

When Winning Looks a Lot Like Losing

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[0 : 00] Before we jump into the Word, I've got somebody here. I grabbed a volunteer last minute.! Okay, so we are in Philippians. I'd like to start with a little biography here.

! Has anybody ever heard the name Ted Turner? Yeah, I see lots of nods. Okay. If you're younger, you might not know that name. He's not somebody as popular today, but back maybe 20, 30 years ago, this was one of the most prominent people in business here in the U.S.

Ted Turner, he worked for his father when he was younger, in his early 20s. His father owned a fairly successful billboard company, putting billboards up on the side of the road, and he worked for his father. At a young age, his father passed away, and he ended up taking over the entire company.

After he took it over, his ambition took over, and he started doing more than just billboards. He started off by buying a TV station, and started what he eventually called the Turner Broadcasting System, today known as TBS. If you turn on your television, I don't know if anybody, does anybody have television anymore?

If you've got, you know, you've got a thousand channels now, but one of those is TBS. And so he started that TV station. This was kind of a relatively new thing, but he pioneered this television broadcasting system.

[1 : 38] He purchased a bunch of portfolio, basically, of television shows and movies that he could broadcast on his television station, purchasing that library from several Hollywood studios.

He started even more channels like TNT and Turner Movie Classics, and one of my favorites as a kid, the Cartoon Network. My kids are like, what is that?

And then, he started one of the really big ones, this new thing called cable, cable television, and he started something he called the Cable News Network, today known more commonly as CNN.

And I'm sure there's lots of people that love to watch CNN today, right? CNN is known as quite a liberal network. They have kind of a liberal bent to their take on the news.

But it was quite successful back then. I don't know how they're doing today. It doesn't seem like they're doing quite as well as they used to. But back in the day, it was quite successful.

[2 : 47] Broadcast all over the world, 24-7. During this time, when he was reveling in his business success, he decided he was going to purchase a baseball team, and he purchased the Atlanta Braves.

And he became worth billions of dollars, and at one point was one of the richest men in the whole world, not just in the U.S. And for quite a while, actually, until just in the last 10 or 15 years, owned more land in the United States than any other private person in this country.

And I'm sure he still does own quite a bit of land. He's still alive in his 80s. And not only that, but so he was successful in business, but he was married to one of the prominent Hollywood actresses of the time, Jane Fonda, a marriage that did not last, I don't know how long it lasted, but I think he was married multiple, multiple times.

But by many definitions, but by most definitions of worldly success, Ted Turner was considered a winner in life.

You ask the question, well, why are you talking about Ted Turner on a Sunday morning? Well, Ted Turner was well known as a religious skeptic.

[4 : 16] He was brought up as an Episcopalian, but really rejected Christianity fairly early in life. I don't know if he says why.

He definitely had a lot of things that I'm sure would harden his heart. A sister who was ill and I think died early from some kind of disease, and a father who actually died through suicide.

But he was giving a speech at the American Humanist Association. And during that speech, he made a comment about Christianity, and this is what he said.

He said, Christianity is a religion for losers. Now I'm going to ask the question, is that true? And I want to consider that question as we look into the scriptures, and specifically the passage that we're going to be looking at this morning.

In Philippians 1, chapter 12, I'll just read a couple of verses. Paul says this, But I want you to know, brethren, that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel, so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ.

[5 : 35] And I want to look at this phrase, the things that have happened to me. What in the world is he talking about? What happened to Paul? Well, I want to go back a bit here.

You know, Paul was somewhat of a prominent person among the Jews. He describes some of his success later on in Philippians, in chapter 3. He says that, Of all the Hebrews, I was a leading Hebrew, a Hebrew of the Hebrews.

He was part of that successful or that highly respected sect called the Pharisees. In fact, he was trained as a Pharisee by one of the most respected teachers of all, a guy named Gamaliel.

And on top of all this, not only was he somewhat prominent among the Jews, but he had this special designation, even among the Romans, as a Roman citizen.

Not many of the Jews had that. Yet, on that road to Damascus, when he ultimately turned to Christ, that he lost a lot of the prestige that he had before.

[6 : 45] And God called him to be a missionary. What the Bible calls an apostle, a sent one. Specifically, to take this message of the gospel, the message about the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ for the sins of the world, to take that message to the pagan people, to the Gentile people of the world.

You know, we stand in awe of his position today as an apostle, a prominent apostle, to the Gentiles.

But if you think about it, if you think about what that role was, what that leadership role was back then, it wasn't really anything to brag about.

We forget that at that time, the Church of Jesus Christ was just this tiny little cult that just started a few years back. He wasn't a great leader over billions of Christians all over the world.

It was just tiny little groups scattered all throughout Asia and Europe. But he traveled all over Asia and Europe preaching the message about Jesus Christ.

[8 : 01] Most people ignoring what he had to say. It was just some nut that was preaching some new religion. Now others, they became angry and upset.

There were riots. A lot of people became hopping mad. And just a handful of people in every city, just a handful, listened to the message and believed it and became followers of Christ just as he was.

The church that he's writing to here in this book of Philippians is just this little tiny church in a city of about 10,000 to 15,000 people.

Well, we don't know the size of the church. Maybe it was 50 people, maybe 100. I would imagine it couldn't have been more than a couple hundred people at the most that he's writing to in this large city of thousands and thousands of people.

During his travels to start churches and to revisit and encourage the existing ones, he describes many of the things that happened. He was whipped by the Jews five different times with the 39 lashes.

[9 : 15] He was beaten with rods, he says, three times. He was stoned and left for dead once. He was imprisoned many times before the current imprisonment that he's experiencing now.

He had to actually make tents for a living in order to make a living for himself because the Christian converts that he had, the people in the church, either were unwilling or unable to support him.

Certainly wasn't getting rich off of this new religion. He writes about some of his own converts in the churches that he started, kind of wondered whether he was a real apostle because they met some really cool apostles that were pretty amazing and they weren't all too impressed with him.

Others were, like I said, not too impressed with his physical presence or his ability to speak. It doesn't seem like he was a great orator by any means. He had problems with his missionary teams.

At one point, he said, during one of his trials, he said, everybody, my whole team abandoned me. He just left. In one letter, he complains about a guy named Demas who just left and ran back off into the world.

[10 : 34] And then one of his closest compatriots, Barnabas, if you remember him, who traveled with him extensively. At one point, they get sideways because of a dispute over another guy named John Mark and Barnabas parts ways with Paul.

He loses an important member of his missionary team. Not only that, some of these churches that he started, they're not exactly amazing. And one of them, some people are, they're getting drunk during this Lord's Supper memorial.

They go to church and they get drunk at church. That doesn't sound like a very good, successful church to me. Others, he writes a letter to, actually, it's the same church, and he's writing to them because it seems they think it's super cool that one of their members got married to his mother-in-law.

And they're kind of, like, happy about it. And Paul's like, even the Gentiles know that that's super gross. What's wrong with you people?

When you review Paul's life and the ministry that he's in, this thing, this religious thing that he's doing, by most definitions, this guy is a total loser.

[12 : 00] And on top of that, what's his situation now? Did he take a bunch of money from, you know, that he collected all over the years and run off to, you know, some island somewhere to live it up?

How did he end up writing this letter? Where's he at? Well, after his last missionary trip, he goes down to Jerusalem. On the way, there's some, like, creepy prophet guy who takes off his belt and ties his hands and says, when you go down to Jerusalem, you're going to be arrested.

And the sensible people in the rooms tell Paul, don't go down to Jerusalem. Sounds like a bad idea. And Paul's response, I'm going, for sure.

When he's there, he gets falsely accused by the Jews for doing things that he did not actually do and then arrested by the Romans.

And during this whole trial there in Jerusalem, the Lord visits him. He says this, this is Acts 23, 11.

[13 : 06] But the following night, the Lord stood by him and said, Be of good cheer, Paul. For as you have testified for me in Jerusalem, so you must all also bear witness at Rome.

So Paul knew that this was what he was supposed to do, head to Rome. And so during his trial, you know, he could have used the leverage that he had as a Roman citizen because he brought that up.

That gave him quite a bit of clout and some special privileges among the Romans. He could have used that to have a quick trial and be done with it, to get off the hook from this false charade of a trial.

But instead, like an idiot, he uses his Roman citizenship to appeal to Caesar. And the people in charge are like, what a fool.

He could have just been let go, but he's going to appeal to Caesar and now we've got to go through this whole process. And man, Caesar's probably not going to be thrilled about this. That's a dangerous thing to do, Paul.

[14 : 11] If you read through Acts 21-28, you get the full story. And by the way, I would recommend reading that. Maybe as part of getting a little bit of the historical context as we go through Philippians here.

But basically, long story short, after a long journey, he ends up in Rome and he's under house arrest. And this is where he's at when he writes these words to the Philippians.

In light of all this, all that's happened to him and the state of things now, Paul writes this little letter and he tells them, you know all those things that have been happening to me and the present situation that I'm in?

I want to tell you something. It's awesome! Guys, we're winning! The Lord is winning! The message of the gospel is getting out.

It's working! And at the end of this passage, he says, you know what? I rejoice because of it. What a nut!

[15 : 24] At least, that's how it would appear, right? From an earthly perspective. From the perspective of somebody like Ted Turner. But why is Paul so excited?

He's excited because the message of the gospel is getting out. It's gaining new ground, finding a new audience here among the Romans. He says, and this is verse 13, here in Philippians 1, so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard and to all the rest that my chains are in Christ.

What does that mean, my chains are in Christ? He's just saying, hey, people hear about this nut that appealed to Caesar and he's under house arrest here in Rome and he's preaching this weird message about some guy that died, he was crucified and you're supposed to believe in this guy.

people are hearing the message because of his chains, because of his situation and the gospel is advancing forth.

But so what? I mean, from Ted Turner's perspective, it's a loser message. Some message about believing in a poor Jewish teacher who was crucified by the Romans kind of sounds like a dead-end religion.

- [16 : 44] What does this religion even offer? Does it offer any political or cultural power or clout? Well, not at this time it didn't. Does it offer you health and prosperity?
- No. Does it offer you peace with your enemies? Not usually. Does it offer you endless pleasure? No.
- Instead, here is what that gospel message offers. And this is something that Paul actually wrote in his letter to the church in Rome.
- And this is from Romans 1, verse 16. And he said this, For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ.
- Though many people might think that I ought to be ashamed, it seems like a foolish message. But I'm not ashamed of it and here's why. He says, For it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes.
- [17 : 51] God is the message that offers life eternal. A message that offers peace with God. A message that offers forgiveness of sins.
- A message that offers rescue from that faithful day called the day of wrath in which God will judge men in righteousness according to their works.
- And even though from an earthly perspective it looks like a losing message, but from an eternal perspective with eyes looking toward things that are eternal, Paul is winning big because more people are learning about Jesus.
- and every time someone dares to believe that message and it's not many people, it's just a few, but every time someone dares to believe his message about Jesus Christ, they inherit life eternal.
- And the lamb that was slain receives the reward of his suffering. but even though this is the most important message in all the universe from an eternal perspective, that doesn't mean that it's an easy message to preach.
- [19 : 25] It wasn't easy for Paul, it wasn't easy for anybody else. It causes controversy. And so in the next verse here in verse 14 he says this, and most of the brethren in the Lord having become confident by my chains are much more bold to speak the word without fear.
- Paul's imprisonment, his situation has caused and encouraged other believers to be bold. You know, most of us are pretty timid. Courage isn't something that comes easy.
- Christianity and there are a handful of people, you can see this among the broader culture, not just in Christianity, but there are a few people in the world that will be willing to stand by themselves, to stand alone, regardless of what anybody else is doing.
- But many times we'll see this, that when one person dares to stand alone, it will inspire others a lot more, not everybody, but a lot more to stand up with them or behind them.
- And here's Paul being willing to do this hard thing, to follow Christ through thick and thin. And because of the persecution and the chains that he's suffering, many others see that and they're inspired, they're inspired to follow him and to be just as bold.
- [20 : 57] Courage is contagious. sharing the gospel like Paul did, it wasn't just something that was difficult and challenging to do back then, but it's difficult even today, even in America where there's freedom of speech and you don't really have to be afraid of getting arrested, but you have the fear of man, you have, what are people going to think, how are they going to react, how are they going to respond?
- One of the things I think that we could do to help with our boldness is to find someone else, find someone else who has that boldness and hang out with them, do ministry with them, find somebody who's willing to go up to people and speak boldly about spiritual things and about the gospel, hang around those kinds of people, they'll inspire you to do more.

Another fear I think some people have is just a fear of screwing it up, right, well, man, if I try to share the gospel with somebody, what if I say the wrong thing? You know what the solution to that is?

Hey, learn more about the gospel and the word of God, get trained up, go to the Berean Bible Institute or, you know, some other place of Christian education, learn how to share your faith so that you can do so with more confidence.

But it's interesting. Here, Paul speaks of those who have become emboldened because of his chains to preach the gospel. And he says some people were emboldened to preach in a good way from positive motivations.

[22 : 43] But then he talks about these people who are emboldened to preach for other reasons. So he says this in verse 15, some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife and some also from goodwill.

The former preach Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely supposing to add affliction to my chains, but the latter out of love knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel.

What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached. And in this I rejoice and I will rejoice. What is he talking about here? You know, it really is unclear exactly who he's talking about.

But the big picture's perspective is this, is that there's some people who are choosing to declare Jesus Christ, whether it's just the name of Jesus or the gospel message itself, for some doing it for good reasons and others for not so good reasons.

And you might think, well, he's probably here talking about unbelievers who are mentioning Jesus for their, you know, for bad reasons.

[23 : 57] Because Christians would never proclaim Christ for such corrupt and petty reasons, right? That would never happen. And some naive people might think that Christian leaders are not nearly as petty as people in the world, and they would be wrong.

He talks about envy. People envious, probably, of Paul's, I don't know, his influence. Maybe it was people in Rome who maybe were already, there was already somewhat of a church there, and they were envious of his new influence among the Christians there.

Or maybe envious of his authority, or maybe the success that he had that maybe they didn't have. Paul uses the word strife. And that word just means contentions or divisiveness.

So people preaching Christ in order to cause contentions, debate, division, wanting to divide the church. You know, Paul talked about this.

He said when he wrote to the Corinthians, he says, you know, some of you say, oh, I'm of Paul, and I'm of Apollos, and I'm of Peter, and I'm of Christ. He said that's not a good thing. You shouldn't divide up the church, the body of Christ like that.

[25 : 14] You know what? You know what was happening? This is what we're seeing here that Paul's describing here, and over the Corinthians, is they're starting to start denominations already, even in the very beginning. He talks about selfish ambition.

That's one of the words that he uses. Selfish ambition, it's also translated as rivalry. People wanting new believers, believers in Christ, to follow them instead of following Paul.

And who knows why? Is it, you know, pure selfishness, or maybe they think Paul's not preaching a good enough message, and well, we need people to follow me because, you know, I'm doing a better job.

He says that these people are, their preaching is not sincere. That word sincere just means not pure. So their motives were not pure in the preaching that they did.

What does this look like today? Well, I'll tell a little story. This is just a quick little illustration. It's actually a made-up story, but I think it helps illustrate. You can imagine that this has probably happened.

[26 : 33] But you have a Baptist, you know, get, denominations today, right? And we belong to the non-denomination denomination. But there was a Baptist denominational leader, you know, he's going around traveling to churches.

He shows up to this church, this little Baptist church out in the country. He says, hey, how are things going? I said, well, it's not going so great. We just had a church split. People are, like, leaving our church every week.

We got another group leaving. We don't really have many new people coming. Our church is kind of on the decline. We don't know how things are going to go. It's like, oh, man, that really stinks.

I bet you guys are really discouraged. And he responds and says, the pastor responds and says, yeah, it is discouraging. Hey, but we are heartened by one thing. The Presbyterians down the road are not doing any better.

And so, hey, as long as we're not winning, you know, we're okay as long as nobody else is winning people to Jesus either. You know, I even see this in my own tendency, right?

[27 : 45] We have things that we're passionate about here in this church, about the grace of God, and things that we, you know, that we are, that we believe are important and true that distinguish us from other churches.

And so you might see a little revival going on over here, or a lot of people coming to the Lord through this church, maybe because they're bringing in a lot of people because of their amazing music or some of the programs that they're doing.

You might think, ah, well, I don't know if I'm really happy about people coming to the Lord through that church because, well, they're compromised and they're doing all these things that I wouldn't do, and maybe even some of the things they're doing are just not good and biblical.

But I think we ought to have the same attitude as Paul. And even in those scenarios, we can rejoice because people are coming to Jesus, or at least they're hearing about him.

Just a few other examples I think we can consider that fit in with what Paul's talking about, with the spirit of what he's talking about. You know, I think of megachurches, and a lot of megachurches are focused on one primary thing, and that's numbers, right?

[29 : 01] Getting bigger. And so a lot of times there's compromise on this and that. And whether the gospel message is preached clearly, you know, can maybe be disputed.

And it doesn't mean, by the way, it doesn't mean that every large church or megachurch is bad or is compromised in a lot of ways, doesn't mean that. But it seems like it's fairly common.

But you know what? People are hearing about Jesus. I think about even like prosperity preachers.

People who, from all appearances, it looks like their primary reason for preaching Christ is so they can put more money in their pocket. You know what Paul would say even there?

Christ is being preached. People are hearing the message about Jesus. I even think recently we had the, I think it was at the last Super Bowl or maybe two Super Bowls ago, or maybe both, there was a commercial put out by a group.

[30 : 11] It's called the He Gets Us Campaign. Anybody seen those commercials? And some of them are, in fact, a lot of them seem kind of questionable. Like, what kind of message are they teaching through this?

It's not actually really clear. And I haven't seen in any of them a clear presentation of the gospel that people need to trust in Christ, to trust in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.

In fact, I even went to their website once and just scoured the whole website to look for a gospel message. I found none. There was no gospel message in there.

It's more of a message about, you know, Jesus understands you. And you know what? That doesn't really help people without the message of the gospel that Jesus died for your sins.

But you know what? When that commercial went on during the Super Bowl, the number of people Googling and searching about Jesus went through the roof.

[31 : 13] People are looking, looking up about Jesus and the claims of the gospel. And maybe the Who Gets Us campaign isn't doing much other than just mentioning his name, if they even do that.

But because his name is being declared in one way or another, we can celebrate and we can rejoice. I even have heard from some, I've heard this from actually multiple people, multiple testimonies.

Back in the day, I don't know, was this in the 70s? There was a play that was really popular called Jesus Christ Superstar. Does anybody remember that? And that sounds like a great play, right?

About Jesus Christ. It was intended, and it delivered on this, to be a mockery of Jesus Christ. In fact, I've never seen it, but from what I understand, Judas is the hero, and Jesus Christ is mocked and ridiculed.

But I've heard from multiple people who said, I watched that play, and after watching that, and even recognizing all the mockery involved, it got me to consider about Jesus, and that was the catalyst that caused me to believe on Jesus Christ.

[32 : 31] Wow. God can even use mockery and ridicule of his name to bring people to himself. You know what is the worst thing that could happen with the name of Jesus?

It's that nobody ever talks about him. The people just ignore Jesus, and there are people that try to do that, but it just seems like so many people, even the enemies of Christ, they can't help talking about him, writing books about him, and why you shouldn't believe in him, and mocking and ridiculing him.

And you know what? Every time they do that, more and more people hear the name of Jesus, and they wonder, I wonder what it is about this guy, and why so many people believe in him.

And because of that, we can rejoice with Paul. Now, all this to say, this is not to say that when people preach with bad motives in order to line their pockets, or to promote some kind of progressive form of Christianity, or to mock and ridicule Christ, that they shouldn't be criticized, that what they're doing is good.

Motives do matter. Paul talks about it quite a bit. And it's proper to criticize those who preach Christ for the wrong reasons. And we ought to even look at ourselves, right?

[33 : 56] Take a look at ourselves. Why am I doing this? Why am I preaching Christ? And Paul talks about the good reasons, out of goodwill and love. Those are the two words that he uses.

Those are the right reasons, to preach Christ out of goodwill and love. And ultimately, what that means is that we preach Christ because we want what is best for people, for those who are lost, for those who are perishing.

We want what is best for them. And what is best for them? Is it that they become billionaires, millionaires, they become financially successful? They're healthy and powerful?

Will they have lots of comfort? No, that's not what's best for them. Those things are fine in and of themselves. But the most important thing, the best thing for any person is that they might be saved.

That they might inherit life eternal. And so Paul finishes up with this in this passage anyway. In verse 18, he says, What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached.

[35 : 08] And in this I rejoice. Yes, and will rejoice. And this is the theme that we've talked about of this letter to the Philippians.

It's joy. It's rejoicing. Rejoicing in the Lord. And he is rejoicing here because of the gospel, because of the message of the gospel, and that the word is getting out.

Not everybody is listening. Not everybody is receiving the message, but the word is getting out. You know, there is, and I'll wrap up with this, there's a debate among Christians about the value of Christianity becoming accepted or popular in culture.

Right? Is it better for Christianity to be maligned and diminished in a minority in a culture, or is it better for the Christians to have political power and clout and to have more influence over the culture?

And so those in the camp who would say, well, it's better in persecution. They'll say, you know, you look at China and, you know, the church is growing there.

[36 : 28] And the Christians there are, you know, they're a better kind of Christian. Right? Because they're, are they becoming Christians because they're going to get some kind of special reward from the government or from their neighbors?

Some special privileges? No, not at all. There's nothing like that. And so, it is true, right, when you become a Christian under those circumstances, usually it's for all the right reasons and not the wrong ones.

People argue that, well, some people say, you know, the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church. That is from Tertullian. And so, when you have persecution and martyrdom, it causes a lot more people to be inspired to become Christians.

And they look, they look at these people who are, their faith is obviously not based on any temporal value that they're getting. It's all based on some eternal value that they're looking to.

And that causes people to be interested. And then, on the other side, when you have Christianity is popular in the culture, some people become Christians for the wrong reasons, at least in name.

[37 : 44] They can, they can have more success. They can network better in their business, right, when the people around them are Christians and you're not. I've seen this in different parts of history.

I don't know if it's as common today, but maybe a hundred years ago, if you weren't a Christian and let's say you were a lawyer, people didn't want to hire you. They wanted to hire the Christian lawyer. So what do you do? Well, you start going to church.

One, you can network with the people in the church, but also people have kind of a better idea of you. Oh, you go to church, you'll probably be fair and reasonable and won't overcharge me and those kinds of things.

And so people would go to, you have the same thing today with politicians, right? If you want to be successful among your constituency, then you're going to carry around a big Bible and go to church services and make sure people are filming while you do it.

But what you find with cultural Christianity is that there's a lot of fakes, right? A lot of people that fake it and it can be difficult to know who's real and who's not.

[38 : 48] You don't have that kind of problem when you have a persecuted church. But when you have cultural power and clout, that gives you a lot more resources, a lot more freedom and liberty to do things.

America, we're able to send out way more missionaries than other countries can. With the liberties that we have, we can use technology, we can print all kinds of books.

There's a lot of good that we can do. And so I don't think that we should necessarily focus, I don't think that we should try to change our culture so that we're more persecuted.

That seems to me kind of a dumb idea, right? In fact, is Paul, in his writings, does he say, oh man, I'm so glad I'm in jail and I want to stay in jail as long as I can.

He actually, in fact, in this letter says, hey, I'm hoping to get out of jail soon, right? Because I'd like to come to you guys. He doesn't want to be there. But, regardless of what's going on in the culture, regardless of whether we have political or cultural power, we're the minority, the persecuted minority, it doesn't matter either way, Christ needs to be preached.

[40 : 08] And if our cultural power and influence, one of the things happening today, right, in the White House, there's a lot more Christians in the White House than there was a year ago, and there's a risk there, right?

Some of those might be fake people, but some of them seem for sure for real. But what can we do with that? We can use it to what?

Own the libs to get the gospel out. Use this as an opportunity to get out the message of the gospel, to preach Jesus Christ.

And that is Paul's message. In every way, in every way, in every circumstances, to preach Christ.

Christ. And like Paul, we can rejoice that Christ is preached regardless of the circumstances. I'll end with this, a little gospel message.

[41 : 06] I look around saying, I think I know everybody here. Everybody's received that message, trusted in the gospel. But I'll, just in case, bring this message again.

This is the message of the gospel, the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. Not just because, but for a specific reason, for the sins of the world, that you might be saved. Even though the message of Jesus looks like a losing message in earthly terms, all of us need to have eyes looking towards eternity.

Because the life that we live, it's just what the Bible calls a vapor. It's just like a breath from the mouth. It's here today and gone tomorrow. Do you want to join with the winners of the world?

Or is it better to join with these losers called Christians that have eyes not on the things, the temporal things of the world, but with eyes towards heaven looking to eternal things, looking forward to win through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, eternity with God.

And the message of the gospel is simple. It's just this. Jesus, God the son, died for the sins of the world and all he asks that you do is trust in him, trust in his atoning death for your sins.

[42 : 31] Not trust in your own work, that would be the opposite of trusting in Christ, trusting that I'm good enough, that I can earn my way into God's, into peace with God, into a relationship with God, into God's eternal reward.

Instead of trusting in our own works, trusting in what he accomplished for us. There's no rituals to perform, no good deeds that must be accomplished first.

Just faith in Christ's death is burial and resurrection on your behalf. And if you have not done that, do that today. let's pray.

Father, sometimes we feel like we're winning in this culture that we're in. Sometimes we feel like we're losing big time. But I would ask, Father, that you would work in us regardless of what's going on around us, regardless of whether people like us or don't like us, that we would remain faithful to you, that we would use every opportunity to make the message known, to make Christ known, to make the message of the gospel known.

That whether people, regardless of what they choose, that at least they'll know that they can have eternal life in you through simple faith alone. Thank you for working in us each and every day to be messengers of yours.

[44 : 03] In Jesus' name, amen. Thanks, everybody.