

4/7/19 - Col. 2:16-23 - "Don't Chase Shadows"

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Preacher: Brenton Beck

[0 : 00] We're going to direct our attention to Scripture and the teaching of His Word, and before we do that, we must pray. So please join me in prayer. Father, we come to You today, Father, as Your hands and feet in this church.

Father, we thank You for Your written Word, the perfect inerrancy of Your Word. And Father, that no matter the culture or climate, it is transcendent from age to age and applicable, perfect for correction, perfect for teaching, perfect for encouragement.

So Father, we turn to You for those very things in Your Word this morning, to help us, to refine us, to challenge us this morning. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Amen. I'm going to grab my water real quick. So I wanted to just go through a quick reminder of what we discussed last week as a church family.

Leading up to this week, we find ourselves quite far from that opening verse, like as we open the service with the Christ-centric hymn, which we talked about in verse 1, which is verses 15 through 20, which talks all about Christ's supremacy over all things, and Christ's sufficiency in all things.

[1 : 36] We find ourselves kind of far away from that. However, even in last week's message, in this week's message today, we're going to still feel the weight of that in the text today.

Last week we spoke on Paul's strong critique of empty and deceitful philosophy, and we established a couple checkpoints along the way.

So this is just to remind you, because everything leading up into today's message is built on from last week. We had some checkpoints. The first checkpoint last week was in verse 8 through 10, which was Christ is the fullness of deity, which makes him head over all rulers and authorities, over all the angelic realms.

The second checkpoint from last week was in verse 11 through 12, where all those in Christ are victors as they participate in Christ's death in regard to circumcision, which we spoke about last week, in his death, burial, resurrection through faith.

And then the third checkpoint last week was, there's forgiveness and complete obliteration of the legal record written against us as Christ disarmed those powers.

[2 : 56] Last week served as credibility for the believers of the church in Colossae, and also established credibility and authority for his church even today.

So as we lead into this passage, we come with all this knowledge of established knowledge and informed information regarding what Paul was trying to communicate, saying that you as believers are set apart.

And he got into some specifics, and he's going to keep going into some specifics in today's passage. So keeping in mind last week, we're going to continue to build upon those three checkpoints, specifically today in regard to these behaviors and practices which distract those who are in Christ.

So we're going to hit on three sections today in Scripture which discuss these behaviors and these practices, which are rooted in the Old Testament. They're going to be related to as shadows.

Today we're going to talk about, number one, the insignificance of human traditions, including dietary customs and various law celebrations compared to Christ. We're going to be talking about the insignificance of those with visionary experience and asceticism who try to disqualify believers in Colossae.

[4 : 23] And then the final thing we're going to discuss today is Paul returns to a selected critique of some previous chapters, some previous verses of imperatives that he discusses, which serve as both the conclusion of chapter 2, but also, interestingly enough, it's the introduction to chapter 3.

This last couple verses and chapter 3 tie very closely together. It's almost a contrast. So let's turn to his word in Colossians chapter 2.

We are in verse 16 today. That's such a cool picture. Verse 16 says, Therefore, let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath.

These are a shadow of things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. Let no one disqualify you, insisting on asceticism and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind, and not holding fast to the head from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God. If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations? Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch, referring to things that all perish as they are used according to human precepts and teachings.

[6 : 05] These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh.

There's a couple times in my own marriage where sometimes I just try to overdo things.

One of them being sometimes with cooking. Whenever I sometimes decide to cook, nothing beats my wife's cooking, so she typically handles that portion in her household.

But when I want to try to impress her, a couple times I made some pasta. You know, yeah. But like steak, one time I completely ruined steak because I was really trying to make a special dinner and I kind of was missing the point.

Like I injected the steak with this seasoning, with that spike thing that you inject. It's kind of like a freaky like horror film injector, like a meat injector.

[7 : 25] So I injected the steak with a bunch of stuff that didn't need to go in there. I put all sorts of seasoning, like, oh, this is going to be really good. She's going to be so impressed. This is going to be such a special dinner.

And so I added all this stuff and, you know, I think I actually overcooked the steak, which ruined it to begin with. But after all the seasoning, after everything that I was trying to throw onto this meal and make it special for her, I didn't tell her I did all this stuff.

But, you know, her response and even to this day, she was like, I don't know if these seasonings go together. So she doesn't know that I spent all this time trying to make this special meal and injecting it.

I'm just like, hmm, it's just a new spice that I tried. So there we were eating. I think she was scraping off all the spices in that meal.

But I was trying to add a bunch of things that really didn't need anything added to it. A bunch of people obviously would argue, you know, you need A1 sauce with steak. I think that ruins steak, quite frankly. I think it should be a sin to add A1 sauce to steak.

[8 : 38] But it's not written in Scripture, as I know at this point. But we're going to see this adding to something that doesn't need to be there in this text today.

The first point we're going to be talking about today is going to be shadows and substance. And we're going to be looking specifically at verse 16 and 17.

It says, Therefore, let no one pass judgment on you in question of food and drink or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath.

These are a shadow of things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. Paul starts this passage out with therefore. It ties the relationship in with all the previous texts that we've discussed up to this point.

As I mentioned last week's checkpoints. And we meet the first group of people in this text who were trying to promote festivals, trying to promote strict dietary laws, trying to promote, celebrate days like a new moon, a Sabbath.

[9 : 57] And Paul instructs the church of Colossae to shift their focus from this judgment or spiritual intimidation Paul brings about an issue that these people have, and it's an issue dealing with their hearts within the false teachers.

His warning today in these two passages warns of two realms of judgment to dismiss. First is the judgment against diet, of food and drink.

But also the second judgment to dismiss is the judgment of days, festivals, new moon, or Sabbath. Looking back in this culture, there were false teachers in this day casting judgment upon believers.

The believers in Colossae who would freely eat and drink. These believers would freely eat and drink in complete disregard to the Old Testament laws as they were taught and instructed by Paul. These false teachers thought they had a way to God that they, that to reach a certain spiritual fullness you had to live and do what the Old Testament is still calling out for them to do.

[11 : 15] They couldn't let go of these and that it would only enhance their belief and their relationship with God if they would return to the Old Testament dietary laws.

If we look back into Leviticus, we're not going to jump into the text directly but you can write it down in your notes because historically speaking, in Jewish law, there were food that were deemed clean and unclean.

And I wonder if I have that piece of paper. Oh, did I forget it? No. Okay, so reading Leviticus and studying Leviticus, I was going to put it on the screen but I kind of want to be simple and not give an extra thing to Dom.

However, in Leviticus chapter 11, it references things that are clean and unclean. If you can recall, this is a list here.

If you can kind of at least see like a numerical proportion of what is clean. Like, chicken is clean, doves, goose, guinea fowl, if anyone's interested, that was clean, pigeon, it has animals, birds, and fish.

[12 : 28] A whole list that's found in Leviticus chapter 11. But then if you compare this list of food that is unclean, you can kind of see it gets a little more exhaustive.

If you can see, the animals, birds, fish, and there were some others, insects, that were deemed unclean, and even reptiles. I told my wife when I was studying Leviticus one time, I came home, I'm like, turtles are unclean.

Turtles. And she's like, I don't know what you're talking about. But it's just interesting the dietary laws and restrictions that were listed in Leviticus that according to Jewish law, you had to observe. But unknown to the Jews, some of these laws were actually good to protect the people from getting illnesses and diseases that they don't know about.

They don't have sanees right down the road to tell them, have a nutritionist to tell them what's good and not good to eat. God was providing that to them. But there were also some spiritual reasons which stimulated their conscience on an everyday life.

[13 : 44] If we look back to Mark, specifically Mark chapter 7, Jesus addressed the judgment of the Pharisees who were offended by their eating habits, by Jesus' eating habits.

In Mark 7, 18 through 20, it says, He said to them, Jesus said to them, Then are you also without understanding? In some translation, it actually says, Are you so dull? As Jesus speaks to these Pharisees, He continues, Do you not see whatever goes into a person from the outside cannot defile him since it enters not his heart but his stomach and is expelled?

Thus He declared all foods clean and He said, What comes out of a person is what defiles him. And then lastly, in Acts chapter 10, I'm not going to go into this one in depth, but it's when Peter had a vision that God gave him of the sheet being lowered onto the earth, the four corners of the earth, and God instructed Peter to go and kill and eat.

And Peter denied the request three times. Imagine that. Another three time, Peter. Because at this point, God was instructing that He made all things clean at this point to show Peter that these dietary restrictions and these laws are ineffective anymore, that there's a new focus for this church. And also, back in this, looking at this text, we see a judgment by days. So that was the diet and food and drink restrictions that the false teachers were trying to impose on the believers.

[15 : 28] But we also see days with festivals, with new moons, with Sabbaths. And Jews had their festival, their special feast days, and that's recorded in Leviticus 25.

And their new moon celebrations recorded in Isaiah 1, chapter 13, or chapter 1, verse 13. They also celebrated their Sabbaths and observed their Sabbaths in Exodus 20, verse 9 through 11.

These are all part of Israel's laws observed in the Old Testament. But this, but still, at this point, they are just a shadow to these believers in Colossae.

They are not the substance. But when Christ came, church, and this is something that the New Testament believers of Colossae understood at this time, that when Christ came, he fulfilled all of these.

the significance of these laws served as a mere shadow of things to come. A significance that was fulfilled in Christ.

[16:38] Believers no longer celebrate Sabbaths, but are called to meet on the first day of the week, also known as the Lord's Day, which is why we meet today. This is listed in Revelation 1, verse 10.

These Jewish customs and observances actually weren't bad. Like, if you think about it, like, okay, like, they were actually kind of healthy, like, saying, like, you know, eat this, don't eat this. We talk about, we're like the first to jump on fad diets these days. You know, it's not that bad to watch your diet, but these specific dietary restrictions, these specific day observances serve with a specific purpose and a specific season.

And notice how Paul doesn't say, you shall not, but he says instead, do not let anyone pass judgment. What was intended to be a shadow of what is to come, they started to become an idol. And through this verse, it's almost as if Paul had idolatry in the back of his mind the entire time. And we read about this, it's actually perfectly referenced in Hebrews chapter 10.

[17:53] I'm just going to read it to you unless Dom's pretty quick to the click back there. Hebrews chapter 10, 1 through 4. Wow.

He's pretty quick. Yeah, he's pretty quick. It says, for since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come, instead of the true form of these realities, it can never by the same sacrifices be continually offered every year make perfect those who draw near.

Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered since the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have any consciousness of sin. But in these sacrifices, there is a reminder of sins every year.

For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin. So these laws back in this Old Testament served for a specific purpose and for a specific season that ended.

And they are no longer a shadow, but the substances come in Jesus Christ. We live in a society today, I believe, that we are prone to outdo one another with an innovative mentality, finding a new and fresh way, trying to impress your wife with different seasonings and food, trying to get better things.

[19:25] And in churches today, I believe this legalism can creep in and expresses itself in surface-y faith, like an appearance of faith.

And while there is a cultural bridge to gap between the Colossi Church and then us today, I don't think anybody is kind of tempted to going back to these dietary restrictions in here.

I mean, some might, but I don't think that's the issue today. But it's a little bit different today. Today we see the very same root Paul is warning against, which is legalistic idolatry.

It's an issue with the heart. Those who were casting judgment upon the believers in Colossi were tied up in legalism. And the problem with legalism is that it breeds judgment.

It breeds self-righteousness. It breeds your own way and not God's way. it's a subtle, prominent fixation upon the external rather than the internal.

[20:39] And in the church today, we see this when people who should be dealing with sins like coveting, like the deadly sins, like coveting, like gossiping, like slandering, like bitterness, like hatred, with people who need to be dealing with some real heart issues, they conceal it behind financial giving, raising your hands in church services, by appearing from the outside that you have a changed heart.

And while not all these things are bad, like hand raising and things like that, I'm not trying to go down that rabbit trail and saying, like, no, we can't do that. However, that should be a shadow of a substance that's within our hearts, that's already established, not something that is done out of just routine to make us look like we have pure hearts, but it should be the expression of a pure heart. As we go into point two, we see in verse 18 and 19 our second point of holding fast. Verse 18 continues, let no one disqualify you insisting on asceticism and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions puffed up without reason by a sensuous mind, verse 19, and not holding fast to the head, from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, grows from a growth that is from God.

Paul turns his attention to critique a second set of group of people, more than likely the Gentile, the Hellenistic Gentile believers, or the false teachers in this time.

Paul is warning the Colossian church not to feel disqualified by the ascetic practices and cultic acts of worshiping angels or this knowledge, but rather to hold fast to Christ where truth growth is found.

[22 : 44] We see in this passage a deceptive mysticism which is not rooted and established as we spoke about last week, rooted and established in Christ, but is man-made based on more about a sensuous mind feelings, like kind of what you're feeling, and it's an emotional intuition rather than actual biblical intellect of what Paul was teaching this church and what Epiphra has taught this church.

This wording includes three realms of disqualifications to dismiss. The severity to self-discipline which is asceticism. Number two, which is the worship of angels which is false worship. We see this all through the book of Hebrews. Christ is supreme over the angels. And then number three, lofty visions based on a sensuous mind of feelings and emotions that lead you. Gnostic's were great pretenders at this time who not only fooling themselves but also the Colossian church to a certain regard. These teachers were assumed to be humble and self-disciplined. You know, people that you would look to them at the way that they conduct themselves and be like, oh, well, it seems like you got it figured out.

[24 : 07] What are you doing? What's the secret that you got it figured out that maybe we're not doing the proper way? So they would conduct themselves in severity of self-discipline.

They were very disciplined people. But deep within their hearts was legalistic pride that was undealt with.

These Gnostics who claimed to have special revelations that wasn't in accordance to God's word, extra-biblical revelations, which to people looking at them from the outside, people looking at them like the Colossian church would look at them and say, wow, I must not have it in with God like you have it.

You hear all this stuff, you have this knowledge, like they were on the inside, these people. They went on in great detail about visions completely consumed in emotion, a sensuous mind, and a false hope of deep and spiritual growth, that if you think that you're going to achieve deep and spiritual growth through emotional responses, you're missing something.

But guess what? If everything was a lie because we see in verse 19, it was not in accordance to Christ. As 19 says, they did not hold fast to the head from whom the whole body, the church, individual members, are knit and nourished.

[25 : 45] Two key words of his church through its joints and its ligaments. That holding fast grows from a growth that comes from God. The root problem at this time, kind of visiting last week, and even Pastor Brad's message from two weeks ago now, about this striving for, like, presenting you as spiritually mature.

For this, Paul toils, remember, in Pastor Brad's message, that he toils for to present you as spiritually mature. We talked last week about being rooted and established, which is the groundwork of spiritual maturity, which is in your hands daily throughout the week, not just one day on Sunday.

today. And the root problem is plainly laid out for us today in the physiological metaphor of the body in verse 19.

The purpose of these Gnostics was to grow people, that their motive was growth. They wanted to help people grow. However, Paul was dismissing their methods.

If it was rooted in Scripture, if it was established in His Word, if it wasn't led by a sensuous mind and emotions and feelings, yeah, it would have some legitimacy.

[27 : 11] But it wasn't. It was puffed up, it was lofty, all about knowledge. And when the message proclaimed is united with the true gospel message being rooted and established, church, Youngstown Metro, this is where true growth is found.

This is where true nourishment is found. Just as verse 19 tells us, a growth with a growth from God. And so today, I must caution you to be aware of also similar false teachers because this very same thing exists in our culture today with various people.

As one commentator mentions on this text, he says, this not only draws this emotion, this sensuous minds of feelings, not only draws one's attention away from Christ, but they also disrupt the unity within the church body, which finds itself in Christ alone.

It tries to pull people and saying, look, I have something special. Follow me. where we as a church follow Christ. There's a difference in endgame.

[28 : 29] And the false teachers who focus on themselves instead of Christ fail to bring about this spiritual maturity because if your emotions, again, if your emotions are the rooting factor and the

one method of establishing you in your faith in Christ, guess what?

life, this Christian walk is full of emotions. You read through the Psalms, it's like a roller coaster. And if you rely on your emotions and not on the solid word of God, you're going to get lost.

That when hard things and hard seasons come, as God allows suffering to come in your life, it's going to rock and shake the foundation of your spiritual journey with Christ.

And if it's built on motions, it's going to collapse. this commentator also continues about this passage saying their obsession with their own superior knowledge and with their own exclusivist practices prevents them actually from bringing the gospel to outsiders.

That these personal, these group of people were so focused on their own group of followers, of false teachers, that they failed to look at the gospel of going to all nations, baptizing in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, that the Great Commission was almost being ignored because it was all about just come here and attend here, where we as a church actually are counter to that.

[29 : 59] We assemble, but it's more like a huddle, a pep rally to go out, to be filled, and then to go out of these walls. Our purpose is to reach souls for Christ as a church.

Our response to false teachers today that have a hint of this type of mentality is to hold fast to His Word, church, as the source of growth, to hold fast to Christ, which is the substance.

It's not a shadow, it's the substance of growth, and to hold fast to this community, each and every person grounded and rooted in His Word gathered here today to hold fast to this community, which is an expression of this growth.

And finally, in our third point today, we see in verse 20 through 23, false submission. Verse 20 continues, if with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations?

Do you not handle, do not taste, do not touch, referring to all things that perish as they are used according to human precepts and teachings. These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh.

[31 : 31] Paul goes on into a little more detail as we end chapter two about these man-made elemental spirits of the world, which is also referenced in Paul's, the verse in chapter eight, referring to elemental spirits of the world, man-made things.

And these things are earthly regulations, but as believers who have participated in the death of Christ ought to also not obey earthly man-made commandments, but rather to submit to the commandments of Christ, which is the expression of faith, if anybody was here throughout the first John series, the last series we did, obedience plays a huge role.

So, just a real quick rabbit trail is, like, if you're getting today that, you know, we should be, the New Testament church should be prone to, like, lawlessness, like, we shouldn't have to worry about anything, we're getting it wrong as well, because while you have the severity of self-discipline, you can also have this extreme freedom where, antinomianism, where it's, like, it's just lawlessness completely, like, we're set free, you know, we can, you know, do drugs, we can do, we can live however we want, we are free, we are set free, Christ's blood has set us free.

I'm not saying that as well, but there is a great middle ground which is rooted in Christ and his commandments which we are to adhere to, which we are to be obedient to, which is Christ's commandments.

In this text today, in verse 20, it says, if you died, which is referring to the circumcision of Christ, which we spoke about last week, being dead, participating in the death of Christ.

[33 : 27] As Paul concludes his address regarding to this external masquerade, you guys know the whole masquerades that, you know, go on in, like, England, you know, like the, well, you know, get-togethers with the masks and everything.

He addresses this masquerade which is still prevalent in churches today. I mean, I think humans always have error, but there's also correction to humans, so, you know, Lord willing, on his time and through his word that he'll correct all churches that might be prone to this same masquerade, this external masquerade of false religion and this false worship, this false wisdom and false commands.

We see him wrap up his previous remarks and he chose to wrap up with asceticism, which asceticism is an expression which proclaims independence from God.

This is actually very dangerous because it says, the believer will say through ascetic practices, I am going to get to God on my own terms.

That the more I do X, Y, Z, the closer I'm going to get to God by their own might. The goal in asceticism is to help people deny sin, but in so doing they are also dangerously achieving a righteousness on their own.

[34 : 59] And it's not in Christ alone, by grace alone, through faith alone. So today we see that he is holy and his promises are true. Paul is calling us to look at things as they really are.

Our practices, our disciplines in life. Are we trying to work our way to a certain spiritual realm or a certain level of knowledge or are we trying to draw closer to God?

His word draws us closer to God. Prayer is huge too, but all these other additive things, these dietary laws, these observance of different days are sometimes distractions, especially when you're coming out of Old Testament laws and into New Testament Christianity.

It's huge. But we also need to look at us as we really are, that we are fallen, we are broken people. And we have to look at God for who he really is, that he is holy and we are not.

That through Christ, through his provision through Christ, is the only way by our faith to ever get anywhere close to God. And what he has done for us on the cross.

[36 : 20] R.C. Sproul speaks on this. He says, the deadly form of legalism which exists today is which makes human regulations and traditions the measure of true holiness and salvation.

We see this today praying to saints, indulgences, monetary contributions which the more you give, the more you pray to certain aspects, more, you know, the cloth that has Jesus' blood on it, these different acts that are supposed to supposedly cover sin or reduce a term in purgatory, things like that are all nonsense.

They're all in vain, drawing no one closer to God than a rock lying in a desert. And we see today practical legalism.

I've personally known individuals who seem to have a head full of solid knowledge, they seem legit from the outside, kind of like these false teachers would more than likely appear.

But deep inside, they reveal over time like the ugliest heart of pride and self-righteousness. It's almost like where every point they try to make is to glorify some aspect of their credentials or experience, and it's quite annoying, honestly, people who do that.

[37 : 43] But the true test of humility for us, church, for each and every one of us, and me included in this room, the true test of humility is always teachability.

That the greatest teachers out there known in the theological camps today were once students, and these teachers, to continue in a way that is humble, have some sort of way of not trying to think that they're the greatest and that they're the best, which would glorify them and not Christ, but actually they have a self-discipline, most of them do, of coming under teaching of other brothers and sisters in Christ.

That this knowledge and this growing process is something that they embark on as well as us today sitting here. So as we close the message, I would like to encourage each and every one of us in the room today who are reading this passage today to not chase shadows, essentially.

Don't chase shadows. Church, the sun has shifted in direction in redemptive history.

history. These Old Testament laws, these dietary restrictions, this do this, don't do this, clean, unclean, the direction of the sun at that time has changed, which casted a shadow in redemptive history forward to Christ.

[39 : 26] Let our strivings, our community, and our hearts be changed and transformed for the world to see the fruit in our lives, and in so doing, the new direction of the sun, which casts another shadow back to Christ on the cross.

So what once casted a shadow forward is now casting a shadow backward. And so all these things that we do as a community, reaching out to our neighbors for Christ, volunteering down in children's, volunteering on sound, volunteering on computer, yet those are great things.

But there's an issue at stake which is more important dealing with our hearts and reevaluating our hearts and our motives to these things. Are we doing it to think that we're crazy, to think that we're going to cover up our sin by the more we volunteer, by our perfect attendance through the year, by our baptism, by our church membership?

If any of these things serve to you as the substance which is replacing Christ, we're missing it.

These things, these things in our church body serve as a shadow which point back to Christ on the

cross.

Just as I spoke about that story with my wife, the substance does not need any more seasoning added to it. The message, the Bible, doesn't need anything added to it.

[40 : 57] It does not need anything taken away. It is perfect. And Christ's sacrifice on the cross does not need anything added to it. It doesn't need any seasoning. Our prayers, as Scripture talks about, don't pray like the Pharisees with lofty words.

Just talk to God. He calls us friends. As we root and establish ourselves, just as we spoke on last week, in Christ alone, our strivings, everything that we do, and our hearts will change, our community will change, our hearts will transform by this.

So let us remain steadfast to the cross, not adding or taking away. Let our theology, all of our preaching done on this stage, all of our singing, all of our disciplines in life, be kept right at the foot of the cross, yoked with Christ crucified.

Can we daily evaluate our hearts, church, and be reminded of the grace which bought us? which set us free from sin, which provided us with the righteousness from not anything we do, but because of Christ alone.

Because only then will we joyfully pursue holiness, because it's the outflow. Only then will we love God's law, because God's law is still good.

[42 : 16] It gives us a sense of direction. It gives us a need for saving faith, as we spoke on last week. But let us, as a church, cast a shadow back to Christ in all that we do, that when our neighbors see us, I don't know how that might look for you, if it's an apartment or whatnot, but when our neighbors see us, let them see a shadow casted back to Christ on the cross, as we participate as believers through faith in his death, burial, and resurrection.

I want to encourage you with a verse from Galatians 2, verse 20. which I want to be on our hearts as we leave today, as we continue to sing these songs of praise to God this morning.

It reads, I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me, and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Let's pray. Father, it is something to behold the completion that the cross serves.

Father, the Old Testament points to you, that the more mess that we read in Deuteronomy and Leviticus and Judges, that we see these texts pointing forward to you, casting a shadow forward to you.

[44 : 05] And Father, let us not forget about the shadow that casts back to the cross, as we are on this side of redemptive history, and where we are participants in this gospel work.

Father, impress upon our hearts to never become legalistic, to never be prideful, to never look at our neighbors, our brothers and sisters, various, of various different religions, of different beliefs. Let us sit and share a table with our atheist friends and share the good news of Christ and not judge them. Father, if we get into a legalistic pride, we are missing the gospel, we are missing the grace. Father, impress upon us of where we need to get better at this, and if we are serving truly out of the outflow of the grace we have received, with the outflow of pride, we pray for you to examine our hearts this morning.

In Jesus' name, we pray. communicate ■■ czynka?