

# SERMON TRANSCRIPT

DATE

November 15, 2020

SPEAKER

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SERIES

Rooted

PART

11

TITLE

The Power Behind Christian Responsibility

SCRIPTURE

Colossians 3:22-4:1



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So in your Bible, if you would turn with me to the third chapter of the Book of Colossians. If you're new with us, we're in the book verse by verse and we happen to be up to Chapter three, Verse 22. As you turn there, I want to ask you to sort of just imagine for a moment maybe one of your friends being handed a report that compared two people, the lives of two different people. Okay? So on one side, in fact there's no names on it. So when your friend has the report, they have no idea who they're seeing, but what they do is each one of them compares basically what each person prioritizes, what each person loves, what they spend their time doing, what they spend their money on.

Each of the reports sort of details what they read is the authority for their life and what they speak about and read even to their own kids as the authority of life. Each report details how they treat people within their family or their friends, how they treat people who are old and young, rich and poor, black, brown, white.

Each of the two reports contains information of how each of these people have in the last year dealt with success and how they've dealt with suffering, how they make decisions, what they talk about, what they think about, what they sing about.

And here's the question, if that report anonymously compared you, one of those two individuals was your life, what you cared about, your priorities, your loves, what you talk about, what you read, and it compared that life with another life that did not know Christ as Savior and Lord, the question is could they discern a difference that Jesus has made?

This is ultimately Paul's central concern. This is one of his big concerns is that he so desperately wants Christ to be seen as relevant. I think another thing would be ask is this, is that through that report would Jesus be seen as consequential or as a trade up? Meaning if somebody saw the person that was marked by Jesus Christ, where Christ was in their life and was changing the way that they treat people and how they spend time and money, their priorities, their dreams, would somebody look at that person's life and make the call to say even though this pond is comfortable and there's a social network and there's virtues and values, if that's what it looks like to walk with Jesus Christ, if that's what He can do to a family, if that's what He does in terms of the heart of a child or of a parent, if that's what it looks like to be with Jesus, then I look at that and that just looks like a trade up. I would be willing to part, if not part, at very least look and say, man, I at least need to consider the claims of Jesus Christ and to consider what the Bible says that He accomplished to understand more of who this person is if it creates that kind of a life.

You see, Paul wanted so desperately for Christ to be seen as relevant through the lens, that picture frame of people who were calling upon him as Savior and Lord. And so when you think about some of the letters that he wrote such as Ephesians Chapter four Verse one, he says, "Walk in a manner worthy." He says the same thing to the church in Philippi, "Let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ."

In other words, what he's saying is this, to those of you who know Christ as Savior and Lord, it is your privilege and responsibility to display a life that's so appealing, not because of your success, but because of your love, humility, and hope that people want to know its source. And this is ultimately where we're at in the Book of Colossians. We're at the section of the book where after he has described the life of Christ and what he makes available to us, he looks at these real believers in a real town, and he says that there are people all around you who have yet to see Christ as relevant. And one of the ways that they're going to see is through you.

You see, as we've talked about many times, and I hope this is not getting old, but it's just fortifying, you understand really what he's seeking to do in this letter is in Chapter one, he says, "Let me first give you one of the most vivid pictures in the entire New Testament about the stunning reality of who Christ is and what Christ has done." And that's what we find in Chapter one.

And then what happens is we get into Chapter two where he's saying now I realize that there's people who've moved into your city, into your town who have different beliefs, who have different understandings and their life is not crumbling necessarily as it seems. And as a result, some of you have believed that maybe to reach full spiritual capacity, we should create the super soil where we include Jesus with the best elements of everyone else's faith and philosophy.

And so in Chapter two, he says, "No, you don't understand what you have." In Chapter two Verses nine and 10, he says, "For in Him, Christ, the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have been filled in Him." In other words, you don't need more if you have Christ. You do not need more love, you do not need more spiritual power if you have Christ, and the reason is because all love, all power from God dwells in fullness in Jesus Christ and this Jesus Christ lives in your heart. In other words, what Chapter two is all about is this, is trying to convince believers in Jesus Christ that they do not need more power and more Jesus, they simply need to appropriate what they have in power and what they have in Jesus.

And that's what Chapter three is all about. And so he actually starts and in Verse one and two, he says and so this is how you do it, this is how you appropriate the power that's available to you in Christ so that your life begins to change that people see Christ is relevant. He says the first thing we have to deal with is our heart and our mind. So he says, "If you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above." This is the word priority, it's the word of the heart, it's the direction of the heart. And then he says, "Set your minds on things that are above." In other words, if you spend all of your time on earth and you never think about Christ and He is not your priority and your heart really doesn't think a whole lot about Him, then what happens is this, is that your life does not bear witness of how consequential and real He is, how powerful He is in changing somebody's life.

He says, “But if, if you would actually prioritize time to be with Him, to speak to Him, to ask Him to fill you with His spirit, to open up His word, to ask you for wisdom and understanding and clarity, and then you seek to actually think about that throughout the rest of the day, then what happens is your heart and your mind begin to follow Christ so much so that you begin to see in your own life things that are out of step with that picture.” And so he says in Chapter three, Verse nine and 10, he says, “There’s some things that have to come off.” He says, “You’ve put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.”

In other words, when you’re thinking and your heart is prioritizing Christ in your life, throughout the day you begin to interact with people and in certain stressful situations, and suddenly you see in the mirror I’m not behaving a whole lot like Christ. What’s happening right now is not showing to my children, to my family, to my neighbors, to my friends, that Christ is absolutely relevant for life.

And so those attitudes and those behaviors, he says, you need to put them off. This is the word for repentance to say, “You know what, God? I see what I’m doing right now. This does not have to mark the rest of my day. I woke up moody, I do not have to be moody for the rest of the day. I woke up irritable, I woke up complaining, but I don’t have to do that for the rest of the day. I can repent because of God’s spirit is living within me.” And then we don’t want to walk around spiritually naked. He says and so what we do is we put on the character of Christ.

We say, “You know what? I’m going to seek to be loving in this.” And then we’re praying, God, would you give me grace and power right now to love this person in the way that you would love them? And then what he does, it’s fascinating is he says, now let’s take this and let’s apply this to three different relationships. Two weeks ago, we looked at family, or I should say marriage. Last week, we looked at family, parents, kids. And today we move into an area that is admittedly challenging. Okay?

Let me just tell you right now, okay. I’m not super happy about what happened at 8:00, which it wasn’t bad. I just finished and I’m like... I didn’t cross every T that I’d hoped to, and so I’m probably not going to here either. And so let me just say that, because this deals, this passage is about bond servants and masters. We’re going to talk about slavery and kinds of it, that I’m probably not going to cross off everybody’s list of what I must say in order for this not to be offensive to you. And I just ask you to show grace, okay? Show grace. And then let’s pray that when we leave that we think more about Jesus than me and what I said, okay. That He’s the King.

So let’s read what he says. Verse 22, he says this, “Bond servants,” which by the way, some of your Bible translations, which may even be an older version of the one that we’re reading, it will say slave. Okay? And so it’s the same Greek word translated two different ways. Bond servant, slave. “Bond servants, obey in everything those who your earthly masters, not by way of eye-service as people pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. Whatever you do, work heartedly as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the

Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ for the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done, and there is no partiality. Masters, treat your bond servants justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.”

So the first thing I think that he's doing in the next is the first point that we had last week, and it's this, that God empowers everyone with a decision to magnify Christ. This should encourage us and it should challenge us that no matter what your station is in life, you may be today in a really bad marriage, you may be in a very verbally abusive home, you may be in a very challenging work environment, but what I want you to know is this, no matter where you're at, you have a decision in that station to magnify Christ.

In the Roman Empire, which is where this town was located, these people were living inside the Roman Empire. It's important to know that husbands in the context of marriage, fathers in the context of family, and masters in the text of the marketplace, they had all the authority. They held all the cards. And so what he does in this section, starting in Verse 18 and going to Chapter Four, Verse One is he says fathers, husbands, and masters, you have the opportunity that if you find yourself in any relationship where even though you're equal in personhood, and yet you're the boss, you have more authority. Somebody else looks to you for advice or wisdom or instruction on what you're supposed to be doing, if you happen to be in what we would call the higher place on the org chart, it says you have a responsibility and a decision at this point in time to magnify Jesus Christ by utilizing your authority in order to love people and serve people well. That's the decision that you have and in doing so, you'll magnify Christ.

But then we also know in that same culture, in the Roman Empire, we know that wives, kids, and servants or bond servants, they had no authority. And yet Paul, he writes each one of them and he gives them something to do. In other words, he's making decision-makers out of people in that culture who are forbidden to make decisions. And what he's doing is this, he's saying for those of you who are on the lower part of the org chart, you're under somebody in some arena. He says, you have the opportunity to actually magnify Jesus by making the decision to turn your response into worship, to do this unto the Lord.

And so the Gospel empowers everyone. Now we should recognize something, and this is where I'm going to walk through something that I hope I can get back. I did last service, thankfully, but we're going to take a little walk through history and through how do you understand the Bible? Because we need to grapple with something that's real, and that is this, this very text that we just read as well as a few others within the New Testament and Old was once used by not only people in Europe, but in particular by Christian pastors in America to justify the institution of slavery. And as a result of that, critics to Christianity today use these same passages to condemn the morality of the Bible.

So the questions that I want to try to answer is is the Bible pro-slavery, and maybe a little bit more nuanced is if a master in Colossae heard Verse one and went home and began to treat his bond servant justly and fairly, would the God of the Bible be satisfied?

You ready? Everyone's happy now, right? They're like we should've waited until next week to come back. And so what I'm going to try to do is to work through. When you have these kinds of texts within the Bible, it's really important to go through a sequence of things that I'm going to try to show you how to do right now, that will help you gain clarity. Okay? I'm not going to answer every question, but I hope I can show you that the Bible is not for slavery and that it would not be sufficient to merely be just and fair. Okay?

So there's three categories of thought that you should trace, you should work through when you're studying the Bible and you find things like this, okay? The first is cultural context. When we read the word slave or bond servant and the word master, we invariably think of the involuntary race-based chattel slavery in which a human being is stripped of personhood, is owned as property that's happening now in places in the world and that happened in America in our own history. And what you should know, and just very, very clearly, is that this kind of slavery is among humanity's darkest sins and darkest institutions of injustice. That's wrong.

That is not, however, what's in view in the town of Colossae. So it's important to understand what's happening here. Predating the Roman Empire, and you should also know this, it's staggering to think about and the fact is I studied all kinds of sites on this and it seems like a very wide spectrum. I've read that in between 30 and 60% of the Roman Empire were actually at some point in time in this kind of slavery, this bond servanthood, or prisoner of war, meaning when Rome went out and conquered everybody, all those armies, they became servants to Rome. So you should know that the idea of slavery within the Roman Empire, we read this and there's a sense of gasp when we read the words and we're like, "Oh please explain that," and then we just walk on. Probably when they read this letter in Colossae, nobody gasped. They were all there together, slave and free.

So what was happening? Well, predating the Roman Empire, even in the Old Testament of the Bible, God made a provision of mercy for people who were in significant financial debt to where they could voluntarily make themselves, choose to become a bond servant to their lender, to where they would receive shelter and food for them and their family, they would have rights as citizens and as people, they wouldn't lose their personhood, and they would buy time in order to pay off their debt. In other words, mercy was baked into the instruction.

And for those individuals whose debt was so insurmountable that they literally would be servants for the rest of their lives, God actually instituted a year of Jubilee to where everybody's debt was zeroed out and everybody was set free. This kind of bond servanthood, servant, you're serving to pay off your bond is what that means. Literally it made up so much of the Roman Empire. So that doesn't answer the whole question, but you do need to understand that what you think of normally when you think of the word slavery, when you read these words, is that they are not necessarily the same thing.

So the second thing that you need to do when you come to these kinds of passages is you need to consider God's progressive revelation. Now these titles may be maybe just wordy to you and so I want to help you understand them. God's revelation is simply God revealing Himself and His will to us. And what we need to know is that when you open up a Bible is this revelation is progressive, that simply means that it doesn't come all at once, it came over history. In other words, there's stories that stack on top of each other where one is responding to another, to where in certain places something is prescribed, and then in the next place it's not. Now this is going to make some of you really uncomfortable and it should, because what this means is you have to study your Bible very, very carefully. What it means is this, is that His permission in one setting is not always His will for every setting because the world is broken.

Let me give you an example of this so you'll know sort of what I'm talking about, because some of you are thinking, wait a minute, that means that when the Bible says that sexual immorality is sin, well maybe that setting it was and now our setting it's not. That's not what he means. The Bible is now complete. So we have the whole in order to interpret any one story or one setting.

So let me give you an example. In Matthew Chapter 19, Jesus is walking around and the Pharisees come up to Him and it says they have a test. And they ask Jesus this question, in Verse three, they said, "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?" Can we just do it at will? And Jesus responds, and it's really interesting, first He talks about the fact that He created a male and female, and then He quotes Genesis Chapter two and He says, "A man shall leave his father and mother, shall cleave to his wife and they shall become one flesh." And then Jesus says this in Verse six, He says, "What God has joined together, let man not separate." And all of a sudden the Pharisees must have smiled. They're like, "We've got him. Now he's set up."

And so they say, "Well let me ask you a question, Jesus. Why is it that when all the children of Israel, when they're out in the wilderness, Moses gave them the permission under God's authority for the men to give their wives a certificate of divorce?" That's a moral setting that did happen. Jesus responds with Verse eight, He says, "Because of your hardness of heart, Moses allowed you to divorce your wife. But from the beginning, it was not so." What's He saying there? What was happening there? Well, the people of Israel were camping in the wilderness for 40 years. That's a lot of people married. You camp for 40 years with your spouse and there's a lot of tension in the home. Okay? And so people started to say, "You know what? I'm tired of you." But here's the deal, their culture was such that if a man asked the wife to leave the home or the tent and not come back, she had nowhere to go. No one else was there to feed her, protect her, provide for her because it was a society dominated by those fathers.

And so God cares more about people than He does about marriage. Did you know that? It's like the Sabbath. God didn't make us in order to fulfill the Sabbath, He gave the Sabbath for us to rest. Same thing with marriage. He didn't create marriage and He goes, now, what can I do? I'll make people for this. No, He made it, marriage, for us, a gift for us. And so God looked at the people and He says, the reality is because you are so hard-hearted in order to protect people that I care about even more, and I care about the institution so much,

but even more I care about those people who are vulnerable now, I'm going to give a permission in this setting, that you go ahead and divorce your wives so that she can remarry and be provided for. And so this is what Jesus says. What He's saying is that God's concession due to their hard hearts was not an expression of His Holy will for all mankind.

But here's the deal, because it's progressive, if the only page of the whole Bible you had was when Moses said, man, you can give your wife a certificate of divorce, you might conclude that marriage is as you wish, just like they did. Is it lawful for any reason to divorce your wife? And you might say, yes, it is. And yet you would be entirely wrong. Because Jesus said not only from the beginning, was it not this way, but now Jesus, the Son of God who came in order to restore all the brokenness that took place, He came back and He goes, this is His will, what God has joined together let man not separate.

And so what you find is revelation is progressive, and what that means is this, we must interpret any part of the Bible, including its passages on bond servanthood and masters with the entire Bible speaking into it. So what is the entire Bible? Well, the entire Bible, there's this amazing thing, it's called the grand storyline of scripture. And if you understand the grand storyline of scripture, then what you will find is that the Bible itself speaks into all of these areas so effectively so that we can grow in wisdom to understand what His will is for life.

The grand storyline, it's sort of like a play where you go to and it has all these different acts. It's like act one, act two, and for the case of this morning, I want to show you the five huge acts of the Bible, all these stories, they come together and they form this play that has five different scenes.

The first scene or the first act is creation, where God created all mankind in His image, where He bestowed upon every single person equality of personhood and dignity, that every human being is created in the image of God. Now this is really important, anytime you have the opportunity to create something, there's intent behind that that never changes. In other words, if we only had that passage, we would know that it is never a right thing to enslave another person, to treat them as less, to mistreat somebody. Sadly, that setting, that first scene, it ended very quickly. Because not only did we sin against one another, first we sinned against God.

And so the second scene is the fall. And that's where sin against God actually leads us to mistreat people who were made in the image of God, and of course it only makes sense, doesn't it? That if we look at God and He says, "This is how to live," and we look at Him and we say, "No," then isn't it only natural that for people who were created in His image for us to mistreat them in similar ways that we mistreat the Lord? And so what happens is strife enters the world. My life for your good becomes your life for my good, and therefore homes, relationships, institutions they're created with mistreatment of people.



And what this does is it creates a need for law, and therefore the law came. And it's interesting that when the apostle Paul who wrote Colossians, he writes another letter and he explains the purpose of the law, this is what he says. He says, "Now the law is not laid down for the just," meaning for the people who are doing what is right, "But it's for enslavers, liars, perjurers." There's actually a bunch more, but I just wanted to make sure that I had these in there. And then it says this, this is amazing. He goes, "And whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine." And when you look at this word enslaver, it literally means men stealers. It's where you take somebody's life and you steal it from them. And he says then this behavior is contrary to sound doctrine.

Now here's the deal, like the reason the law came is because people didn't know. Once you start sinning against God, your heart becomes so corrupt that it's so hard to even understand right from left and so God Almighty in His grace, He goes, "They don't know what they're doing is wrong so let me give them laws." And so those laws over time, not only did they point to sin, but here's the other thing it did is throughout this entire time in the Old Testament, in fact, if you ever read the Old Testament through, which you're going to go "Man, these people are messed up, and it's because they were."

But throughout that whole time, everybody started saying, "You know what? God had promised that one day He's going to send a rescuer." And that's the third scene and that's Christ. It's when Jesus Himself lived on this earth, He died for our sin and then He rose from the dead. Everything in the Old Testament points to this, everything in the New Testament points back to this. That Jesus' life, His death, and His resurrection are the pinnacle and the summit of the entire Bible.

And so what we find then is immediately, once you come up that summit, you go down the other side and that's where we get to the fourth act, and that is that Jesus formed a people to love all people. In John Chapter 15 Verse 12, Jesus says, "Love one another as I have loved you." He says, "Treat one another as you want to be treated." These kinds of instructions that flow out of the Gospel from Jesus. It should permeate the way that we think about people and treat people and think about institutions of how people are treated.

It's interesting that from the same prison, another letter was written, actually two more, but I want to talk about one of them. It's the letter Philemon. A Philemon was a master, he's one of these people who had bond servants, and he lived in Colossae. So from the same prison, Paul says, "All right, I want you to send this letter, this one goes to the church, this one goes to Philemon, who's part of the church." And he put it into the hand of two men, one of which was Onesimus, which happened to be Philemon's runaway bond servant, who had fled in order to have freedom on his own.

And he hears the Gospel, he comes to faith in Jesus Christ, and Paul sends him back. But he sends him back with a letter, and in that letter, when we get to Philemon Verse 16, he says, "I want you to receive him back, Philemon, no longer as a bond servant, but as a dear brother." Verse 17 says, "As you would receive me." In other words, he says, this is what the Gospel does, is even in the cases where culture has disrupted things to where injustice is the norm, the Gospel comes in and actually undermines master, bond servant relationships

and creates brother, brother relationships. This is his intent.

And then we get to the last scene. We're not there yet, but the last scene is that Jesus' people will one day live in perfect harmony, and this is heaven. You have to understand what Paul was doing here is he's swinging the Gospel at the heart of man instead of the institution of bond, servanthood, and the reason is because when the Gospel takes root at the source of the heart, the symptoms of injustice will at last be overthrown with time.

And so let me encourage you to never lose sight of the culture-changing power in the Gospel. This is not to say that we as a people who have the Gospel, that we only share the Gospel, it means that as we share the Gospel, we should also be thinking about working for the oppressed. You see it was people like Wilberforce and Martin Luther King in Europe and America that proved that a heart that was rooted in the Gospel actually cares to make right what is wrong, but never without the Gospel leading the way.

It is true that the church has taken far too long to live out what God said long ago, and indeed she continues to drag her feet. And so as a church, let's look to the beginning, let's look to the end, let's look to the pinnacle and allow these things to shape our understanding of how we view people, how we view institutions of evil, and how we even view their inevitable collapse.

The second thing I think that he does here, which is far shorter, is that God calls us to work diligently under those in authority. And so there's clear instructions that He does give to people inside this context. As equals before God, sometimes it's really hard to work under a boss, isn't it? You look at somebody and they can tell you to go clean the bathroom, and yet you're equals before God. What do you do with that? Well, Verse 22 says, "Obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye-service as people pleasers, but with sincerity of heart." It's true that our obedience before God should be tempered and limited by our obedience to God, and so when he says the word here everything, what he means is things that are pleasurable and things that are displeasurable, And whether anybody is watching or not.

And then he goes on in Verse 23 and he says, "And whatever you do, work heartily as for the Lord and not for men." In other words, put your whole inner being into your effort. You should ask this question, did you put your whole inner being into work on Monday? Whether anyone was watching or not. And Tuesday and Wednesday. This is ultimately what he has for us, you see, and the reason. You see his motivation for doing these things, you can see on the next slide. You notice that we're being sincere and the reason is because we fear the Lord. We're working heartily as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that the Lord is going to reward, for it is the Lord Christ that we are serving.

You remember Joseph. Joseph, his brother sells him as a slave and he goes, "Man, I don't want to be a slave, but if I have to be a slave, unto the Lord I'm going to be the best slave," and so he lives a life that's so distinguished that his owner actually begins giving him more liberties and responsibility. Suddenly the master's

wife takes interest in him, hits on him. Joseph says, no, she falsely accuses him and says, “Actually Joseph hit on me,” and so he lands in prison. He’s done nothing wrong to be a slave or to be imprisoned. And he says, “Well, now that I’m in prison, I don’t want to be a prisoner, but if I have to be a prisoner unto the Lord, I’m going to be the very best one here.”

And suddenly what we find is that Joseph is elevated to where he becomes the Prince of Egypt. You say, “Well, who cares? That was so long ago.” It was, but the Bible says whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction that through endurance and through the encouragement of the scriptures, we might have hope. In other words, providence. Let’s deliver our very best work unto the Lord.

This week, if you build cabinets, build them straight. If you sweep floors, do a great job. Whether your work makes something new or cleans up a mess or restores something that’s broken, whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

And then finally, God calls us to treat fairly those under our authority. Our authority should never blind us to equality. If you’re somebody’s boss, you should never think that you have anything over them, except a temporary responsibility to use your authority to serve them, to care for them, to create a great work environment, to utilize their strengths, to treat people that are right and fair, to pay fairly, to communicate sincerely, to make strategies for their good. And the reason is because we share an impartial master in heaven who is watching.

So let me encourage us to display Christ by serving those we lead. See, the calling of the Christian is to serve, it’s to bring out the best those who are under us by taking our strength and using it for their good. And there’s one last thing that I want to remind you of, and it really should propel us as believers to worship and it should propel those of you who are considering Christ to place your faith and trust in Him. You see Jesus Christ, it says that He looked from heaven and He saw all the chaos that our sin had brought not only to our heart and our homes, but to the entire culture. And the Bible says this of Him, it says that though he was in the form of God, He emptied Himself by taking the form of a servant.

Now this word servant is the exact same Greek word that Colossians calls a bond servant or a slave. In other words, Jesus Christ, in order to redeem us, in order to save us, in order to restore his original design, in order to bring us back to where we are a people that actually are living in perfect and harmony in heaven forever. He says the only way for that liberation to take place is for me, the liberator, to actually descend, humble myself and become the servant of everybody.

The Bible says He did just that, He died on a cross for my sin and yours. He paid the penalty in order to absorb the wrath of God that was directed towards you and me. And then the Bible says that when He died, He was buried in a grave for three days. And then He rose from the dead. He rose from the dead in order to give eternal life to everyone who would believe in Him, and therefore, the text goes on and it says, God has highly

exalted Him and bestowed upon Him the name that is above every name so that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God, the Father.

My question is this, is your knee bent to Jesus Christ? Does your tongue, has your tongue confessed Him as savior of all? And this is why this is so critically important, because this case study, it's just limited today primarily to this idea of mistreatment of people, slavery. That's just only one of the horrible institutions of evil, it's only one of the horrible sins that plague the entire world, and there is only one savior and one redeemer that can pull us up from that pit, and his name is Jesus.

And so we, as a church, commend you to Christ, to trust him as your Lord. You do that by simply admitting that you need Him, by placing your belief in who He is and what He did on that cross for you, confessing Him as Lord of your life. And the Bible says that He comes into your heart, He forgives you of your sin, and He gives you the power to begin living a different kind of life so that the people in your circle of influence can see that Jesus is relevant, that He is consequential, and that He is the redeemer and savior of all.

And so we urge you, would you trust Christ today? So let me pray for us. Father in Heaven, we thank you for your kindness to us that leads us to repentance. And we pray, Father, that for everything that we have done to contribute to the chaos and brokenness in this world that put Jesus on a cross, we ask that you would forgive us. For those that are considering trusting Christ even now, I pray God that you would incline their hearts to look to you and to confess their belief to you. Would you save them now? Would you forgive them of their sin now?

I pray, Father, that we as a church family, that we would take the understanding and wisdom that we see from the beginning to the end within the scriptures, and we would use it to be people who would be instruments to help people who were oppressed throughout this world. We pray, Father, that you would forgive us for how we have contributed to the chaos, how we have contributed even to the chaos in America today when it comes to race, when it comes to injustice, when it comes to unfairness, when it comes to actually taking somebody and depriving them of life or liberty, freedom, saying your life for my good. Would you forgive us for how we've contributed? And I pray, Father, that you would help us now to worship you. The great desire of our heart, God, is that you would be magnified and that Jesus would be glorified. And so we look to you now, we sing to you now, we pray this in Jesus name. Amen.



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