



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of Dan Duncan

1 Corinthians 1:18-25

1 Corinthians

“The Foolishness of God”

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] We are in 1 Corinthians. We're going to look at chapter 1 verses 18 through 25, so follow along with me as I read. Paul writes: "For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written, 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the cleverness of the clever I will set aside.' Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debtor of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since the wisdom of God, the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men."

May the Lord bless this reading of His Word. Let's bow together in prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we do thank you for this opportunity to be here. It is a great privilege to be with your saints, and Jim is right, we have fellowship, and it's fellowship in your Word. That is true Christian fellowship, and you give us that opportunity this morning, to do that, to take your Word, open it, read it, consider the meaning, and through that be blessed because the Spirit of God uses that in our lives and we're reminded in this text of how important your word is, how it is sufficient. It is powerful. To bring us to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, to bring us into the family of God. It's what you use to quicken us and save us, and it's what you use to change us and transform us and make us more and more like your Son. And that's a lifelong process and it'll never be finished in this life, and the day is coming when it will suddenly be finished and we are in your presence, but we are changed constantly in this life by the Spirit, using your Word.

So help us this morning to see the importance of the gospel and all of the Word of God. To that end, Lord, we pray that you would focus our minds on the things that we'll do this morning, that you will remove the details of life and all of the issues that we can think about and can distract us and help us to concentrate on the things that we will consider this morning. We will concentrate on your Word and you will build us up in the faith and encourage us and prepare us for the week to come through this time of study. It is a great privilege and we thank you for it, not only for this meeting but there are other ministries throughout the week, and we remember them as well. For the women's ministry on Tuesday and the weekly midweek ministry on Wednesday and other studies that go on.

Father, we pray that you would bless your Word where it is taught, bless those who teach it, bless all of us who listen to it. We pray that you build us up in the faith, you transform us and equip us to be men and women who live for you. It's so important to know the truth of your Word. It is equally important to live it out, to be consistent. Help us to do that, Lord. So we look to you to bless in that way and we look to you, Lord, also to bless us in the material things of life, the physical concerns which we have. We are so blessed by you in this country and it is so consistent and routine that we can take it for granted, but the reality is – and we need to remind ourselves of this – everything that we have, our daily bread, is a gift from you. Every material thing, every physical thing. Our health, our finances – whatever it is, Lord, it all ultimately is in your hands and we give you thanks for the abundance that you give.

We pray for those that are experiencing privation of one kind or another, those who are suffering bad health, those who are in difficulty. We pray for them, we pray that you would be merciful to them, that you would bless them according to your wisdom and encourage them in the midst of the affliction that they are experiencing. We pray, Lord, that you'd bless those who are grieving and some are. Paul told the Thessalonians that we don't grieve as those without hope. We are not like the pagan. All that that people has, all that those who are outside of Christ have, is in this world, and when death comes, it ends it. They have reason to grieve. They grieve without hope. Our grief is temporary. And remind us all that life is temporary and it is short. Help us to live for the moment that you've given us in this world and redeem the time.

Bless us now, Lord. We pray that you would prepare our hearts now as we sing our next hymn and pray that you would focus our thinking upon the text that we will consider and may this be a time of worship and learning and a time that's a blessing for us and honoring to you. We pray these things in Christ's name. Amen.

[Message] In 1882, a banquet was given at the ritzy Manhattan restaurant,

Delmonico's, in honor of the British philosopher Herbert Spencer who had just completed a tour of America. Spencer was the father of social Darwinism that was sweeping the nation and the man who coined the expression "survival of the fittest" to explain evolution. The hall was filled with his admirers who were some of the richest and brightest men in America, man like Andrew Carnegie who was certain man was on a march to perfection. The speeches that followed the feast were all about that, in praise of man and his glorious future, his self-sufficiency and his upward evolution. It was a night of triumphalism. The last speech of the evening was given by Henry Ward Beecher, the most celebrated preacher of his day and a Darwinist who had rejected orthodox Christianity.

It was midnight when he began to speak. The room was filled with cigar smoke, the guests were stuffed and dozing off when in the first minutes he captured their attention with a critique of the gospel. He denounced the idea of sin and judgment and said, "It will not be 20 years before a man will be ashamed to stand up in a pulpit of any intelligence and mention it." Applause erupted from the audience. Even the waiters stopped serving and began listening. Men love to hear such things, especially the smart ones, because to them, the gospel, salvation from sin and judgment, is complete nonsense. Now, that's a sentiment in our day just as it was a hundred-plus years ago in Beecher's day, as it was 2,000 years ago in Paul's day, as it was and has been from the very beginning. To the world, the gospel has always been a message that would never be mentioned in any intelligent pulpit.

Well, Beecher is long gone and largely forgotten, as is Spencer and his ideas, but the gospel is still around. It continues to be preached and people continue to be saved by it. In fact, as Paul explains here in our text in 1 Corinthians 1:18-25, it is the only means of salvation. That's the reason he preached the cross and the reason he said, back in verse 17, that he didn't do it in cleverness of speech. He wouldn't let anything cloud or compromise the gospel. In verse 18, he calls it the power of God. There is nothing we can do to improve the message of the cross. It doesn't need our cleverness. It is complete and sufficient but doesn't always seem that way, doesn't always seem that way when Christians are presenting it to others. It is frequently rejected and they are frequently rejected.

Paul knew that. He'd experienced a lot of that himself. He'd been laughed off of Mars Hill by the philosophers of Athens, just as an evangelist would have been laughed out of Delmonico's that night of the banquet. That was likely the experience of many of those in Corinth. They were experiencing ridicule when Paul writes this letter. They no doubt had all experienced some rejection in one way or another, perhaps when they were giving the gospel to friends in the marketplace or in the synagogue, and that's disappointing, it's very disappointing. But it shouldn't be surprising. The cross divides the world in two, between

what Paul calls those who are perishing and those who are being saved.

People who are perishing are presently on their way to perdition and they're blind. They don't see it. They don't see where they're going. They don't understand the truth around them. They can't see the truth of the gospel. Paul says to them the word of the cross is foolishness and so they go on foolishly. The cross to them is something that's foolish because it was an instrument of execution, it was a symbol in their day of humiliation and defeat. It was a shameful thing. What kind of savior would be crucified? That's what they were saying. It was foolish to them. Commentators often mention a well-known graffito or cartoon from Rome that shows a worshipper standing before what is obviously an image of Christ, a crucified figure with the body of a man and the head of a donkey. It has the inscription, "Alexamenos Worships His God." That was the attitude of the ancient world toward the idea of a crucified savior. The word of the cross is foolishness. They reject it as completely absurd and yet for others it is completely sound. To us who are being saved, Paul says, it is the power of God.

Now, the gospel is not just good counsel. It's not a message about how to live. It has that in it at least but it's far more than that. It's far more even than information about God and about His power. What Paul says is it is power. God saves people through the preaching of the cross, as foolish as the world may think that is. And he does that through the gospel because it is supernatural. The Word of God is supernatural. Read Hebrews 4:12. It is alive and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword. You can't say that about Shakespeare, about Homer, about any great writer, any piece of literature in the world. The Word of God alone is a supernatural book and the gospel is a supernatural message. That's what Paul is saying.

So if the Corinthians were tempted to add something to it to make the message a little more palatable to those around them, and I suspect that that is what moved Paul to write this section of the letter here. They were thinking about changing the gospel just a bit to make it – well, a little more acceptable to people. Paul is saying, "If that's what you're thinking about doing, that is a grave mistake." That would not help the gospel. That would be defeating. It would, as Paul said in verse 17, make the message void. Wouldn't help at all. In fact, he says more than that, it's not that it would not help it and it would not even hinder it. What he says, it would make it useless, it would destroy it altogether. The gospel cannot be tampered with, and what we need to remember is giving the gospel and winning souls is not about us. It's not about our skill. It is not about our technique. It is about God and his work. It is God's power at work in and through the message.

It has always been that way. Paul is not saying anything new here. This has always

been the way it has been, and he proves that by quoting Scripture in verse 19. He cites Isaiah 29:14, for it is written. "Here's the proof of what I'm saying," he says, "and I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and the cleverness of the clever, I will set aside." Ultimately, that is eschatological. In other words, that looks to the future. God will in the future at the end of time, at the end of history, he is going to destroy this present world system along with its ideas and ideologies. It's all coming to an end. But even now that is happening. Even in the present, these things and this world are passing away. The apostle John tells us that. They're always being set aside.

All of those men at Delmonico's who felt so confident in 1882 were at the end of their lives discredited, discouraged, or dismissed. You don't have to be a philosopher to know that philosophies are like fads, they come and they go. But the gospel, the word of the cross, endures forever because it is true. We don't need to dress it up, we don't need to apologize for it, just let it do its work. It is the power of God. There is no power in human philosophies and certainly no staying power. They don't last. Paul presses that point in verse 20 with a series of rhetorical questions. "Where," he asks, "are all the wise men of this age? Where are their answers?" Now, of course, when Paul asks "Where is the wise man?" he means "Where is the worldly wise man?" not the person who has the wisdom of the Proverbs.

Greek wisdom wasn't that kind of wisdom. It wasn't skill in living. Greek wisdom was philosophy and that means it was speculation. It was speculation about the origin and the nature of the world, like modern-day rationalism or materialism. So Paul was asking what have the leading lights of the age discovered. What have they produced? Have they solved the riddle of life? Have they brought God and man together? No, they haven't. These are rhetorical questions. No, of course not. For all of their genius and effort, they are still in the dark. So Paul asks, "Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?" and the answer to that, of course, is yes, he has, and he has done it by the very thing that men consider foolish, by preaching the gospel, which is, again, the preaching of the cross.

That's the explanation that he gives in verse 21. Men, by their best efforts, by their reasoning, what they call wisdom, did not find God. In fact, just the opposite. They invented false gods. Paul explains that at length in Romans chapter 1, how men with all of the evidence before them and above them and all around them worship the creation rather than the Creator. Human wisdom doesn't lead to God, it leads to false gods. It leads to idolatry. That's what Paul demonstrates very clearly in Romans chapter 1 and it's implied here. If men don't worship beasts, then they worship man or the cosmos. We are the stuff of the stars, they say. We're the product of cosmic explosions eons ago. That sounds very good to them. It sounds self-affirming. It even sounds romantic. We are "star stuff." What they're saying is

the creation is our creator.

Now, that's what human reason produces ultimately. It's completely illogical, it's irrational, and it ends up in self-worship. No, in the providence of God, man has had his opportunity to find the answers to life and solve the human problems and hasn't done it. By Paul's day, Socrates had had his day, Plato, Aristotle. There are whole schools of philosophy that had come and gone. By the 1st century, religion and philosophy were bankrupt. They'd had their day, they'd had their opportunity. They hadn't found the solutions to the problems. They hadn't brought men to God – far from it. As Paul says, "The world through its wisdom did not come to know God." And it did not come to know God for good reason: it can't. God is known only by revelation, not by human reason.

If we're ever to know God, He must make Himself known to us, and Paul says that's what He's chosen to do, to answer man's failure by revealing Himself in the gospel. God was well pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe, and once again it's the message of a crucified Savior. That's how God made foolish the wisdom of the world, by making a doctrine a message of salvation that the world through its greatest wisdom could not discover. And Paul says that He was well pleased to do it. Don't just brush over that or read over it. That's an important point. God was well pleased to do it. In other words, it was His own free and sovereign choice to reveal the way of salvation to us. God didn't have to do that. We weren't meritorious, we didn't deserve to have that, He didn't reveal this to us because we were so deserving. We're not.

He revealed it because He was well pleased to do that. He chose to do that. We are debtors to His mercy because left to ourselves and left to our philosophies and speculations, we would be utterly lost and forever lost. Now, this is all about God. This is all about God's grace. Salvation is due to His power and His initiative. He always takes the first step, which leads man to respond in faith. Salvation is for those who believe and that's it. It's very simple. That's it. That's the gospel. Salvation is by grace through faith in Christ, the crucified Savior. It's not for the wise, meaning those who are wise in the eyes of the world or, for that matter, wise in their own eyes. It's not for the privileged, it's not for the intellectually gifted, it's not for the elite or the mighty of this world. They may come, and some do, but their salvation is not due to any of that.

It's not due to any personal merit or position or privilege. In fact, it's in spite of that. It is obtained by abandoning all of that and trusting in Christ alone for salvation. That's more than merely giving assent to something, merely acknowledging it as true. Saving faith is about denying self and putting one's trust in the person and work of Christ. It's very simple. It's not about achieving; it's about receiving. Adding anything to that, any work or ceremony,

any kind of achievement by man is a denial of the gospel. It's all of grace. It's all the work of God. The message of the gospel is not about what we do, it's all about the gracious act of God. It's about what He has done at the cross, which is a finished work, a completed work. We can add nothing to it, we can only receive it through faith. And that's what man finds offensive.

Man finds it offensive that there's nothing he can do, that he must humble himself in faith and simply receive what God has done because he could do nothing. Well, that's offensive, as I say, and so man can't believe it. What he does is he challenges it. Jews demand visible proofs and Gentiles want rational proofs. That's how Paul divides the world in verse 22, between Jew and Gentile. He's dividing them there ethnically – not spiritually but ethnically. Both groups have their standard or touchstone for truth. Jews want signs. We see that in the gospels. Even late in the Lord's ministry, after He had done many miracles, they said to Jesus, "We want to see a sign from you." He'd been doing multitudes of signs for them. Now, it wasn't wrong to want to see a sign. It wasn't wrong to want to see a work of God, but there was in that request an attitude in which they were demanding something from God, and that is wrong.

There was an attitude of controlling God and putting Him and His Word under man's evaluation. "Let's see another sign from you and we'll decide whether you're true or false." Man is not in that position. Man is not God's judge; God is the judge and we're to take Him at His Word, and Christ not only gave them His Word but He gave them ample proof that His Word and His claims were true. He did miracles. In fact, He Himself was the greatest miracle. He was the product of a supernatural conception. He was the fulfillment of prophecy. He was before them, clearly a fulfillment of prophecy. He was the very proof of Himself and what He was saying. But that's what they demanded. They demanded a sign while the Greeks, on the other hand, would believe only if what was said fit their worldview, their speculations, much like today with materialism or naturalism.

Those who believe that, they won't believe anything that doesn't fit their system and they believe in a closed system. They don't believe in miracles, they don't believe in resurrection, they're ruled out immediately. They're ruled out from the very beginning because there are no such things as miracles, therefore you can't believe in them. Well, the reality is there is lots of physical evidence for the truth of the gospel, and the gospel of the cross is completely reasonable. When I say we don't come to it by human reason, I don't mean that it's an unreasonable message. It is completely reasonable and consistent with reality and the condition of man. But no one is brought to heaven by signs and wonders and debates. So Paul says we preach Christ crucified. We don't argue with people. We simply

proclaim the gospel.

It's not wrong to reason with people and to answer their objections and to answer their challenges and show them the weakness of their arguments, all that is fine and I think it has its place, but salvation comes through the preaching of the gospel, through the preaching of the Word of God. It is powerful and effective to bring about change. It must be. It must be powerful; otherwise, people will not believe. The cross is a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles. Or to put it kind of literally, the cross is a *skandalon* and a _____. Those are the Greek words. It's a scandal to the Jews, it's moronic to the Gentiles. Jews are scandalized by the idea of a crucified Savior. They envisioned the Messiah being a conquering hero, a Moses defeating Pharaoh, a David killing Goliath. They wanted a mighty man of valor for their leader.

A crucified king was an offense. In fact, according to the law, anyone who hung on a cross was cursed. That's Deuteronomy 21:23. So here's Jesus crucified and accursed? Couldn't be the Christ, couldn't be the Messiah. So the Jews stumbled over the cross and it was no better for the Gentile, particularly for the Romans. They were more interested in power than in philosophy, as the Greeks were. The cross, for them, was grotesque. It was an instrument of execution reserved for only the lowest of people, for slaves and barbarians and rebels and the very worst of criminals. Roman citizens were exempt from execution on a cross. They could be executed but not that way. That was too shameful for a Roman citizen. In fact, the word "cross" was not even mentioned in polite society, it was so offensive. People didn't go to dinner parties and talk about crucifixions, that was taboo. That was their attitude toward the cross.

Now, we've missed that somewhat. We have such a sanitized, Christianized view of the cross today that we don't appreciate the 1st century mentality toward it. We put a cross on our steeples, we fashion our jewelry into crosses. I think to get an idea of what the cross meant in the early centuries of the church, we have to imagine a woman today wearing earrings stamped in the image of the mushroom cloud of an atomic bomb. Or imagine someone wearing a necklace with a hangman's noose around it or an electric chair dangling from it. Those are the gruesome kinds of associations the cross had for Gentiles and especially Romans in the 1st century. So the idea of a crucified Savior was insulting to a Roman. It was an affront to his pride, it was beneath his dignity. Believing in Christ would mean following a criminal and a nobody. But it also seemed completely illogical, foolish, that anyone would believe that a man who couldn't save himself from the pain and shame of the cross could save others.

These were some of the huge intellectual hurdles to the Romans, cultural and

emotional impediments to the gospel. The world, Jew and Gentile alike, is absolutely predisposed against the gospel. Mankind is born into this world hostile toward God. That's what Paul tells us in Romans 8:6-7. We're born with a mind set against the gospel. So again, the temptation was, in view of all of that, in view of the great disadvantages to giving the gospel in their culture, in their city – and remember, Corinth had all kinds of people, all kinds of cultures and thoughts and ideas. There was the temptation to make the message more acceptable, maybe downplay the importance of the cross, sprinkle in some speculation, make it a little more attractive. But Paul didn't do that. He didn't compromise the gospel at all. He knew the pure gospel is true and sufficient.

We don't need to make it acceptable to men. You can't make it acceptable to men and have the gospel, and you don't need to because it is powerful. So Paul gave the simple gospel to both Jews and Gentiles. He traveled across Asia and Europe, preaching the scandal of the cross. And in spite of the natural resistance and, in fact, in spite of the impossibility of it, some believed. Paul describes them in verse 24 as the called. This is what distinguished them from those who heard the same gospel but didn't respond to it. These responded because God brings them to Himself in what is called effectual calling. Whenever Paul uses this word "called," it means God's effectual call. This is not the general invitation of the gospel but the work of the Holy Spirit, which always results in conversion. It's always effective. It's a secret work that goes on within the heart that draws people to the truth from death to life, from darkness to light. I think that's clear from verse 24 itself. He says but those who are the called, it is the wisdom of God.

Well, that couldn't refer to the general call because so many who are called generally when we give the gospel reject it as foolish, but the called here are those that receive it as the wisdom of God, so it must refer to those who are supernaturally brought to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ through the effectual call or irresistible grace. They are believers, as Paul said. No one is saved apart from faith. We're responsible to believe and no one is saved apart from faith. But they believe because they have been called, because God reached out and saved them. That's Paul's meaning here and he's chosen his words carefully. How else can we explain the fact that everyone finds the cross to be foolishness, yet out of all of these who find the cross to be foolishness, some find it to be wise? Some believe. How did these come to recognize, these people in Corinth come to recognize the wisdom of it while others did not?

How is it in your case that you came to understand the truth of it? You saw it as true, you believed it, whereas somebody else, a friend, a family member, didn't – doesn't? Maybe they're even smarter than you are. Maybe they are brilliant people and they just scoff at the

idea, just are puzzled, or maybe you've had the experience that I've had on occasion where you give the gospel to someone and you explain it and they just look at you like you just arrived from planet X. It just doesn't register. They're not really hostile, at least overtly, they just – it doesn't register. Why is it that it does with you and it doesn't with them? Well, there are brilliant people today, just as there were over a century ago at Delmonico's and millennia ago at Athens who mock the gospel.

Salvation comes to some of us and not to them because of God's sovereign grace. That's the reason. That's the answer. He chooses in election. He draws unbelievers by His calling and He justifies them through faith that He gives them. It is all of God. That's what Paul is saying in this statement, this description of the gospel where he says it is the power of God. It's not the power of God and the power of man. It's the power of God. He calls some; He doesn't call others. Ultimately, it's His choice and it's altogether a gracious choice because apart from His good pleasure, we would all be lost and justly so. Not one of us deserves salvation. What it all proves, as Paul says in verse 25, is that God is wiser than men. The foolishness of God, meaning what the men of this age consider foolish, is really wiser than men and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

Men can mock the gospel of the cross and say it's not preached in any intelligent pulpit, but the fact is this is the only message that saves, and it continues to save. And those who are saved see the strength of it. The Jew who wanted a strong Messiah understands by the grace of God – when his eyes are open to the truth understands that the cross of Christ really is a powerful message, and this Christ that they despised as a weak, rejected person is a powerful Savior who defeated sin and Satan and death, the greatest of the enemies. Rome was no enemy compared to those. There are no political powers that compare with the spiritual powers of sin and Satan and death. Christ defeated them – that is real power. He was cursed by hanging on a tree. They were right about that.

That's what Deuteronomy teaches. It looked forward _____ but the curse was ours that He took in our place by bearing our sin as our substitute. He became a curse for us so that we would escape the curse and the judgment that was due it. And those who are saved see the wisdom of it, the Greeks or Romans whose eyes were opened by the Holy Spirit, who by grace came to understand that the cross is not foolishness, came to understand that it is real wisdom. No man would ever have invented the gospel of the crucified Savior. No person would have invented that. But in it the problem of the human condition is solved. Man is reconciled to God. In the cross, the love of God and the justice of God meet. That is wisdom. That's why the cross is glorious. That's the glory of the cross. By means of it, God paid our debt and is now free to save us – and He does. He saves all who believe.

That's all the sinner must do is believe. That's all the sinner can do is believe, and by God's sovereign grace, he or she does, Jew and Gentle alike. Two things this text shows. First, the cross is the center of our lives. God has done it all. Through His Son and His sacrifice, it is all of God. So that means I am not sovereign, God is. Therefore, I am to be a selfless person and submissive to God's Will, whatever that Will may be. I'm not to trust myself, I'm not to trust the luminaries of our age, I'm not to trust in anything but the Word of God. I'm to be submissive to Him. I'm not to seek my own way, I'm to seek His way, and what that means is I'm to put others first, not myself. When I seek my own way, it will always lead to heartache. I'm to trust Him completely. He's sovereign; I'm not.

Secondly, we should never apologize for the gospel. We should never be embarrassed about the gospel. We should never think the gospel is weak and needs our help. It is power and wisdom. The world and its ideas are foolish. We should never be enamored of the world. It is passing away as I speak. Where is the wise man? Where is the debater? What answers have they discovered? What about the philosophies of our day? Are they any better than the philosophies of Paul's day? Are they? Communism was one of the philosophies of our day. It was for many people, in the early 20th century, it was the wave of the future. It's on the ash heap of history. What about Capitalism? What about Liberalism or Conservatism? What about all the different theories of economics? Even when these things have merit, they can only take us so far and really not very far. They don't bring us to God. They don't reconcile us to Him.

We can have the best booming economy in the history of the world and we can all get rich and guess what – we die. Then what? Only the gospel is the help we need. Only the gospel reconciles us to God. It is power. It's God's power that truly changes lives to give eternal life, and that's what we're to live for. That's what gives meaning to life. That's the solution to man's problems, in the foolishness of the cross. Well, if it seems foolish to you, if it doesn't make sense to you, then Paul says that's because you're perishing. You're on that road to perdition and you can't see clearly. You can't even see where you're headed. The message of Paul and the apostles was wake up. Wake up, believe in Christ, He's the savior. God gladly receives all who do.

God says in Ezekiel, "I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked turn and live." Then He says, "Turn. Why then will you die?" That's God pleading with the sinner. Why continue perishing? There is a way of escape. God's provided it. It is Christ who died for sinners. Believe in Him, trust in Him, and you'll be saved, forgiven eternally, a child of God forever. Look to Him, trust in Him. That's all one must do. The power of the gospel changes you, makes you a child of God. May God help you to do that

and help all of us to rest in that and rejoice in what we have in Christ and what we have in His Word, which is alive and powerful and changes our lives as we read it and study it. God help us to do that. Let's pray.

[Prayer] Father, we do thank you for this passage of Scripture and what it reminds us of and what it says of you. We read that and we believe it, but then we get out into the world and we become enamored of the things of the world and the powers of the world and we become somewhat distracted from this. Your Word is truth. Help us to rest in it and rely upon it. Bless all of us with a hunger to read it and know it and learn it and apply it. So we pray you'd bless us in this way and we thank you that we have life in your Son. Thank you for your grace. It's in Christ's name we pray. Amen.