



## SERMON SERIES STUDY GUIDE

### **Philippians: A crooked and twisted generation, Pt. 2**

Pastor John Riggs

#### **Summary:**

This message confronts us with an essential truth often overlooked in modern Christianity: we are called to work out our salvation, not work for it. Drawing from Philippians 2:12-18, we're reminded that while salvation is completely secured through Christ's finished work, we bear responsibility for how we live out this new life. We find ourselves placed intentionally in a crooked and twisted generation—not to isolate ourselves from the darkness, but to shine as lights within it. The teaching challenges us to understand three critical realities: where we are (in a morally twisted world), who we are (children of God and citizens of heaven), and how we are to live (blameless and innocent, holding fast to the word of life). The sobering reality of the Judgment Seat of Christ awaits us—not for salvation, which is eternally secure, but for rewards based on what we've built upon Christ's foundation. Will our works be gold, silver, and precious stones that endure, or wood, hay, and stubble that burns away? This isn't about fear of losing salvation; it's about living with eternal perspective, understanding that how we walk matters deeply to God and will determine our eternal rewards.

#### **Video Breakdown:**

- Chapter 1: Working Out Our Salvation. 0:00 - 12:16
  - We are called to work out, not work for, our salvation, understanding that God is doing the work in us and we must live it out with accountability to the coming day of Christ.
- Chapter 2: Living in the Midst of Darkness. 12:16 - 26:02
  - We are placed by God to live in, but not be of, a crooked and twisted generation, shining as lights in the world while holding fast to the word of life.
- Chapter 3: The Day of Christ and Eternal Rewards. 26:02 - 40:57
  - The day of Christ is coming when believers will stand before the judgment seat to receive rewards based on how they built upon the foundation of salvation through Christ.
- Chapter 4: Walking as Children of Light. 40:57 - 64:04
  - We must carefully examine how we walk, abstaining from sexual immorality, impurity, and the works of darkness, instead being filled with the Spirit and living as wise children of light.



## Scripture References from the Sermon

### Explicitly Mentioned References:

1. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 - All Scripture is inspired by God
2. Philippians 2:12-18 - Main sermon text (work out your salvation)
3. Philippians 1:27 - Let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel
4. Philippians 3:17 - Join in imitating me
5. Philippians 4:9 - Practice these things
6. John 17:15-17 - Jesus' high priestly prayer (not taking disciples out of the world)
7. Matthew 24 - As in the days of Noah
8. Philippians 1:9-10 - Prayer for love to abound with knowledge
9. Philippians 2:14-16 - Do all things without grumbling
10. Philippians 3:13-14 - Forgetting what lies behind, pressing toward the goal
11. Philippians 3:20 - Our citizenship is in heaven
12. 1 Corinthians 3:10-15 - Building on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones
13. Deuteronomy 32:5 - A crooked and twisted generation
14. Matthew 5 - You are the light of the world
15. Ephesians 2 - Saved by grace through faith
16. Ephesians 5:1-18 - Walk as children of light, sexual immorality warnings
17. Romans 1 - God giving people over to depravity
18. Revelation - Great white throne judgment (referenced generally)

### Alluded to but Not Specifically Cited:

19. Ephesians 2:10 - We are His workmanship
20. Hebrews 12:2 - Author and perfecter of our faith
21. Philippians 1:6 - He who began a good work will complete it
22. Matthew 6:19-20 - Store up treasures in heaven
23. Ezekiel 38 - End times prophecy about Russia and Middle East
24. Genesis 3 - The fall and sin entering the world

Related to Key Themes:

Parable of the Sower (mentioned at end):

- Matthew 13:1-23
- Mark 4:1-20
- Luke 8:4-15

### Key Points:

- Christians are called to work out, not work for, their salvation - God works in us, we work it out
- We live in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation but must not be of that generation
- The progression of sin in society leads to increasing depravity when God is rejected
- There is a coming Day of Christ where believers will receive rewards based on how they lived
- At the Bema seat judgment, our works will be tested by fire - gold, silver, and precious stones will remain; wood, hay, and stubble will burn
- Christians are to shine as lights in the world, being blameless and innocent children of God
- Sexual immorality, including fornication, must not be named among believers
- America is experiencing God's judgment through sexual revolution, homosexual revolution, and finally a depraved mind
- Believers are citizens of heaven placed in this time in history for a divine purpose
- We must stop grumbling and Start To Offer Praise (STOP acronym)

**Discussion Questions:**

Paul emphasizes working out our salvation rather than working for it. How does understanding this distinction change the way you approach your daily Christian walk and spiritual disciplines?

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The sermon describes our generation as crooked and twisted, yet God has placed us here intentionally. What specific opportunities do you see in your workplace, neighborhood, or family to shine as a light in darkness?

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Paul warns about grumbling and complaining, suggesting we start to offer praise instead. What areas of your life do you find yourself complaining about most, and how might intentional praise transform those situations?

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The message discusses the judgment seat of Christ where believers will be rewarded based on how they built upon their foundation in Christ. How does this future accountability influence your choices and priorities today?

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Jesus prayed that believers would be in the world but not of the world. Where do you struggle most with being influenced by worldly values rather than living as a citizen of heaven?

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The sermon addresses sexual immorality, including fornication, as sins that should not be named among believers. How can the church today lovingly confront these issues while remaining grace-filled and gospel-centered?

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## Small Group Discussion Guide

**Series:** Philippians: Joy in Every Circumstance

**Sermon:** "Living as Light in a Dark World"

**Text:** Philippians 2:12-18

### Opening Prayer

Begin your time together in prayer, asking God to open hearts and minds to His Word and to help your group apply these truths to daily life.

### Ice Breaker

**Share a time when someone's godly example made a significant impact on your life. What specifically did you notice about how they lived?**

### Key Scripture

*"Do all things without grumbling or disputing, so that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast to the word of life." — Philippians 2:14-16*

### Discussion Questions

#### Understanding Where We Are

1. **What does it mean that we live in a "crooked and twisted generation"?** How do you see this reality playing out in our current culture?
2. **Read John 17:15-18.** Jesus prayed that we would be *in* the world but not *of* the world. What's the difference? Why is this distinction important?
3. **How does understanding that God has placed you in this specific time in history change your perspective on current events and cultural challenges?**

#### Understanding Who We Are

4. **The sermon emphasized that we are "children of God" and "citizens of heaven."** How should these identities shape our daily decisions and priorities?

5. **Discuss the difference between "working for" salvation and "working out" salvation.** Why is this distinction crucial to understand?
6. **What does it mean to "shine as lights in the world"?** Share practical examples of what this looks like in your workplace, neighborhood, or family.

### **Understanding How We Should Live**

7. **The sermon discussed the "S.T.O.P." principle (Start To Offer Praise) as an antidote to grumbling.** How can praise transform our perspective when we're tempted to complain?
8. **Read 1 Corinthians 3:10-15.** What does this passage teach about the Judgment Seat of Christ? How should this future reality affect how we live today?
9. **The sermon addressed sexual immorality, including fornication, as serious sin that should not be named among believers.** How can we lovingly hold each other accountable while extending grace?
10. **Read Ephesians 5:1-2, 8, 15-18.** What specific instructions does Paul give for how we should walk? Which one challenges you most?

### **Key Takeaways**

- **We are placed by God in this generation for a purpose** — to shine the light of Christ in the darkness
- **Our salvation is secure in Christ alone** — we cannot add to it or lose it
- **There is a day of reckoning coming** — not for salvation, but for rewards based on how we lived
- **We must be different from the world** — living blameless, innocent lives that point others to Christ
- **The old nature battles daily** — we must rely on the Holy Spirit and the Word to overcome it
- **Grumbling reveals discontentment with God's provision** — praise is the antidote

### **Personal Reflection**

Take 3-5 minutes of silence for each person to consider:

- **In what area of my life am I most tempted to blend in with the world rather than shine as a light?**
- **What "wood, hay, and stubble" am I building with that will not survive the fire of God's judgment?**
- **What specific step can I take this week to "work out" what God is working in me?**

## Practical Applications

Choose 1-2 of these to commit to this week:

1. **Practice the S.T.O.P. principle:** When you catch yourself grumbling, immediately Start To Offer Praise. Keep a journal of when you do this and what happens.
2. **Identify one area of compromise:** Ask God to show you where you're living more like a citizen of this world than of heaven. Confess it and make a plan to change.
3. **Memorize Philippians 2:14-16:** Write it on a card and review it daily.
4. **Be intentional about shining light:** Choose one person in your sphere of influence who doesn't know Christ. Pray for them daily and look for opportunities to demonstrate Christ's love.
5. **Evaluate your entertainment and media consumption:** Does what you watch, read, or listen to reflect the values of a crooked generation or the values of heaven? Make necessary adjustments.
6. **Have a conversation about purity:** If you're a parent, talk with your children about God's design for sexuality and marriage. If you're single, find an accountability partner.
7. **Focus on eternal rewards:** Before making decisions this week, ask: "Will this result in gold, silver, and precious stones, or wood, hay, and stubble?"

## Accountability

**Pair up with someone in your group to check in with during the week. Share which practical application you're committing to and give them permission to ask how it's going.**

## Prayer Requests & Closing Prayer

- Share specific prayer requests related to living as light in darkness
- Pray for strength to resist conformity to the world
- Pray for the Day of Christ perspective to guide daily decisions
- Pray for boldness to shine brightly for Jesus

## For Next Week

Read Philippians 2:19-30 in preparation for next week's discussion.

**Challenge:** Share one insight from this study with someone outside your small group this week.



## Sermon Transcript:

But we're getting ready to look at and open up the truth of the Word of Almighty God.

And so let's do this passage this morning in 2 Timothy 3, verses 16 and 17.

You ready?

Here we go.

Hold on, start over.

I didn't have it down this morning.

Are you ready?

Let's do this one more time.

We're doing this for those of you watching this morning.

We want to make sure you get this down.

Here we go.

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness, so the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

There you all go.

Thank you.

Yes.

And not just the man of God, but for the people of God that we have before us now, not just the letters written in red.

And you'll have people say, well, I only listen to the words written in red.

There's a problem with that.

This whole book is the inspired Word of God, and Jesus Christ is the Word.

And so what we're having in front of us and what we're blessed to have is the compilation, the completed Word of God this morning, and that's what we're going to do.

We're going to open it up.

Open it up with me to Philippians chapter 2, and we're going to continue in our study in the book of Philippians.

Philippians chapter 2, and we're going to read verses 12 through 18 this morning.

Philippians chapter 2.

verses 12 through 18.

And I think we're going to get through two more verses this morning as well, so I know we're really making some great, great, great strides here today.

Here we go.

Paul says,

Verse 1.

In the day of Christ, Paul says, I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain, even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all.

Likewise, you also should be glad and rejoice with me.

You all may be seated.

Thank you this morning.

So for the last few weeks, as we've journeyed our way through this section in Philippians chapter 2, we learned together that the Apostle Paul was teaching something that has been mistaught often in the history of the church, and that is that we are to work out, not work for, our salvation.

We are not working for our salvation, for we cannot add one little element to the finished work of Christ in salvation.

We can't do that.

That's not something we can do.

But we are required and accountable to God that we would work out what God is working in us.

And Paul says that we need to take this very serious to these and those Christians here in the church in Philippi.

That understanding and knowing that God is doing all of this work in you and knowing that one day there's an accounting coming as Paul talks about in here four different times today.

In these four chapters, he mentions the day of Christ, that there's coming a day where we as believers are not going to stand before God's judgment for salvation.

That's already been completely done in Christ.

By faith alone, in Christ alone, and through the grace of God alone have we been saved.

That is it.

But what we are accountable to God for is how we live out in our life this new life in Christ.

There is a responsibility that we have as Christians.

It doesn't provide us salvation.

It is working out the salvation that we've already been given.

And so we've learned that's what Paul was teaching here.

We're not working for salvation, we're working it out.

We're working it out in our life.

And then last week we covered a passage here, the first part of this.

And Paul says, do all things without grumbling or disputing.

And we learned together what Paul was meaning and what he was talking about with the murmuring and the complaining and the disputing that we often find ourselves doing.

One thing you can write down that might help you in that is I was driving home last Sunday after our time together.

It came to my mind that what I should have just said is, y'all, when we start to grumble, just stop, right?

And the acrostic, S-T-O-P, just write this down in the margin of your Bible.

If you start to grumble, stop, and think about this.

Start to offer praise.

Every time the grumbling comes in, guess what you do?

Start praising God.

Start praising God for what he's doing and what he's done in your life.

When you begin to praise God, the grumbling goes every single time.

So stop.

Just start to offer praise.

That'll help you when that happens.

I've had to do that this week myself, so it's worked for me for the most part, and hopefully it will do the same for you.

Now, the Apostle Paul here is giving instruction to the Philippian believers as to how they are to live in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation.

Really, he's going to answer three questions for us this morning.

Number one is, where are we?

Where we are.

Number two...

who we are, and number three, how we are to live.

And we're going to see those in this section here as Paul is going to give them instruction on how to do this.

So we know that we're living in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, but we are to not be living of the crooked and twisted generation that we live in.

There's a big difference between living in and being of something.

A huge difference.

And so Paul here says that they are in contrast to be blameless children of God.

That they are to what?

Shine like lights in the world holding fast to the word of life.

And so Paul here is speaking about their manner of living the new life in Christ, living it out, that God is working in them.

It results in a responsibility for believers now to live it out into a world that is crooked and is twisted and living in darkness where we once lived before we came to know this incredible gift of salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ.

In chapters 1, verse 27, we see Paul the Apostle says, only let your manner of life, in other words, the way we live.

Paul says, let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel.

The gospel is worthy of a way in which we live, amen?

It is.

In chapters 3, verse 17, Paul says, brothers, now listen to what Paul says here.

Paul says, join in imitating me, amen?

What a statement.

Paul says, join in imitating me and keep our eyes on those, here's the word again, who walk according to the example that you have in us.

Paul's speaking about how we walk, how we live in this world.

And then in chapter 4, verse 9, once again, Paul says, what you have learned and received and heard is

and seen in me Paul says practice these things practice them in your life the word here in the midst is we all know what this probably means the Greek word mesos means middle or between it simply is like midday is 12 o'clock noon is midday and that we are living like that in the midst of this crooked and twisted generation

God never intended that we would go isolate ourselves on a mountain in a monastery somewhere in another country on an island away from people to escape living in a crooked and twisted generation.

The real truth is God saved you for one purpose, the purpose of glorifying him, yes, but we also have an element where God has saved us for a purpose in the salvation of others.

We don't save anyone, but we are to shine the light of Christ in our life.

That we hold out the light of Christ.

We hold out the word of Christ in a very dark, in a crooked and twisted generation.

That's where we're living in.

That's the time in which we find ourselves.

So we know that we're living in the midst of that.

Now, in John chapter 17, you remember this high priestly prayer of Christ.

He prays for his disciples, but do you know in John chapter 17 that Jesus Christ, your Savior and Redeemer, before he went to the cross, he prayed for you and he prayed for me.

Did you know that?

It's recorded in scripture here.

And in 17th chapter of John, Jesus prays for his disciples starting in verse 15 through 17.

Listen to what Jesus says in relation to these 12 common ordinary men and all the others who make up these disciples that follow Jesus Christ.

He says, I do not ask, praying now to the Father, I do not ask that you take them out of the world.

but that you keep them from the evil one.

They are not of the world.

Just as I, Jesus says, am not of the world.

Sanctify them in your truth.

Your word is truth.

As you sent me, here we go, this is it.

As you sent me, Father, Jesus says, into the world, so I have sent them into the world.

That's incredible.

And for their sake, I consecrate myself to  
that they also may be sanctified in truth.

Now I do not ask for these only, and here you are right here, but also for those who will believe in me through their word.

We are reading that this morning.

We're reading the words from the Apostle Paul through inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and here in 2021, you and I are reading these words.

This is the word of God.

He says, I not only pray for them, but also for all who will believe in me through their word that they all will be one, just as you, Father, are in me and I in you.

Now listen to this, and here's the reason, he says, that he's doing this.

So that the world may believe, number one, that you have sent me, Jesus said.

I'm sending my disciples into the world and all who believe in my message through them, this message of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, every Christian from the time of the cross on, Jesus is praying for them and the purpose of saving us is not to snatch us out of the world, but it's to place us, the light of the world, who is Christ living in us,

in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation.

And the reason for that is so that the world may believe that you have sent me, Jesus says.

And number two, that they may, what?

Become perfectly one so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.

There's a purpose for what Christ is doing in us, in this living out in this world.

We are to be in the world, Christian.

I hear lots of people all the time just saying, you know what, they're almost too, I don't know even a word you could describe it.

They don't want to get in the world at all.

We have to be in the world, Christian, but we're not to be of the world.

There's a huge difference.

And so what an incredible responsibility that you have been given, not for your salvation, but because you have come to have your salvation.

Now we are living in this world.

And as flawed as we do this, and as incapable as we are of actually living this out outside of the Holy Spirit of God working in us, God has chosen to use the church, the body of Christ, to

be in the midst of crooked and depraved generations that they might know that Christ is the Son of God who was sent to provide salvation for all men.

That's why we're here.

We are gathering here today for the sole purpose of worshiping together.

Gathering together, encouraging one another, studying the word together.

Why?

Because we as Christians live in a crooked and twisted generation.

This is not where we shine the brightest, but outside is where we shine the brightest.

We come here to really be encouraged and uplifted and to be given spiritual food from the word.

And we're together.

We're all working for the same purpose here.

But this isn't really where it all happens.

It all happens the moment we as brothers and sisters in Christ go out these doors into the world.

Guess what you are?

You are the light of the world, Jesus says in Matthew chapter 5.

That's what we are.

Satan doesn't want us to shine the light of Christ.

And in fact, the old man will not shine the light of Christ.

And my old man wakes up every single day and beats me out of bed.

But I have to beat him down.

I don't mean my father either.

I never called my dad old man, by the way.

Never.

And I won't call him that to this day.

He's not my old man.

The old man I'm speaking of is the carnal flesh that I still have.

It wakes up every single day ready to oppose the things of God every day.

And if I do not beat that man down, he will raise up every day.

And so I have to.

I have to have my mind washed with the Word of God.

I've got to have the Word of God in my mind and begin my day knowing that I have to rely on the Spirit of God to be working in me so I can beat the old man down and let the light of Christ shine.

Unfortunately, we do that very, very disappointedly in our own lives.

But God still is using us, believe it or not, to accomplish this task.

So the truth is, a crooked and twisted generation has always been the description of generations of people throughout history who live without God.

Always has been, it always will be.

The word crooked here that Paul uses in the Greek is actually the word skolios.

It's where we get the word in the medical field called scoliosis.

And that is this terrible curvature of the spine that causes crippling disabilities in people.

And you've even seen young kids that wear body braces because what they're trying to do is to straighten their spine as they grow and to make sure they can keep it from getting too twisted, which causes a lot of health issues in people.

The word skoliosis or skolios means curved or winding, crooked if you will.

And that's a description that Paul gives, getting that from actually Deuteronomy chapter 32 verse 5, speaking of the generation of Jews who would not obey God in the wilderness, coming from slavery, going to the promised land, and he said they were a crooked and twisted generation and all men

who were 20 years of age and older who believed the 10 of the 12 spies that went into the land and would not go in and possess the land every one of them God allowed to die off and he raised up another generation and took them into the promised land that's crooked and perverse

It really means morally twisted or warped.

That's what it means.

The mind without the spirit is twisted.

That's what it is.

It's warped.

The word twisted here that Paul uses is really almost a synonym of what we see in the word skolios.

It actually is the word diastrepho is how they say it in the Greek.

It means to distort or to corrupt, if you will, to pervert something.

It means to oppose also.

So it's the opposite shape from what it should be.

In other words, we know that when God made things, they were what?

good but sin corrupted everything absolutely everything and think about the great gifts that god has even given us as men and women what you find though in generations of people that have a crooked and twisted mind because they live outside of god guess what happens the good things are twisted and they don't even look like the natural thing that god gave

And so generations that become unhinged in their depravity, guess what?

As it moves along, it always becomes more and more depraved.

There is a progression that happens.

It starts out here with sin, but as sin continues, God is giving man over to what they want naturally.

It's the judgment of God.

And there's a progression of sin, and it just gets more twisted and contorted, and it gets more out of shape and out of line.

It is actually completely corrupted and perverted naturally.

And there's no argument among us here this morning that we and our generation are living among the most twisted and the most perverted generation that our nation has ever seen.

We are here.

But we are here and God wants us to be here.

Did you know you were chosen to be born during this time in history?

God doesn't want to snatch you out of here.

If he didn't need you here and want to use you here, you wouldn't be here.

You're here by the grace of God in this moment in history to do a very important task by God through the salvation he has provided in Jesus Christ.

And that is he placed you and I at this time in history not to isolate ourselves from this crooked and twisted generation, but to shine in the midst of this crooked and perverse generation.

And pointing to Jesus.

pointing to Christ.

And that's what Paul is encouraging these Philippian believers to do, because they were, like us, living in a very crooked and twisted generation.

That's the generation after generation that we've seen from the time of Adam's sin all the way through the story in the history of humanity.

It becomes more and more depraved as time goes on.

Jesus said in Matthew 24 that it will be as it was in the days of Noah at the coming of the Son of Man.

When Jesus comes back, this world is going to be utterly depraved.

We're quickly arriving at that destination.

The train is nearing its destination, no question.

There are four occasions, as I mentioned earlier, in these four chapters that the Apostle Paul reminds these Philippian believers in his letter, and he's pointing them to a direction.

How many of you know it's difficult today, with all that we have going on around us, to stay focused and to stay fixed on the things of God?

It's very difficult today.

And he's doing this.

He's pushing the minds of these Philippian believers who are living in a very difficult time in history.

They were the only church in Europe.

Did you know that?

At the time of their beginning, there was no other church in Europe.

They were living in a very depraved Roman city with a lot of the Roman legions lived there that worshipped pagan gods.

And we know that they were under the Roman rule then.

And they were living in a very depraved city.

And yet he tells them, hey, listen, you need to shine like the light into this world, pointing to Jesus, because there's a purpose in what God is doing and using you for.

He says there's a day coming, which is an event, and it's coming.

We talked about this about three weeks ago.

With a person.

There's a day coming, an event is scheduled with a person in a certain place.

And Paul is pointing these Philippian believers to this person for this event in this place and for this day.

And in Philippians chapter 1, 9, we see it mentioned here by Paul first.

He says, and it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more with knowledge and discernment.

We need discernment today.

And we also need in our day to pray that God would not let our love grow cold.

It says in the last days that the love of most will wax or to grow cold.

Like wax does, you know, it drips, it's hot.

But as soon as it falls down and hits on a table or a piece of glass, what happens to that wax?

It gets cold and it gets hardened.

And that's what Jesus says that's going to happen in the last days.

Because of the increase in wickedness, the vile manner in which humanity is living...

That the love of most people because of wickedness is going to be like once it was hot and you could dip your finger in it and it's liquid and it's pliable.

That is going to be like the wax that hits the table and grows hard and calloused and takes a butter knife to get it off your countertop.

That's what happens to the love of people living in wicked societies.

And that's a thing we have to guard ourselves against.

I know I do.

It happens to me.

I'm sure you struggle with it.

Maybe you don't, but I do in the day in which I'm living in and you're living in.

But he says this, "...so that you may approve what is excellent..."

And so be pure and blameless.

This is all about how they're living.

Paul says, I know you're living in a crooked and twisted place.

I know you are.

God knows we're living in a crooked and depraved world, Christian.

He knows that.

He knows where we live.

He knows what the society is like.

He knows the norms of our day.

And yet what he says is that we are to live a pure life, a blameless life in this world.

In other words, we're to live in it, but don't be of this world.

And it takes the Spirit of God and the Word to wash our minds as we are bombarded with the culture in which we live in.

It's not an easy thing to not get dirt on your feet when you walk through a muddy pen of cattle.

It's going to happen.

But we need to be washed all the time.

I need the Word of God to cleanse me and to wash me.

That's what the Word of God does.

It cleanses me.

And you and I need that living in our day and our time.

But he says that they would be pure and blameless.

And here's the event.

Here's the day with the person.

And it's in the future.

It is for the day of Christ.

The day of Christ.

And then we see it in Philippians chapter 2, 14 through 16.

He's taking these Philippian believers and he keeps turning their face toward Christ.

And the day of Christ, that is what they're looking to.

The day of Christ.

They're looking that way and they get sidetracked and Paul says, well, let's get you back on here.

The day of Christ, the day of Christ, every single Christian.

If we could keep the day of Christ right here in the forefront of our mind, it will help us as we live in this crooked and perverse world.

Philippians chapter 2, he says this again, verses 14 through 16.

This is who we are also, by the way.

We need to know what we are.

We need to know where we are in a perverse or crooked and twisted generation.

That's where we are.

Let's be honest about it.

And then he says, this is who we are also.

But he says, do all things without grumbling and disputing so that you may be blameless and innocent.

Here it is again.

That you would be different than the world here.

That you would be living differently than the world.

He says, you're children of who?

God.

You're children of God.

That's who you are.

You were children of darkness at one time.

You were following the ways of the enemy at one time, Satan, but now you're children of God.

So this new life, we live it now differently.

He says, "...without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation among whom you shine as lights in the world."

Here it is again.

He says this same phrase again.

There it is.

That is...

The event, a day with a person in a certain place.

Paul keeps directing their mind.

Here we go.

He's thinking here as we thought and talked about this a few weeks ago.

1 Corinthians chapter 3.

There's coming a day.

As we've learned here just in one page back in your Bibles that every knee is going to bow and every tongue will confess Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of Father in heaven, on the earth, and under the earth.

Everyone will face the judgment of God.

But the church, the bride of Christ, is not facing the great white throne judgment that we read about in the end of Revelation.

That is for all the wicked unbelieving.

They stand before the great white throne judgment of God.

You and I, though, we stand before the Bema seat judgment, the word judgment seat of Christ in 1 Corinthians 3.

It is a judgment for you, but guess what it is?

It's the mercy seat.

The mercy seat.

And what we're going to find out there is God before in Christ Jesus, we stand before him not for our salvation.

That is secure in Christ.

But it is going to be about how we built upon the foundation who is Christ.

How did we live this life out?

And I shared this with you as a pastor to people that I love is to let you know there's coming a day of reckoning for even us as Christians, not for salvation, but for rewards.

I don't want you to go through eternity and not have these tremendous overabundance of rewards for the way that you lived the life that Christ has given you.

You will, because you're in Christ, make heaven.

There's no place that you've got to go for a period of time and maybe get in, maybe not get in.

No, you are in Christ Jesus.

He can only die one time, and only his blood can cleanse and wipe away every sin and every stain.

You are in Christ Jesus.

But if you flip with me just quickly, we're going to do this, just because I want to go over this one more time to 1 Corinthians, just quickly.

And I want to show you this.

We spent just a tiny bit of time in this last time.

1 Corinthians, just go with me there, and we'll start in verse 10 of chapter 3.

Excuse me.

Chapter 3, verse 10.

This is not about our salvation, folks.

You can't lose what you didn't do to earn it.

You can't lose the salvation that God has given to you.

Aren't you glad?

You can't.

Why?

Because He keeps His covenant with you.

He's the one that gave the blood in the covenant.

He's the one that made the covenant.

And He's the one who will keep the covenant.

Thank God for that.

We are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus.

He is the author and perfecter of our faith.

As Paul says in Philippians chapter 1, He who began a good work in you will be faithful to complete that work.

Thank you, God.

Thank you so much for that.

But...

There is an element that is so left out today in the gospel message that there are many people that don't even think about this.

That we are now called by God to live out, to work out what God is working in us.

God's doing the work in us, but we're required to work it out, to shine it out to the world.

That's our responsibility.

Listen to what Paul says here, starting in verse 10 of chapter 3, 1 Corinthians.

According to the grace of God given to me like a skilled master builder, I laid a foundation and someone else is building upon it.

Let each one, Paul says, the gospel that he laid is the only gospel, Paul says, that ever can be laid.

It's the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And we know in Ephesians chapter 2, you are saved by grace alone, through faith alone in Christ alone.

That is it.

Not of your works.

Why?

No man's going to boast about their salvation.

All that glory goes to God.

He gets all the glory for that.

Amen?

Amen.

And that's good news for us because if you had to earn your salvation, there's not a person on the face of this earth that could earn it.

We'd all lose it.

This is what he says.

Let each one take care how he builds upon the foundation.

Remember that?

If your foundation's off down here, it may only be an inch, but let me tell you something.

If the gospel's not the gospel, I don't care how close it is to the gospel, but if you leave out elements of the gospel, when you build on that foundation, by the time you build up, your building is going to be as crooked as you can imagine.

There's only one true foundation, and it's the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

That is it.

It's why the gospel is so important.

That's why we preach the gospel here.

That's why we over and over go over the gospel here.

I want you to know the foundation is Christ and Christ alone.

That's your foundation.

And he says, be very careful then how you build upon it, for no one lays a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Now, if anyone builds on the foundation, now this is it.

Paul says, be very careful how you build on it.

This is important, Paul says.

As we build on this foundation, which is our salvation.

This is Christ that gave us this new life.

This is salvation, regeneration, filled with the Spirit of God.

Now there's a building that's going on.

We're building upon what Christ has done.

Now we're working out what Christ is working in us.

This is what's happening.

Paul says this.

He says, if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, or precious stones, wood, hay, or stubble,

Each one's work will become manifest, here it is, for the day.

There's the day again.

What?

The day of Christ.

The day.

The day will disclose it because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done.

If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives,

He will receive what?

Reward.

Reward.

If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer what?

Loss.

Though he himself will be what?

Saved.

There are many, many, many people who have come to faith in Christ...

who have never been taught by the Word of God through any teaching, that it matters how they live their life.

It matters.

And this is what we're seeing here.

Everything that I do in the carnal, fleshly man, everything that I do that's all world-based, let me tell you something, it's wood, it's hay, and it's stubble.

But everything that I do in the Spirit of God, being led by the Spirit of God, as we're sons and daughters of God, those elements of things that I do in the Spirit, letting the Spirit of God to direct and lead me, those things that are done in that kingdom mindset.

You can't do one thing for God's kingdom in your flesh.

Did you know that?

You can't.

It's all done through the Spirit of God.

And these are the things that are going to remain.

Notice it doesn't say that you'll be lost.

What does it say?

You still be saved, he says, but you're going to smell like a pile of smoke, right?

I mean, you're going to walk basically into eternity, which you have eternity.

Man, that's incredible.

But that's not the point.

What I want you to see is that there's a day of reckoning coming.

And the reckoning is not a reckoning of you losing your salvation.

This is about your rewards, Christian.

Think about this.

You're going to get even more than salvation when you get to heaven and eternity with God.

He's going to give you rewards that you have earned by what you've done in living out what God was working in you here on earth that he will give you and you will enjoy them forever.

That's why he says don't store up for yourself treasures on earth.

Why?

Why?

They're wood.

They're hay.

They're stubble.

But store up for yourself treasures where?

In heaven.

That's where we store them up.

And it's what we do for Christ and God and his kingdom, not in salvation.

You can't earn that, man.

That's been given to you in Christ.

But it is the rewards that one day, as we all stand before the judgment seat, the mercy seat of Christ, he's going to give rewards out for what we did in working out what God had worked in us.

That's why Paul makes this very interesting statement here.

In verse 16 of chapter 2, we're going to finish this thought.

Holding fast to the word of life, so that on that day, Paul says, I may be proud.

Why would Paul want to be proud of these Philippians on the day of Christ?

Notice what he says here, though.

that I did not run in vain or labor in vain.

Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon what?

The sacrificial offering of these Philippian believers' faith.

Paul says, listen, I am laboring for you.

and I want to on the day of Christ be proud, Paul says, that I didn't run in vain, that I didn't labor over you in vain, that I didn't pour into you, that I didn't live before you and walk before you in a manner that's worthy of the calling of Jesus Christ.

That Paul says, when I'm there and you're there, he says, I want to be proud as I watch God hand out these incredible rewards that we can't even fathom.

That's what I want for you.

That's why I want you to know these things.

Dear Christian, I want to on the day of Christ, I want to watch God give you faithful son and daughter of the living God, hand you rewards that you will have for all eternity.

I want to see that happen.

That's why I'm sharing this truth with you.

I want you to know there's a day coming, Paul says.

Paul says he's being poured out like a drink offering, but he says this about it.

I am glad and rejoice with you all.

Paul says it's worth it.

I'm in prison for gospel.

I've been now four years in prison.

I mean, this is all because of Christ, and it's all worth it, Paul says.

Absolutely every element of it is worth it.

He also says the same thing in Philippians 3, verses 13 through 14, using a little different form here in his sentence.

Paul says, one thing I do, I forget what lies behind.

Remember the Egyptians?

They never stopped looking back where?

To Egypt.

And they constantly murmured and complained.

At least in Egypt we had meat, not this provision of God from heaven.

I mean, we literally have to walk out of our tent and bend over and pick it up.

This is work, man.

So what did God do?

Okay, here comes some quail, folks.

I'm going to give you so much quail that you're going to be sick of quail.

Guess what?

Here comes the meat.

What'd they do?

Complain.

God brings them to this Dead Sea or the Red Sea.

Oh, sure.

Moses, thank you, brought us out here so we can be killed out here in the desert.

God parts the water, takes them through on dry land, cuts them off from their enemy as he washes over all of that that oppressed them and held them in bondage for 430 years, and God wiped it off.

God leads them through the desert to the promised land.

You know what they did constantly?

They were stumbling over themselves, constantly looking back to Egypt because they weren't satisfied with what God was doing for them.

Do you not see how jacked that is?

But listen, be careful.

We do the same thing.

Why is it that the wicked seem to prosper?

You ever grumble like that?

Do you know the wicked do not prosper?

For what is it for a man to gain this whole world and lose his soul

There's no prospering for the world that doesn't know Christ.

It's so temporary, so vain, so empty, so non-fulfilling.

No, the wicked do not prosper in any way, shape, form, or fashion.

But we do in Christ.

Paul says, I forget what's behind.

And if you read what Paul has just talked about, he says, everything about what I had and what I did is all rubbish, he says.

It's all rubbish compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ.

he says and then he moves on and says this i strain can't you just see that y'all ever run a race you know you're straining to the finish line maybe it's a close finish with you and someone else did you ever run for second place by the way go ahead and line up on the blocks i'm getting fourth today thank you thank you why even get on the blocks man no run your race

Paul strains, he says, where?

He's straining ahead, he says, I press on toward the goal.

Here's the goal, the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

That's what Paul is straining for, forgetting what's behind.

He says something similar to this in Philippians 3.20, the fourth time.

He says, our citizenship is where?

In heaven.

In heaven.

It's okay to be disgruntled with things here.

By the way, I know you're proud to be an American, so am I. And I'm a citizen of this great country.

But I'm a citizen of something far greater than America.

The problem is, is when I live more like a citizen of this country than I do of where I'm really from.

A citizen of heaven.

Citizen of heaven.

And that's where from it we await our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Well, as always, we're running against the clock.

And I'm going to give you just two more simple passages here that we're going to look at on the how we are to live.

We know where we are.

We're living in a crooked and depraved generation.

And I've got pages of all kinds of stats I can give you about where we're living in.

But you all already know.

But we have to know who we are.

We are the children of God, citizens of heaven.

And although He has left us in the midst of this world with a purpose, we are not of this world.

That's an important thing to understand.

It really won't break your heart as bad when you understand that all this stuff is really in the plan of God.

It's all going to go down just as God said it would.

It's okay.

Things are not falling apart, Christian.

They're falling together.

It's all right.

Keep your eyes on what's going on in the Middle East.

Very fascinating things happening.

We're moving so much closer to the Ezekiel 38 war.

Moving there quickly.

You notice America doesn't come to the rescue.

No one does to Israel in Ezekiel 38 when that war happens.

But I promise you, if Trump would have been president, he'd have gone to it.

What we have now, not a chance.

No, not a chance.

Things are being set in place.

Russia is flexing her muscles.

The countries that are in Syria, read Ezekiel chapter 38.

Several of the countries that are mentioned in Ezekiel 38 are already in Syria.

What are we doing?

Things are moving forward, just like God said.

Christian, be encouraged.

Here we go.

This is the final point.

You guys are like, please hurry.

This is it quickly, how we are to live.

We know that he says we're to be blameless and innocent, that we are to be what?

We are to be shining like lights in the world, holding fast to the word of life.

That's what we're supposed to be doing.

This is what Paul says in Ephesians chapter 5.

Follow along with me in your Bibles if you want to.

Underline a few things.

I love the book of Ephesians that Paul wrote as well.

Paul says, therefore, this is how we are to live.

Be imitators of God.

You college students, you young people, you married men and women, you grandparents, this is the question you ask pertaining to things in life.

When there is something set before you, one of the first things you should ask is, God, is this something that you would want for me to do?

And would this give you glory and honor by me doing it?

Very simple.

Not hard to ask that.

Now, you may not want to ask that, but that will keep you out of the ditch often.

Very, very much it will.

He says, be imitators of God as beloved children because you're loved by God.

Walk in love as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

Here it goes.

You all ready?

You got your seatbelt fastened?

Now I'm telling you, the longer that I preach in this culture, the more foreign the language of the Bible becomes to this world.

And it is utterly amazing as I preach and teach these things, how the church is so unaffected by it.

Because the church is being overcome and infiltrated by the world.

Listen to this.

But sexual immorality...

And all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you.

Now everyone wants to talk about homosexuality.

And that's good, we should.

Because those people need Christ.

But let me remind you, the first perversion of sexual sin is not homosexuality, but fornication.

Fornication.

And fornication in the church is not even something they discuss much anymore, but it needs to be.

Fornication simply means sex outside of marriage.

Sex outside of marriage.

If you're here today and you're having sex outside of marriage, did you know this should not be a part of who you are in Christ?

Period.

Period.

Fornication is listed in those who will not inherit the kingdom of heaven.

Did you know that?

Along with homosexuality.

And it goes through the list.

Paul goes through that.

We all want to point out homosexuality, and rightfully so, but it's more of a twisted perversion of the twisted perversion of fornication.

God gave sex for a purpose, but it's not just for you to just free gratis.

Only in the confines and the context of covenant marriage with God.

One other person.

If you're a man, a woman.

If you're a woman, it's a man.

It is in marriage.

I say that today because, listen, in the church, preachers won't preach about this stuff anymore.

And the church is becoming more and more vile, and we're becoming more like the world.

And every time I turn around, we have different denominations.

You know what they're doing?

They're embracing this twisted and crooked generation.

Amen.

I mean, you think cowboys are hard to find today?

It's going to be hard to find a true follower of Christ if we don't watch ourselves.

We've got to live like godly men and women.  
If you're fornicating, confess that sin.  
Stop before God because his judgment is real.  
Young people, that is a gift from God.  
Do not abuse that because the effects of that will last a lifetime.  
It will.  
I'm telling you, it's the truth.  
God says this.  
Why does he do this?  
Because he's loving.  
Why do I set rules for my kids when they're growing up?  
Not because I'm a jerk, but because, believe it or not, I love my kids.  
Love them.  
Never set one parameter for my children and neither did you.  
That wasn't because a line was drawn.  
Because love was the line.  
That's why God does this.  
He says it's improper for the saints.  
Let, he says, there be no filthiness nor foolish talk.  
Oh my goodness.  
Pull on your steel-toed boots.  
Here we go.  
Nor crude joking.  
which are out of place, Paul says.  
But instead, let there be thanksgiving.  
For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral, impure,  
Or who is covetous.  
That is an idolater.  
Worshipping things other than God.  
Things that we set above God.  
My brand new truck.  
My horse.  
My house.

My this.

My that.

That's what I'm living for.

That shouldn't be what you're living for.

It's wood.

It's hay.

It's stubble.

Live for Jesus.

Live for Christ.

And then he says, has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ of God.

Let no one deceive you, Paul says.

I don't care about these smooth-talking preachers out there.

Listen, and there's a bunch of them.

I don't care.

Paul says, let me tell you something.

Don't let anyone deceive you, Paul says, with empty words.

For because of these things, listen, the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.

Therefore, do not become partakers with them.

We don't yoke up with the things of the world.

We are to be abstained from those things so we can shine the light of Christ.

That's what we do.

For at one time, he says, you were darkness.

You were is a key word.

Thank God you're not anymore.

But now you are light in the Lord.

Therefore, Paul says, this is what we're supposed to do, walk as children of light.

For the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true.

And try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord.

Take no part in unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them.

Why do I preach about those things?

Because they're in the word of God and I'm to expose them.

Why are we talking about this in the church today?

And every single church fits into this category.

Because we have to let the word of God set on us so that we know for our good and for God's glory.

It's important.

It's serious.

Take no part in unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them.

For it's shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret.

And then Ephesians chapter 5, 15 and 18.

Paul says, look carefully then how you walk.

Why?

Not as unwise, but as wise, making the best use of your time.

I can't guarantee that you'll live to see the sunset, nor me.

But this is what we do know.

The days are evil, Paul says.

Therefore, do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

And then he throws this in there.

And do not get drunk with wine.

Why?

Because it leads to what?

Debauchery.

How many of you know that's true?

You ever rival and revel in debauchery after you got hammered?

Anybody here do that?

I see three people.

The rest of you are lying.

You absolutely did.

You did.

He says, no, no, no, no, no, no.

He says, don't do that.

He says, guess what?

Be filled not with wine, but guess what be filled with?

The Spirit.

The Spirit of God.

Every generation from the fall has been crooked and twisted.

There is a progression into deeper and deeper wickedness as God gives them over to what they want as they reject the truth of God, the basic knowledge of God that He provided through His creation alone.

That is His invisible qualities, His eternal power.

And his divine nature can be seen by every single human that looks at God's creation.

So men are without excuse, the Bible says.

They will be.

I'm not going to go into all of Romans chapter 1 because we're running out of time.

But those of you that know that passage, when a nation or people reject God and begin to worship a God of their own making, guess what?

The first thing that happens to those people in that nation, he gives them over to a sexual revolution.

Revolution.

A sexual revolution.

And then, as they continue in the futility of their thinking, Paul says, guess what God does?

Okay, gives them back over.

This is his judgment, by the way.

Let me tell you something.

America, she ain't coming back, folks.

Why?

God is judging this nation.

He is.

He is.

How do you know, John?

Because from the sexual revolution of the 1960s, we then move to what is next?

Homosexual revolution.

What's happening here?

The crooked piece of wood is getting twisted even more.

And then God says, since they knew God and what they should do, God gives them over.

God's judging them, giving them over.

What's happening to America?

Why are the wheels falling off the country?

Because God Almighty is judging the nation that had foundations on God.

But rejected God says, we don't want you, God.

We want a God of our own making.

And God says, okay, have at it.

And the twisting of the mind begins.

And then the very last part of this, and I'm going to end with this today.

And you said, sure you are, John.

You said that last time.

Furthermore, just as they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, so God gave them over to guess where we are today, folks.

A depraved mind.

Depraved mind, it says.

So that they do what ought not to be done.

They've become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed, depravity.

They're full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice.

Does this look like your news?

Yes.

Yes.

Their gossip, slanders, God-haters, insolent, arrogant, boastful.

They invent ways of doing evil.

They disobey their parents.

They have no understanding, no fidelity, no love, no mercy.

That is our society.

That's it.

Your grandparents would be... I don't even want to think what they would think if they saw all this.

Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things, but they even approve of all those who practice them.

Washington, I mean, what in the world?

This is America to the T. Why?

Because God's word is true.

Just to show you how depraved we've come, I'm not going to go through all the other things that you already know.

Last month, here's a first for America.

Y'all ready?

April 2021, a parent in New York filed a claim for individual autonomy.

A parent in New York is suing.

Here we go.

I told you the depraved mind is suing now to upend the law that chastises and prohibits.  
We believe that law is important.

Amen?

Amen.

incestuous relationships incestuous relationships did you know that the very first homosexual lawsuit was filed in 1970 in Minnesota and here we have in 2021 now we have a parent that's putting forward a lawsuit you know why let me tell you why this is why the parent wants to marry their adult biological child

And let me tell you what, Pandora's box will not be shut.

I told you this incest thing was like the final straw for America, that we really yet haven't approved the sick, carnal, twisted, depraved mind that preys on children.

And yet we have a parent, not knowing even what the sex of the parent is, they didn't give that, wanting now to strike the law saying that incest is not good for a society.

Because they want to marry their adult biological daughter or son.

Twisted.

Perverted.

And we live in the midst of that.

Why?

Why?

so we can shine the light of Christ.

Garnet, make your way up here, please.

So we can shine the light of Christ.

Church, I'm telling you, we're living in a day, and I don't know how else to say this.

We have to understand how important it is that we are led by the Spirit of God, that we live as children for this day.

What?

The day of Christ.

Jesus is coming.

We're going to meet Jesus, whether by death or when he comes, one or the other.

You will meet Jesus, and it could be this week.

I don't know.

But if you do, and when you do, I pray, like Paul, that I have not labored or run in vain.

Week after week.

But that God pours out on you.

what's left over, the gold, the silver, and the precious stones of your life that you will enjoy for all eternity.

We're living in a crooked and depraved world, but you're here for a reason, and that is to be blameless, innocent children of God holding up the light of Christ.

That's why you're here.

Not so you can whatever.

Amen?

Thank you all for your patience this morning.

I ran a little late today.

Forgive me for that, but darn it, would you close us in prayer?

Amen.

So before everyone dismisses, I've got a few things.

I do want to invite you to, if you've got the blue cards in front of you and you want to reach out to us and somebody to contact you, fill one of those out, give your information.

If it doesn't have the question you have on there, flip it over on the back, write that, turn it into our offering bucket.

And at this time, we've got some of our lay pastors, and I think John will be making his way over there.

If you simply just like to pray after this service, go over here to our lodge, enter in there.

Maybe there's something that's going on that's applied, that John brought to light in your life.

Maybe it's sin in your life that you don't want to wait another moment.

You need to deal with today.

We've got our lay pastors over there.

They want to pray with you.

They want to work with you through that.

So I would invite you, after we close in prayer, to make your way over to the lodge.

and if you have any questions about membership or baptism or anything like that you can also make your way into the lodge and those lay pastors can help you with that but before we pray I do have I do have well I think I'm going to pray first and then after we pray I've got one last announcement that's going to be fun so would you please join me in prayer

Dear Heavenly Father, Lord, we thank you for bringing us here to this building, Lord.

Not that there's anything special about this or even special about what we're doing, but God, you are special.

Lord, you've given us a pastor that preaches the word of God, and Lord, I'm thankful for that.

I'm thankful, Lord, that he preaches through your word and exposes the sin in our own life, in my life.

God, and I pray that your word has cut to the heart of somebody this morning, and I believe that it has.

And so during this time, Lord, as we're all in prayer, if God has been pulling on your heart, maybe there's something that you do need to deal with.

I encourage you during this prayer, everyone's heads are bowed.

If you'd like to quietly get up, you can make your way to the lodge.

We'd like to pray with you there.

Lord, thank you.

God, you've placed us in a certain time in a dark world,

But God, you've given us the most amazing news, the news of your son, Jesus, and salvation and redemption and in him.

So God, help us to know that.

God, help us to train ourselves to be fluent in the promise of the gospel.

God, there's needs that need to be met, Lord, and only those needs that you know.

God, I pray that in this time, in this season of prayer, Lord, that you would reach out to us and that you would compel our hearts to be bold, to take steps towards you, to seek you out.

Lord, maybe that is just to cry out and confess our sins to you.

Lord, I thank you for your Son, for his grace.

In Christ I ask these things.

Amen.

Now, before you get up, I've got something.

So for parents, today is our gardening day.

So parents that are going to be going and picking up the kids, I want you to pick up the kids and you can follow me.

I'm about to leave through there.

And if grandparents, if y'all would just like to see, the reason we're doing this, guys, is applicable to today's message and John's message.

What our goal here at Textthoma Cowboy Church is to assist you and to equip you in building up of your family.

So what we've got is we've got some little garden beds.

I know it's just kind of a little deal, and it's kind of fun for the kids, but they're going to be planting some plants, tomatoes, cucumbers, pickles, or onions, or I don't even know what else.

You can't plant a pickle.

What am I thinking?

Cucumbers.

They're planting them in our raised beds, and we're going to be talking about the parable of the sower.

If everybody remembers the parable of the sower, the seed was cast out, the word of God was cast out, the birds picked up some of it, the people trampled on some of it, some of it grew up in the rocks, and it grew up and it was okay for a while, but it burned out because its roots were not deep.

Some grew up in the weeds, and the weeds, the things of this world, temptations of this world, choked them out.

What we want to help you do here at this church, our ministry, our children's, our students' ministries, we want to help you parents cultivate your ground,

Because we can't be in charge of the growth, just like Paul said.

We can't be in charge of, Christ has built the foundation.

Only God can cause the growth in your children and in your family.

But what we want to help you do is we want to help you cultivate the ground.

There's good, fertile soil.

in these raised beds that we're going to be planting these plants in.

And we want to use that as a teaching illustration today and in the future for our ministry.

So parents, I'm going to dismiss you right now.

Parents, if you want to walk back there, pick up your kids and go back to the kids' worship for everyone else, thank you for being here today.

I invite you to come back next Sunday.

God bless you, and I hope you have a good week.

Thank you.

Before Never

In a land where we'll never grow old Never