we must scatter because there are people out there who are hurting, who are in darkness, who don't know. And actually Jesus died for them too. That Jesus is standing in their corner as their advocate.

And Jesus is appealing to God, the father on the account of justice. And he died for them. And that's why John the Baptist says, behold, look, see the lamb who takes away the sins of the world. So it depends what the challenge is for you. If you actually are still struggling to wrestle and understand what it means for Jesus to have died for you, then dwell on that. What does it mean to be adopted through propitiation?

I know there's a harder words to understand sometimes, but if you have that, if you're okay with that, then the next challenge is this. Do you appreciate that it is for the whole world? And does your eyes allow you to see the darkness that surrounds and let your heart be broken for those things? Sins of the whole world. The question then is what now? So I had two points to this. This was the first part that we understand what Jesus being the advocate means. Jesus understood.

[21 : 32] We understand what Jesus being the propitiation for our sins means. The question really is then this, fine. What now? What now? How does it impact my life right now?

And that's where the passage continues. If you look with me to verse three, he says, and by this, we know that if we, that we have come to know him, if we obey his commandments, if we obey his commandments, what he's saying here is this.

I want you to know Jesus. I want you to know God and the joy that comes with that. And God is light. And in him is no darkness at all, that he is faithful and just. He is an advocate. He is the righteous one.

Even in those short verses, he's described a lot about God. And then he says this, if you truly know him, you would keep his commandments. Actually, this is Henry Blackaby is the one who said, if we knew who God is and how much he loves us, we'd have no problems obeying his commands. Can we just dwell on that? That actually, God is light. God is faithful and just. He is advocating and standing in your corner. It would make no sense for us to not listen to what he has to say.

[22 : 40] And this is what John is saying here. If you truly know him, you would keep his commandments. And this is the issue of obedience. This is interesting. And this is what separates Christianity from the rest of the religions.

Every religion says this. If you obey, you will be saved. If you obey, you will be saved. Obedience leads to intimacy.

But Christianity flips it around and says, you are saved. Therefore, you obey. You are saved.

Therefore, you obey. Intimacy with God leads to obedience. Not the other way around.

Even as I say that word obey, I think it triggers something inside a lot of us. That word obey. Maybe we've grown up asking questions as a kid.

Why do I have to do that? And then your parent or your teacher or your pastor just says, oh, you don't have to understand. Just obey. And so therefore, what happens is we reduce Christianity just to simply a set of rules.

[23 : 39] And often those rules are what? Don't do this. Don't do that. Don't do this. Don't say that. Don't look at that. And then we think Christianity is just that. But that is a religion.

Christianity is a relationship where if you are intimate with God, when you know him, you can't help but obey because you know he is always right. Soren Kierkegaard is the one who said, actually, the root of the gospel's rejection is what?

The dislike of obedience. If you go all the way back, all the way back to Eve, the root of the gospel's rejection is what Eve did when she disobeyed.

It's a rebellion against authority. And I want to challenge you today. If you have that word obey and it gives you certain connotations about the faith, I want you to see if you can rejig it because it's a different kind of obedience that we're talking about here.

Verse five says this, but whoever keeps his word in him, truly the love of God is perfected. If he knows God, then the love of God and keeps his word, the love of God is perfected.

[24 : 44] This tells me that obedience is not out of duty. St. Augustine was the one who said wicked men obey from fear. Good men obey from love.

Wicked men obey from fear. If you think about all the tyrants or all the authorities that you've not trusted or been burnt over the years, often we obey out of the sense of fear because of the consequences if we don't obey.

Wicked men obey from fear, but good men obey from love. If we keep his word in him, truly the love of God is perfected. Obedience starts from love and then is perfected through the love.

The question for us is as we obey, do we appreciate that? When we know him and when we're walking in the light, there should be two things that happen. One, it should affect our behavior, our moral actions. And two, those moral actions should be filled with love.

When someone looks at the way you live, do they sense that kind of love? That's what it's about. But often we don't see those two words together, obedience and love, do we? We see obedience and duty.

[25 : 48] We see obedience and consequence. We see obedience and fear. But when we obey out of an intimacy with God and knowing him, what's perfected is love.

That's interesting to me. I don't know if it's interesting to you. And finally, it says this. Whoever, verse six, whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.

If you're walking in the light, then you will obey his commands and it will be out of love. And it's walking. It's walking. It's dynamic. It isn't static.

There are some of us here who've said, God, you're real and I'm going to follow you. And it's a one second decision. And then the rest of my life doesn't really change at all. But that really isn't the Christian faith.

The Christian faith is one of walking. It's dynamic. It's continuous. It isn't just one decision. It's an everyday decision to choose and say, I'm going to walk in the light. Like last week, I said, there's ifs everywhere.

[26 : 49] If we confess, if we follow, it's all down to you. And it's all down to me as to whether I'm choosing to follow. If, if there is a choice, it is dynamic.

But here's the problem. That comes at a cost because he says, walk as Jesus walked. Where did Jesus' walk lead him to in the end, Ellen? Like, how would you describe it?

He says, walk as Jesus walked. Where does that lead him to? Calvary. Bearing death and pain and sorrow. Of course, ultimately the life that follows as well.

When we commit to walking, there is a cost. The question I have for all of us always is, does your faith cost you? Does your faith cost you anything? As you made that decision at the beginning to follow Christ, has it changed the way you walk at all?

Those people at the beginning, they weren't called Christians. It was called the way. Because they were following the way of Jesus. Therefore, it doesn't, it was only until 100 AD, when Ignatius actually recorded down and described them as Christians, as a label.

[27 : 55] But really it was just, oh, are you following the way of Jesus? Actually, then it makes even more sense or how more ridiculous it is when people said they were following the way of Jesus, yet they really were really going their own way.

Because when we actually understand who God is, we can't help but follow his way. But we also have to acknowledge that way comes at a cost. It must cost you something. Something must change.

Does it change for you? Let's remove the 90 minutes that you're going to spend on a Sunday morning here. Does the rest of your life look any different? What is obedience? Obedience is basically surrendering your own will.

It's saying, hey, I'm going to, this is what I want to do, but I'm going to submit to you and I'm going to follow you. Is there any of that? Have you rearranged any of your life around this way that you said that you follow?

For those of us who are playing in the basketball game today who haven't been in shape for many, many years, I've decided that changed the way that I live this week. So every evening I drag myself down to the court and I'll run like a crazy man and try to, because I don't want to, you know, die this afternoon.

[28 : 59] But it changed my way. It changed my way. And of course, you know that we have baby MJ coming in two months time. Actually, that's the real name that we have.

Baby MJ is on his way. And we have two rooms in our house. So we're trying to, and of course we're going to be outnumbered now. So we're trying to figure out what to do.

So we're looking at our room going, how can we change the furniture around? Or maybe I just have to move out. But how do we, how do we change the furniture around to accommodate this new selfish sinning being that is going to come and demand everything from our lives?

It's funny because it will change. The furniture will have to move. But it's funny, isn't it? Because some of us invite Jesus into our lives and yet our houses look exactly the same.

But actually our lives just look exactly the same. Jesus come along. And then it's just completely, that's the hypocrisy that the people outside, you said that you have invited Jesus into your house. [30:06] Yet you have done nothing to accommodate him. You have not followed him at all. There is no obedience in your life for me to look at, to watch. There's no point following you because you're not following him. I might as well continue going my own way.

Did you, have you moved any of your furniture around when you committed to following the way of Jesus? If you truly knew him, then you would.

That's actually all that John is saying right here. So the conclusion here is this. As we look at our lives, as we truly understand Jesus is the advocate, the righteous one who's appealing to God for justice.

He's saying, obey. Not out of duty, not out of fear. Obey out of love. And would you change your furniture around? Would you, would you move your life around so you would follow in his way? Francis Chan was the one who said this, that if your life makes sense to everyone else around you, then that's a problem. Think about your colleagues or your classmates or your friends or people who don't follow the way.

[31:16] If your life makes sense to them, then there's something wrong. The whole point of the Christian faith is saying, man, I choose to put my trust in something else, in someone else.

And that way is different. And I'm going to obey that way. And I'm going to submit and I'm going to surrender because I trust that way is better because God is light. He is faithful and just, he is righteous and he loves me. Can we rearrange our furniture?

Can we change the direction? And can we walk? Now, here's the question. I know a lot of you are sincere about your faith and you ask, well, what would a Christian do in this scenario? I would, I've got a colleague who's talking smack about me all the time.

What do I do here? Or what do I do about this? Or what career choice should I choose here? Or what spouse should I choose here? And we've got all these questions about how to live our lives specifically. And here's the problem that we have as we look at this book here.

It's dynamic. It isn't a set of rules. That is not what it is. C.S. Lewis says this. We might think that God wanted simply obedience to a set of rules. Whereas he really wants people of a particular sort.

[32:21] We might think that actually Christianity is, can I do these things? How low can I go? What are the things that I can do? What are the things I can't do? Whereas that's not what God's heart is. C.S. Lewis says, actually, what God is trying to have is raise a people of a particular kind.

And what kind is that? It's people who are walking in the light, who are walking towards the light. It's not directions he's giving us. It's a direction. That was an example that I had to give that I got to witness firsthand yesterday in my niece Eden.

We were having dinner together and she's developed this incredible habit. Is Alex here? Developed this incredible habit where when she's eating at a high chair, she just drops stuff on the floor. Yeah, it's just, just drop it and then points at her dad and says, pick it up.

Right. And then picks it up and then she looks at it again and then just drops it again and pick it up. And so when, as adults, we're looking at her going, hey, don't do that.

That's not cool. We're not actually just saying, hey, I don't want you to drop your food onto the floor. I don't want you to drop your cutlery on the floor. It's not quite as simple as that.

[33:30] What we're trying to nurture in our kids and those of us who are parents will know this, that we're not just trying to get our kids to obey a set of instructions or directions. We're trying to form who they're going to become.

So we're going to become people who understand that there are consequences that when we drop food onto the floor, then things get messy and that someone has to clean up. That they understand a bigger picture of what we're trying to form here.

It isn't just the fact, oh, daddy says I'm not allowed to drop food on the floor. Therefore, I'm just going to mindlessly follow it without understanding. There is something that my brother and Alex are trying to form in Eden that isn't simply just don't throw food on the floor.

Do we get that? That's what God's trying to do to us. It's not just about a set of instructions that we're trying to follow here. He's saying, I want you to walk in the light. I want you to walk towards the light and you're not going to be perfect, but I want you to think about who you are becoming and where you are walking to.

It is a direction and the beauty is, and that's where the Christian faith is just so beautiful is we have an advocate who stands right next to us. Who's also living right within us.

[34 : 37] Galatians 2 said, it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. So how we have to live, we just live with open hands going, God, what would you do in this current moment? What would you want me to do?

It may not make sense to my parents. It may not make sense to my boyfriend or girlfriend. It may not make sense to my boss, but I'm going to do it because I trust you. I follow you. And I know that you're forming me to eventually be more and more like you.

It is a direction, not directions or directives or instructions. Do we have that trust in him? That's the beauty. There's this old, old hymn. This is where I'll finish and we have something special for us today.

There's this old hymn called trust and obey. Trust and obey. And it's this idea of saying, actually, can we trust in the redemptive work of Jesus? That as we stand next to the advocate who's advocating for us, that we are, we just trust in the work that he's going to do.

It's not on us. We're just stuck there. We're stood there. We're just with our heads down. Actually, we don't deserve anything. We keep choosing our own way and we keep making mistakes. But standing next to us is an advocate who says, I've paid everything and I'm going to work with him.

[35 : 52] Judge, I'm going to work with him. Not only have I paid everything, but I'm going to guide him and I'm going to mold him. And I'm going to be the one that teaches him how to live. Doesn't that fill you with faith? And doesn't that fill you with comfort and confidence that you trust and obey?

You trust in the work that this advocate is going to do. And then you obey because you would. If you did get yourself into legal trouble, if you did get yourself into some kind of issue, I would call Queenie straight away.

And then I would trust everything that she says and I would obey everything that she says. Right? Wouldn't you do that? Christ is the same. Would we trust and obey? Let me finish with the lyrics here.

When we walk with the Lord in the light of his word, what a glory he sheds on our way. While we do his goodwill, he abides with us still and with all who will trust and obey.

Trust and obey. For there's no other way to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey. Then in fellowship sweet, we will sit at his feet or we'll walk by his side in the way.

[36 : 53] What he says he, we will do where he sends. We will go never fear only trust and obey. Let's remember this, this week. It's an old hymn.

It's a very traditional old school hymn. I even thought about singing it today, but we're just, we're just going to let that one pass. But the words, trust and obey. Trust in the redemptive work of Jesus and obey him.

Out of love. Out of love. Trusting that he's doing a good work in you and he will bring it to completion. There's something I really wanted us to do. If you've been part of this gathering for these last few months, we've been trying to figure a lot of things out.

Still are. But one of the things that you'll notice that has been missing is communion. Partly that is just, we've just been waiting for the denomination that we're part of. EFCC.

Just kind of complete some paperwork and some admin issues here. But we are now able to do communion together. But actually it's been, it's been good. Because something about communion actually weighs very heavily on my heart.

[37 : 53] That goes beyond just getting these little fiddly little cups that we're going to try and peel. And then drink and then not think anything about it. And if you've taken communion before, you'll know that this is a, this is central.

Central to the way that Christians have worshipped all the way. Since the way of Jesus at the beginning. Luke 24. The moment after Jesus walks with those two guys in the walk to Emmaus. And they sit down and they break bread. And there's that verse that just says, and he was made known to them in the breaking of bread. There's something sacred about communion. That actually I've been okay.

Well, one hand I've been okay with not doing for a while. Cause I really want us just to settle and make sure we're okay. And the other hand, it's just been, man, we're not a real church almost until we do this.

Because in doing this, we join the communion of the saints over these last thousands of years. Doing the same thing. And actually for many, many years, the central piece of a service was not a guy, a chump standing here talking for about 30, 40 minutes.

[38:55] It wasn't that. For many, many years, the central component of worship was actually this table. And what we're about to partake in. I wanted us to share with you a common passage regarding this in one Corinthians 11.

And I want you to really think about these things and spend some time in reflection. One Corinthians 11 says this. For I received from the Lord, what I also delivered to you.

That the Lord Jesus on the night he was, when he was betrayed, took bread. And when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, this is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me. In the same way also, he took the cup after supper saying, this cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me. For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Whoever therefore eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a person examine himself then. And so eat of the bread and drink of the cup.

[40:00] I want to say one thing about this.

Why the apostle Paul writes this passage in one Corinthians as we read it. Do you know what he saw? He saw a church that was divided. He saw a church that after the service, they would have lunch together and the poor people would sit on one side and not really have much to eat.

And then the wealthy people who could afford food sat on the other side eating and drinking. And that's what triggered him to write that passage that we all read now.

Did we realize that? That the issue here was unity because he was like, if you guys understood what Christ did for all of you, then you would not be divided like this.

You cannot be divided by this because of what Christ did. So thankfully we don't have the peely little things. Thank you, Bonnie and the team for helping us with that.

[41:09] But I also can't stress enough what we're about to do. And I really want us to carry a somber, a sober heart into this. But I also want us to know the people around us, because I think if we don't even know the names of the people around us and we're taking communion, there's something that's just weird about that.

There's something that doesn't quite make sense. How can we commune without knowing each other's names? So I wanted us to spend just a moment now. Last week we had everyone turn around and just confess whatever it might be that you wanted to confess.

But today I just want you to turn around and just share with the person next to you. Well, first of all, make sure that you do know their name. And also to know, is there something that's burdening their heart right now?

Okay. And again, it won't be long. I know it's a low bar, but I feel as though if we don't start it this way, then we'll just get caught up in the whole way where we all take communion, not talk to each other. And then we all leave and not talk to each other.

And then I think it's almost meaningless. And what we're doing here. Does that make sense? Is that okay? So just the person next to you, whether they're here for the first time or not, just something about their name. And if there, is there anything that they're struggling with right now?

[42:17] Just to hear that because we're only as strong as our weakest link. And we must, if we're to be a gathering that really commits to walking with each other as a family, we at least must know we're not going to solve any problems here.

We might not even have the time to pray for everyone, but at least we need to make sure that our hearts are inclined in the right way. Name and just something that they're burdened with or challenged with. And after that, we'll start communion.

Is that okay? Just a few minutes. Okay. Okay. Okay. Thank you.