

A society that abandons God finds itself in a downward spiral. Romans chapter 1, verse 18, says this:

For the **wrath** of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness **suppress** the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God **has shown it to them.**

Romans 1:18-19

To read those words, “*the wrath of God*” has been revealed, I don't know about you but there's something I think inside each one of us that says, “Wow, I don't want to hear about that because that's not my picture of God.” For most of us, we have received or have been on the receiving end of the wrath of someone and it has not been a good thing, and it has not been a righteous thing, and it certainly has not been a godly thing. I sort of think of it, like, you take the word *anger* and then just ratchet it up, ratchet it up, ratchet it up, and then all of a sudden you get in the face of someone's wrath. Ugly. And not something that I really want to connect with God or even to begin to think about in relationship to God.

In fact, if you think about it for a moment, who have you ever met that when you said to them, “How did you become a Christian? How'd you become a Christ follower?” they said, “Oh, I heard the sermon on the wrath of God and boy, I was in. I'm a Christ follower now from the wrath of God.” Not my experience for sure. You say, “Man, of all days I brought a friend today and now they've got to hear you talk about the wrath of God.” Let me tell you what, what I'm about ready to share I believe is redemptive, and the wrath of God I'm gonna share in just a second is one of His attributes. If that's the case, maybe there's something there we need to hear today. Listen to these words, John 3:36:

Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life;
whoever does not obey the Son shall not see
life, but the wrath of God remains on him.

John 3:36

Think about it a moment. I believed in the Son [Jesus], but this verse tells me that even though I believed on the Son there was a time where the wrath of God was upon my life. I made a choice at a given point to obey Him and now I am a child of His. God loved me so much, you think of the verse that's very familiar John 3:16:

¹⁶ “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

— very next verse, John 3:17 —

¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

~ JOHN 3:16-17

I want you to remember that as we talk, because as I take you through this little tour of this little section of Scripture there's going to be some moments where you're going to feel this discomfort where everything inside of you is going to scream, "This is condemnation!" But I want you to hear no, that's not at all what's going on but rather it is a God who loves you so much, who has shown you His mercy and His care and that as a result of *nothing we have done* He accepts us to Himself and He invites us to believe in Him and put our trust in Him.

Wrath though, let's talk about that for a moment. It's one of His attributes. It's His response when evil is present. How in the world can we say that that's one of God's attributes? Well, let me start by saying this: When God does something it is right. Just because we take it and we don't do it right does not mean that God doesn't get it right. What God does by very definition is always right, so when we read that one of God's attributes is wrath we need to recognize right up front that by definition God is right.

God's righteousness means this:

**God is always right
God is always just
God always keeps His promises**

So if God is good, He has to hate evil or He is not good. And what he's gonna say in this text here, it is a big, big, big deal to be on the wrong side of God. The text says, "*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth*"—now here's what that means: A person who hears what God says and says,

"That's probably right, but I don't want to believe it. I don't want to think about it."

It sort of reminds me of when my kids were little and one of the kids would be messing with the other one calling him a name or something like that and the kid that was being called the name would just put their finger in their ear and scream real loud so as not to be able to hear it. There is this picture here where when God speaks truth there is the response of some who say, "I don't want to hear it." You think about those who would claim to be an atheist. Very rarely would you ever find that person to have become an atheist because of a result of deep study that finally brought them that conclusion. Most often what you find is that the person realized that God would not put His stamp of approval on their behavior or their actions and then they said, "Then I don't want to believe God. I don't want to have anything to do with Him." And so left with a choice they said, "I'll deny God."



Now think about it for a moment, and I read this verse a moment ago but I want to read it again, Romans 1:20:

For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the **creation** of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are **without excuse**.

Romans 1:20

So in other words, when you go look out over that beautiful canyon, when you look at that tall mountain, when you see that big, puffy cloud floating across the sky—it's sort of like in our world where we have labels on our shoes, on our jeans, on our shirts, labels everywhere, on our glasses, everything is labeled, you know exactly what it is the moment you see it. God says I have placed My thumbprint, I have put My Name, I have put My label on everything in creation—and when you look at that your immediate response is, "That's God." That's why you talk to people and they say, "I go camping because if I can

get camping I get out there in the woods and I just, I feel really close to God, I sense God.” God has made Himself very known. Remember what it says in Scripture, God has placed eternity on our hearts.¹ God has hardwired it. We have to come to this place where we so want to reject Him and reject it to be able to not see it any longer and to push it aside.

I talked to a medical doctor quite some time ago and he was telling me about all the things in the human body that medicine has really not for the most part figured out. That when they look at all those things they go, “Yeah, we sort of understand how it works, but we don't know how it works.” It's because there is a God in Heaven who has created us. And here's what we want to say about that God and this is what this text tells us about this God—by looking at creation we know that there is someone smarter than us. I mean, for a medical doctor to say, “We don't get it,” it's a pretty amazing thing. That is to admit there is a God who is smarter than me. There is One who is more powerful than me. You try to calm nature, you try to channel nature—it doesn't happen. There is One who is smarter than me. There

By looking at creation you know:

1. There is someone smarter than us.
2. There is someone more powerful than us.
3. There is someone bigger and beyond us.

is One who is more powerful than me. And there is One who is way beyond us. That's what we get when we look at creation, we find those things.

And then he tells us here in verse 19 that God has shown it to them, and verse 20 as a result of what He has shown them they are without excuse. So here's the

conclusion you come to: If I look out there and I see that there is a God, that I have to believe in that God, and I have to be accountable to One who is smarter, more powerful and bigger than me. If I come to a place where I go, “I don't want to buy that. I don't want to believe that,” then I have to deny that, I have to suppress that, and I have to put that down.

That's why not too long ago we talked about evolution. You see, if we go back to the beginning of our Bible we read, “*In the beginning, God*”²—not a big explosion, not some sort of happenchance where a bunch of stuff comes together in a glob of goo and it eventually becomes this [human body]. “*In the beginning, God*”—but in order to explain away God so that we can have control over this process, so we can control the narrative, we have to come up with some other explanation. But when we look at creation we realize that there is someone bigger, someone smarter, and someone way beyond us. At that moment if we choose to suppress Him, we choose to say no to Him, look what happens, verse 21:

For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal an and birds and animals and creeping things.

Romans 1:21-23

“*For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him*”—in other words, it fit their lifestyle a whole lot better to just say, “Yeah, no God.” Again, not a result of study but as a

¹ He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put eternity into man's heart, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end. ~ ECCLESIASTES 3:11

² In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. ~ GENESIS 1:1

result of lifestyle going, “This doesn't work for me,” and so they became futile in their thinking. Why? Because they wouldn't give thanks to Him, they wouldn't honor Him. They wouldn't look at that mountain and say, “There must be a God.” They wouldn't look at that vein on the back of their hand and go, “Who does that? How does that happen? How does that get created? There must be a God that is way beyond me.” They didn't do that. They wouldn't give thanks. They wouldn't honor Him. And think about it for a moment, when I give thanks my perspective changes. When I give thanks I remember I can't exist without Him. And they're like, “Oh, yeah, I can because I will be god. I will be the one in charge.” A lot of this becomes a battle of who is in charge. If I'm in charge I have to quickly say there is no God, I don't want to honor Him, I don't want to believe in Him, I don't want to give any attention to Him.

Back to verse 21, “*and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and they exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.*” Here's the bottom line: They said, “I need to find a substitute god.” You've got this God that's bigger, smarter, and beyond you and you go, “I think I'll create something else because I don't like what He might bring to my life. I don't want to be accountable to Him. I'll create something that can be accountable to me.”

So we take an image that we've seen in this world among that which is created and we create something and that becomes the thing that we worship. And by the way, we do that in our day. Maybe not as much with carved things, probably not many people in this room carving things, but we work our tails off so that we can buy things and cars and boats and yachts and houses and sporting tickets and we worship people. Anything to create a substitute so we can be accountable to something other than the one true God. Here's the bottom line: We struggle because we have devoted ourselves to created things.

And it says here in verse 24, “*Therefore God gave them up.*” Word “*gave them up*” basically a legal term; so when finally the judge has heard everything he turns the person that's in the case over and they take the person away to prison. Now that's not ultimate destruction but certainly he gives them up and they get the results of what they were doing. There is something, and I'll share this with you right now, a principle where when we do things God's way, when we stay under His authority and under His control, that in that we have protection. When we step out from underneath that protection we end up going down the results of what we've done and what we've been a part of and it becomes the path that gets taken.

Therefore **God gave them up** in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.

Romans 1:24-25

He says here in the rest of the verse, “*they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever.*” And we find, this last couple of weeks but I think it's important to continue to find it, idolatry, that thing that you replace God with is finding ultimate significance in created things. It is placing our allegiance, our ultimate allegiance to things that are not God. It is the thing that distorts our humanity and causes destructive behaviors. And again, what we have in front of us is Paul saying here's the deal with the pagan, they have chosen to say no to God, we don't want to believe Him, we don't want to be under His authority, and that will start a

process, a slow spiral downwards. So as a result, instead of trying to discover God they suppress the truth as seen in creation, they worshipped created things. And here's what I want to say here as a church today: If we do not act on the truth that we know, our hearts will become hard. We need to be super careful about that hardening of our hearts.

The text goes on to chapter 1, verse 26:

For this reason **God gave them up** to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.

Romans 1:26-27

This is clearly speaking about homosexuality. This is a subject that in our society is incredibly polarizing. It is a subject that is at the center of court cases today. It is dividing families. It's a subject that is causing churches to struggle to figure out; denominations are dividing over this subject. But what the Scripture is going to tell us here in the entirety of this passage is that when a society begins to turn away from God homosexuality is a part of the process of pushing God away. Scripture is not conflicted on this. Scripture calls it for what it is—it calls it sin. The text tells us here that there will be a pressure, a push, to make this natural, to make this the norm in society. We see that constantly. If you go into our schools, you'll see that this is just a common thing, it is no longer an outlier. The text tells us it is not natural, it is not part of what nature does, and Scripture is clear that it breaks the heart of God. It is a step on the path to pushing God away.

And some would say, “You know, this is just the way I was born.” Understand, the Scripture is clear that all of us were born into sin and we have a sin nature. So to just say, “Well, because I was born with a sin nature evidently that sin nature is okay,” would be quickly for us to say, “Well then, if you murder someone you were born with this sense of wanting to take out your aggressions and your passions on someone, so since that's the way you were born that was okay.” If we were to say that was the case, then we'd say that a child molester, they were born with that propensity and as a result that's why they're doing what they are doing.” If that's the route we go, everyone gets a pass and anything goes, and that's not what the Scripture says.

Here's the bottom line: Last week we talked about the Apostle Paul says, “I am not ashamed of the gospel,” and he says, “it's the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes in God.”³ So what happens when we stop believing, which was the beginning of this process, and we begin to move away as a society we are under the wrath of God. The good news is, the Gospel is, that Jesus came to forgive us of our sins and we can respond with the Gospel. What we need in face of this situation is the Gospel message; the good news that yes, you were born a sinner. Yes, in this room, across this room, we've got every sin probably well done in a list. We have been people who have been highly devoted to those sins, but God through His Gospel comes to forgive us of those sins and cleanse us from them. We don't carve one out and say, “Well, this one's a little bit different,” and make it okay. God says it is sin.

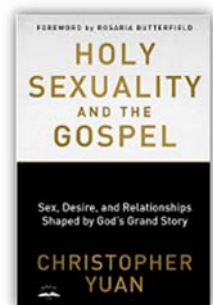
³ *For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. ~ ROMANS 1:16*

I'm highly concerned about our young people. I had the opportunity a year ago to sit in a session where a gentleman by the name of Dr. Christopher Yuan spoke and he talked about this subject of homosexuality, and he had gone through a period of his life where he practiced homosexuality and tells his story clear. And then afterwards he sat down and he had a conversation with a group of about 40 students who were able to ask any question, and I just was beyond belief of the questions that I heard asked. I guess I would—if you'd say come up with every question you could think of that they might ask him, I'm pretty good at coming up with questions but I wouldn't have gotten any of them right. I just wouldn't have gotten any of them right. The things that our young people are dealing with along these lines in their schools and the issues that this creates are beyond anything that I could imagine. Oh, my heart was just incredibly broken, and I went up to him afterwards and I said, “Would you come and share at our church?”

And it was interesting, the event that I was at they actually had security there because there were those who said that they would come out and picket it because he was there and he was saying that this isn't the lifestyle that you should live in, and that there's another alternative and there's another way, and there's God's way. And so here I am going up, “Would you come to our church?” [Laughter] And he said that he would. He's coming on June 30th of this year. I encourage you, I tell you that now so you actually put it on your calendar. I would really encourage you to carve that out of your schedule this summer and make sure you're back from vacation on that Sunday. But what we're going to do that Sunday night and that Monday, we're gonna have him speak even more and he's bringing along with him his parents who went through this experience. And he told me, he says, “When I get together with a congregation like yours,” he said, “the issues that I deal with have a lot more to do with what moms and dads and grandmas and grandpas and brothers and sisters are dealing with

because this has become such a mainstream in society, and parents have just an incredible amount of questions.” And so he's bringing his parents and we're gonna be able to have a whole evening where we just pummel them with questions. We'll have a whole evening where we can ask him the questions and I'm hoping that our youth group will just come out to be able to ask the questions that I heard asked in that session.

So he wrote a book called *Holy Sexuality*⁴ and in that book I thought he made an incredible case for basically there's this mindset of heterosexuality good, homosexuality bad, and he says, “Well, hold on a second. There are sinful activities in both of these.” He says the thing that we need to look at here is what is holy sexuality, what is God's view of sexuality? How do we live our lives according to God's view? So he doesn't spend his time beating up on homosexuality; he spends his time presenting God's truth and what God has to say about this. And as you've already read here today God is extremely clear about this, so how do we line up with this?



By the way, just one other thought on the student end of things. I have been a big promoter of an organization called Summit, Summit Ministries, summit.org. They do a two-week conference where they do 60 hours of lecture for kids that are juniors up through age 25 and they bring in the best speakers from all over the country to hit all these major issues and these big questions that our kids are dealing with today. Again, you hear my heart for our young people that are just being bombarded with this and it's just wrecking them and they don't have the



⁴ Christopher Yuan, DMin. (Nov 2018). *Holy Sexuality and the Gospel: Sex, Desire, and Relationships Shaped by God's Grand Story*. Colorado Springs: Multnomah. https://www.amazon.com/dp/B07B2JGPJR/ref=cm_sw_em_r_mt_dp_U_z22ACbWQ3PFHQ

answers they need because, as you heard there a moment ago, I'm hearing the questions and I'm thinking *I've never even heard that question before. I didn't even know that was a possibility. I didn't even know it was a problem. My goodness, I didn't see this coming.* They bring in the best of the best to talk to those things. And I'll tell you what, after our kids have been in this constant bombardment with the thoughts and the beliefs of those who long ago said there is no God, we don't want to have authority, and what He says is wrong, to have a group of people explain wait a minute, here was God's design, here was God's plan, and when you live according to that plan here are the results you get. When you choose not to live according to that plan, here are the results that you get. And they are able to answer from Scripture and from science and from society and culture the answers to the questions the kids have. So those are just a couple things that I would throw out.

I just this week ran across something that is just really incredibly current in our culture today. Many of you know the name Chris Pratt. He responded to a tweet just this last week defending the Hillsong Church, a church that he attends. Listen to what he says: "It has recently been suggested that I belong to a church which 'hates a certain group of people' and is 'infamously anti-LGBTQ.'" Nothing could be further from the truth." He wrote, "I go to a church that opens their doors to absolutely everyone. Despite what the Bible says about my divorce, my church community was there for me every stop of the way, never judging, just gracefully accompanying me on my walk. They helped me tremendously offering love and support. It is what I have seen them do for others on countless occasions regardless of sexual orientation, race, or gender."

Here's what we know for certain, every one of us in this room struggles with sin. It doesn't make sin right that we struggle with it. It doesn't make it okay to continue doing it because we struggle with this. In fact, what each one of us need to do when a sin comes to our attention, when we read in the Bible this this activity that I do is wrong, it is our response that what we need to do is repent of that. And when we talk about repenting here, we throw out just basically three things: you've got to see it, you've got to own it, and you've got to turn from it. See it, own it, turn from it, whatever your sin is here today. And this passage here is going to keep bringing that to our attention because as we continue to make this spiral down away from God going, "No thank you, God. You don't exist. I don't want to have anything to do with You. I don't want to be under your authority. I don't want to be under your control," we continue.



And no sin is an only child, it always leads to the next one and it keeps on going and there is a given point where we have to see it, we've got to own it and call it for what it is and call it sin, and we need to turn from it because God has given us this book, our Bible, and He says, "Hey, this is my owner's manual for you. This is the best way to live." And in His loving way He tells us what the truth is, how we're to live our lives. When we choose not to do so, eventually He says okay and it's this ongoing statement here "*he gave them up.*" They suppressed the truth about God as they saw in creation, they worshiped created things, and they exchanged the natural relationships between men and women. They did all of that instead of trying to discover who God was.

Instead of trying to discover God they:

1. **Suppressed the truth of God as seen in creation.**
2. **Worshipped created things.**
3. **Exchanged natural relations between men and women.**

When God tells us what to do, can you imagine, He says don't murder, most of us in this room would be in agreement with that. Can imagine a society where you're irritated with someone and [*snaps his fingers*] kill 'em? Someone cuts you off in traffic [*snaps his fingers*], just kill 'em. I've had people say to me all the time, "Well, I don't murder. I didn't do that." Well, what about some of the other ones? I've heard people say to me, "The one thing I won't put up with, I can't stand when people lie." Because we know, because of what God has said, that when all of a sudden the truth is not amongst us those lies come from the very dark pit of Satan himself. God knew that, and God knew that when we step out of being people of character and integrity all of society starts to crumble. We need to take God at what He says, and we need to speak truth and call it for what it is.

Unfortunately, there are ridiculous pressures around us, all around us constantly, that there are certain "protected" sins that you can't say anything about. And I would just say no, that's not the case. My Bible is clear about those things. Galatians chapter 6, it's the most loving thing to tell the truth. Galatians 6 says:

⁸ For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption,

— now how many say, "I want that"? Well, then, why wouldn't you tell someone that you're sowing to your flesh? But then it says —

but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.

~ GALATIANS 6:7

I gotta wrap up. This cycle continues down, if you look down here to verse 28 it says:

And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless.

Romans 1:28-31

"*And since I did not see fit*"—here it is again, just keeps on saying, "*to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind.*" By the way, one of the reasons of us coming together to worship every week, and the Scripture tells us that we're to do that, we need that because it's amazing how quick the things of society cause us to slowly veer away from the truth. It's why we encourage you to just keep on reading your Bible because the things that we're being told every day and that we hear, after a while they just sort of sound right, and before we know it we're way off of course.

He "*gave them up to a debased mind to do things that ought not to be done.*" Basically, that is a mind devoid of God's moral code. In other words, we no longer have this structure based on what we know is right and wrong because we threw that all aside. We no longer have this structure to make good decisions, and we're trusting in people to make decisions based on what we would hope would be that right moral code and they don't have any of it any longer. And that's why I mentioned at the very beginning, this is the process of a society going down a very steep slope to destruction.

And then he lists those sins and there are way too many they go into great detail on all of them. "*They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy,*

murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless.” Can you think of anymore? You just sort of throw them all in a pot there and all of these things are no longer part of their moral code and part of their decision-making process.

I was thinking about those first words there, “*and since they did not see fit to acknowledge God,*” and I was picking out just a couple words in here that I'm like, “Yeah, I don't know if I could give a really good definition for those.” So one of those words, *insolent*, I don't think that's a medical word, “showing a rude and arrogant lack of respect.” Anyone see that in the society around you? Wow. *Haughty*, the sound of the word sort of tells me maybe what it means, listen to this: “arrogantly superior and disdainful.” It was interesting, one of the words in this little list was *disobedient to parents*. Uh-oh, we're at the bottom of the spiral and some of you've got four little disobedient ones running around the house right now, right? Ouch.

But hear me, what I think is interesting about this, this is why you will discipline your kids. This is why you will teach them what is right and wrong. That's why you can't just depend on the Christian school you send them to. It's why you can't just depend on the classrooms you're sending them to up there [children's ministry rooms], although I can tell you they're giving them the truth and they're giving it and giving it and giving it to them. I'm so proud of all of you who are doing the teaching up there and making that happen and I love that. But as parents we've got to be teaching it to them because we know that when a society says no, there is no God. I want to be able to do what I want, when I want, because I am god. It's one of the problems that we have. We talked about idolatry a moment ago, our children in many cases have become our idols and the last thing we want to do is disappoint them, disrupt their lives, make their wishes not come true, and so we do raise little princesses. Whoops.

I was talking to, I saw a Facebook post of a lady we know this week, a school teacher, and she said she's resigning from her position as of spring break because there is no control among the students and the administration will not stand behind that. We've come to a place where the result of our rejecting God has affected every aspect of our lives.

I want to tell you some good news though quickly before we leave. Second Peter chapter 3, verse 9, says God is patient—I'm so thankful for that. I just want you to hear that; I want you to know that. You know, when you hear *wrath*, humans when they are wrathful they go sinful fast. Our loving God, when He acts according to His character, in wrath His desire is to draw us back. Read 2nd Peter 3, take your small group through it and look at it closely. It says that he does not want anyone to perish. When we hear wrath, I mean, when someone's being wrathful to us we know they want us gone. They want us fired. They want us dead. They want us out of their world. That's not God. He doesn't want any to perish. Second Peter 3 says He wants everyone to come to repentance. This is not a hateful thing, this is God putting that pressure on a society to draw them back to Himself.

⁹ The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

~ 2 PETER 3:9

Instead of trying to discover God, they suppress the truth of God. In a scene in creation they worship created things. They exchanged natural relations between men and women. They lived without a conscience and they celebrated the things that they knew were wrong. Listen to these words, Romans 1:32:

Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.

Romans 1:32

So we saw all sorts of buildings lit up in New York City the other week over murder and you just go, “That explains this.” We no longer have a moral code to make these decisions and everyone is standing there, “Oh, it's great!” It's NOT great. And yet we have a patient God that doesn't want anyone to perish, that calls all to come to repentance.

A lady by the name of Madeleine L'Engle, I heard a quote by her just this week, said:

We do not draw people to Christ by loudly discrediting what they believe, by telling them how wrong they are and how right we are, but by showing them a light that is so lovely that they want with all their hearts to know the source of it.

— Madeleine L'Engle

Madeleine L'Engle (2016). *Walking on Water: Reflections on Faith and Art*, p.172, Convergent Books

My heart is that this church will be a church that just longs to live for Jesus because when we live for Jesus, when we do things God's way, we get God's kinds of results. And at a given point, in my experience has been is people come back and say, “What's different? Why does that work for you?” And it's in that moment that I can tell them about the gracious love of Jesus. When they want to pick a fight over a couple letters, it never leads to good things; but when we get the opportunity to tell them about the gracious love of the Gospel, it's a game-changer. I encourage you, church, live the Gospel. Live as forgiving people, live as loving people, live as Bible people that are always ready to share with them the hope that we have in Jesus Christ. It's a game-changer.

[Closing Prayer]

Lord God,

I know that in this room today because we are all sinners we struggle with some of the things we've heard. We also know that in this room today because so many of us have loved ones and family members who are on this trajectory, our hearts are just hurting. I'm just wanting to say thank you that You are a patient God, that You are loving God, that You are a God that draws all men to yourself.

O Lord God, I pray that You would minister to the people in this room and that they would repent, that they would see the need, and that they would own it, and that they would turn from it. Lord God, I pray that You would work in the lives of our family members that are struggling with these things, our friends, our co-workers. Lord Jesus, help us to know what to say and when. Help us to know how to love them, how to reach out, how to care for them.

Lord, I pray that people will come here hungry to hear your truth and find out why living for You is the best way to live. Lord God, I pray that if there's anyone in this room right now that's never put their faith and trust in You that they would come to You, just drawn like crazy to You, a

righteous, holy God that loves them, that gave your life so that we can have life. I pray that we just call to You right now. The Scripture says those who call on the Lord will be saved.

It's in Your Name we pray. Amen.

Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/317978921>

YouTube: https://youtu.be/RusSqIDs_S0

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