

# The Power of God

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Date: 24 March 2024

Preacher: Kevin Smith, Senior Pastor

[ 0 : 00 ] Not in our own strength will we trust in the Lord. Father, as we come now, may your word be preached with your power. May Jesus be exalted.

May all of us turn our eyes to him. Turn our hearts to him. Surrender our souls to him. Pledge our lives to him.

Oh God, help us to see Jesus. Every person under the sound of my voice. May you reveal Christ to us in a deeper way even today.

And may we find healing and peace and joy and guidance in him alone. So Lord, to that end, we pray that you would anoint the preaching of your word.

Anoint your servant. Lord, that again, your word would be clearly taught, clearly proclaimed, and applied to our lives. And help us, Lord, even to hear this message and apply it even more to our lives.

[ 1 : 08 ] Because we know it is the word of God. Do your holy work, oh Lord. Use your unworthy servant. In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.

1 Corinthians 1. Very familiar passage, I believe, to many of us. Verses 18 to 25. Paul is preaching. For the word of the cross is folly 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 a discernment of the discerning I will thwart. Where is the one who is wise?

Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since in the wisdom of God the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe.

[ 2 : 17 ] For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom. But we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles.

But to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. That is the word of the Lord. Please be seated. Let me just say thank you for your prayers.

My wife and I were in a home church in Philadelphia last Sunday, where I had a chance to preach three times on Sunday morning. And we needed your prayers because I was in the midst of a crazy toothache that made me want to cut off my own head.

Our dentist called in an over-the-counter cocktail of Advil and Tylenol on huge doses. And I had to take three, every service, before service, I took six pills just so I could preach.

[ 3 : 34 ] And God was merciful. And, you know, our church is hurting in many ways in Philadelphia. And God made us a part, I think, of that healing process.

So thank you for your prayers for our trip and for my recovery. Thank you. Is the gospel true? And that's one question. I hope you've settled it. Many people have. But there's another question that goes with it. Is the gospel sufficient?

Okay, sufficient for what is the obvious question. If you're talking about building a car or a bridge, no, the word of God or the gospel is insufficient for that task.

The gospel, the word of God is sufficient to do what it claims to do.

[ 4 : 45 ] What does it claim to do? The gospel reveals God and brings people to him, making them whole in Jesus Christ.

I say making people whole in Christ because the gospel not only saves, but goes on to transform us into the image of Christ.

To be made like Jesus is to be made perfect. For he was the perfect human being as well as God in human flesh.

To be made like Jesus, to be whole, is to be what Adam was meant to be. And that means to be what we were meant to be.

But what is the material cause of this wonderful activity? What is the material cause? What is the crux of that cause?

[ 5 : 55 ] What moves it forward? It is the power of God revealed in the cross. Palm Sunday today, as we celebrated, is prep for Good Friday.

For on Palm Sunday, the king comes to his city. Jesus enters into Jerusalem, the great capital of his people, and he comes, but it's preparation for the most incredible event that's going to happen on Good Friday.

And of course, what we call Resurrection Sunday. The king is coming to die. 2,000 years ago, an event took place that not only changed the world, it changed the destiny of humanity.

You see, the gospel has sufficient power to save, to give hope, and to transform people.

This means, therefore, that we are not sufficient in and of ourselves. If the gospel is sufficient, you are not.

[ 7 : 21 ] Amen. Amen. Now, why is Paul talking about the power of God and the cross here? You got to, you remember, these are letters.

He's writing. There's a flow of thought. Read the Bible like that, please. There's a flow of thought. These, they were writing and thinking through what they want to say. And the apostle, for some reason, in verse 18, starts talking about the word of the cross and the power of God.

Why? It's kind of weird. You know, sometimes I come to a text. You do it too, right? You think you know what it's talking about, and then you start reading, and you realize, oh, it says more than I thought it said.

That's good reading, by the way. Keep reading like that. Begin at verse 2. Okay, I forgot to mention it. Do you have your Bibles? Pull them out, because the screen is off today.

We're going old school. Don't look at the screen. Listen carefully, and look at your Bible. All right.

So, if you have a few Bibles, if you need one, there's a few Bibles there.

[ 8 : 31 ] I forgot what page 1 Corinthians is on. I meant to look. I forgot, but it's in there. Beginning at verse 10 here, Paul is doing battle against ungodly divisions in the church.

Listen to what he says. I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment.

For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people, they visited with Paul, that there is quarreling among you, my brothers. What I mean is that each one of you says, I follow Paul, or I follow Apollos, or I follow Cephas, or I, oh, the deep ones, I follow Christ.

Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? He says, I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, so that no one may say they were baptized in my name.

Well, I did baptize also the household of Stephanas. Beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else. Why is that, why is he not concerned? For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, and not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest, listen, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

[ 9 : 57 ] Okay. You feel, you heard that, you're flowing with me, right? They were battling over their favorite preachers. No church ever does that.

I mean, really. Paul, Apollos, and Cephas, and then the real spiritual ones said, I follow Jesus. Now, Paul planted the church. Apollos was the most eloquent speaker of that time, possibly.

Cephas, who's also called Peter, was the leader of the apostles. You see, each of them felt a sense of prestige if they had been baptized by either one of them.

I was baptized by Paul. Who were you baptized by? I was baptized by Apollos, the great speaker, the great preacher. Hey, I was baptized by Peter, the first among the apostles, baby.

There was just all kinds of crazy divisions, because people, even back then, tended to elevate preachers in a way they should not be elevated.

[ 11 : 02 ] They were creating their superstar preachers. Oh, we don't know. That never happens anymore. I know. I know. Let's get it. Let's bring it home.

Some of the problems we have faced even in this church is because of that very thing. I am of Randy. No. I am of Kevin.

I am of Carl. I am of Barry. Some of you don't even know who Barry is, but Barry Henning was a great preacher here, pastor here years ago.

And people just divide among themselves and think that one is better than the other. and you, I listened to that one, but I can't listen to that one.

It's crazy. I love what Paul says. Was Randy crucified for you? Were you baptized in the name of Kevin?

[12:10] I certainly hope not. This happens everywhere in Christendom. and it's sick.

It's spiritual and maturity. I'll tell you a story briefly. A few years ago, I was preaching and after I finished preaching, I was greeting people and a dear lady walks up to me and she says, I'm so sorry.

I was like, Miss, I don't even know you. What do you mean? She said, I never gave you a chance. When you came, I left the church. Me and my husband.

And they live out somewhere. I won't say where they live. And she said, I never even, thank you for preaching the word of God. I never even gave you a chance. Broke my heart.

But bless me. Because here is someone willing to confess their sins and repent and give God glory.

[13:20] We hugged each other and it was all good. Every day, a pastor serves his congregation faithfully, week after week, year after year.

And many are almost disregarded by the very people they serve. Why? Because their people are looking at the superstar pastor on the YouTube, on the videos.

If you're visiting with us, listen. Go home and appreciate and love your pastor. If he's faithfully preaching the word of God and loving you, do it. Amen.

Paul is dealing with this kind of stuff, y'all. He expects the church to honor their leaders and respect their leaders. We're actually commanded to do that, but not worship them or divide over them.

Because he says in verse 17, I'm getting there, verse 17, he's explaining his method of preaching. He's concerned that because of divisions and elevating preachers and whatnot, and because of what something he calls eloquent wisdom, some eloquent preachers using eloquent wisdom, he is concerned that it will dilute the gospel, dilute the preaching of the cross.

[14:41] Divisions. Partisan stuff. He speaks, this phrase, words of eloquent wisdom, must mean humanity's wisdom, worldly wisdom.

Worldly wisdom on how to preach, how to grow the church, how to evangelize, how to develop Christians into maturity. There's so much worldly wisdom floating around our churches.

But the gospel stands on its own because it comes from God and it is sufficient to do what it says without those things.

Don't mean we can't learn something, but they can never be the bedrock. The gospel, the cross, is sufficient to grow Christians, mature Christians, grow churches, evangelize the lost.

The gospel shows the world a different way. It shows the world that you're broken. We're all broken and we have no hope.

[15:49] The gospel holds up the truth about humanity and the truth about God even when we don't want to know it. So we can't mesh the gospel, the cross with worldly wisdom and sociology and psychology and marketing and personality cults.

If you do, you will rob it of its power to save, to sanctify, to transform people into the image of Christ. nothing can transform people like the gospel.

Other things, these other things can be helpful. But listen, hear me clearly because Paul is trying to teach us something here about worldly wisdom. These other things might help us apply the word of the cross in certain situations, but they must be applied with great care or psychology and sociology and marketing will take over.

It's happened throughout this country in our churches where these things have taken over and now the gospel is more like a self-help message in those places where we have to put on a show to attract people.

I'm not interested in putting on a show for anybody. What you win them with, you win them to, my pastor said. We must win them to the cross.

[17:23] We must win them to Jesus. Why must we be careful? Because as people, we prefer our own preferences.

We prefer our own wisdom to God's. We like figuring out ourselves.

This leads then to how we see the power of the cross humbling us in our quest for power and wisdom without God. That leads to verse 18.

And verse 18 begins our passage. It's the crux of the passage. For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God.

Paul divides humanity into two groups and I'm going to follow that throughout the passage. He divides us into two groups. Not even Jew and Gentile or Jew and Greek.

[18:31] Not barbarian and Roman. Not black and white. Not Latino and Asian. an African. He divides humanity into two groups.

The perishing and those who are being saved. That's how he describes devised humanity. Two groups. You're either one group or the other.

And each group views the cross differently. the two views of the cross are either weakness and foolishness or power and wisdom.

Which one do you favor? When you look at the cross, do you see weakness and foolishness?

I'm shaking your head. Or do you see power and wisdom? First of all, those who are perishing see the cross as foolishness and weakness. Those who are perishing here, the word perishing means being ruined, destroyed, dying.

[19:42] And the language seems to suggest that they're doing it to themselves. This destruction is holistic. The perishing are perishing in all aspects of their humanity.

spiritually, emotionally, physically, socially, and if not changed, eternally. We are redefining ourselves sexually, technologically, socially.

We are redefining what constitutes a family or marriage and we call it progress. And we think we're living the good life or believe that we are on the cutting edge.

But in reality, God sees us as we are and he says, we're perishing. Some people feel they're perishing in the midst of their pursuit of pleasure.

Many are not happy, though they are more successful. I'll never get over Robin Williams. I'm telling you, he's the funniest man I've ever seen.

[20:53] Genius comedian, comedian and comic. Made me laugh from the moment I saw him as on Mork and Mindy. Y'all remember that? Every movie that man did that I saw, he had me rolling.

I watched interviews with Robin Williams and he would just spontaneously go into a riff and just have you, he could just do it. You're talking about something and all of a sudden he turns it into a comic riff.

He was amazing and he committed suicide. I'll never get over that because I have much respect for him.

I don't know the man personally, I'm talking about his work. Many are not happy, though we are more successful. Our relationships are not lasting. Drug use prescribed and picked up are on the rise.

We are escaping reality constantly in gaming more and more. That is a billion dollar industry, gaming, social media, wild adventures and all kinds of sexual expression and we're still not fulfilled.

[22:13] People are hungry and desperate for real life and hope. Who do we look to in our desperation, in our perishing?

Who do we look to? Verse 20 says, sadly, we don't look to the gospel. Where is the wise?

Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? Verse 19 says, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and the discernment of the discernment I will thwart.

Where do people look when they're hurting? Where do people look when they want purpose and meaning? Where do people look when they want something special? They want to feel something in their lives?

Where do people look? These are the people, Paul just listed them. The wise man refers to in that day the Greek thinkers or philosophers. They had passed away by the time of Christ.

[23:14] People like Aristotle, Socrates, Plato, the Stoics. When Paul was preaching the gospel in the city of Athens, he was brought to the Aeropagus, which means Mars Hill, to explain his teaching to their philosophers.

Luke says this about these wise men. Acts 17, 21. He says, all the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there spent their time doing nothing but talking about and listening to their latest ideas.

Does that sound, this is nothing new. We're always looking for, we love going to those who are saying something new or saying something in a new way, saying something they can tweet, saying something that catches our fancy.

We're always looking for something new. Where do we go? We go to our wise men today on X. He says, the scholar, that's a reference to the Jewish teachers of the law called the scribes.

They were experts in the rules to follow God, to follow God and to be right with God. We tend to look to things we can do religiously that make us feel good about ourselves and somehow earn the blessing of whatever deity we're seeking to follow.

[ 24 : 39 ] We like doing works. We feel good doing works and earning blessing. That's not the gospel. He talks about the philosopher leaning or the debater here, which of course reflects both these groups already mentioned, but these see themselves as the wise, the scholarly of this age who love to debate.

They love to our return to people. We like people who are brash and bold, who say things that, man, that's right, he said it, I wish I had said it.

We love people who stand against the status quo and say, put their finger in someone's eye. We love those people who see themselves as smarter than everybody else, more informed than everybody else.

we like them. That's why they're called trolls, by the way. And talking heads, the pundits, who love to say, those liberals are all wrong, those conservatives are all wrong, we love those guys because they're they flew.

They're but they're all functioning in the perishing.

[ 26 : 09 ] Paul says they use the wisdom of this age, wisdom of the world, the wisdom and intelligence that is not dependent upon God and what God has revealed but what they themselves have concocted from their thoughts and their minds and their studies and they actually think they know more than God.

It's true today. Those who seek for wisdom but won't come to Jesus and whom are hitting all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge and truth.

The Stephen Hawkins of the world who are looking for the beginning of the universe in science alone, they still don't know what exploded. The Big Bang is still somewhat taught I guess but we still don't know what exploded.

Something exploded and when an explosion everything flew out. What was it that flew out? what we don't really know but it became matter and guess what it did?

It stopped at just the right places. The sun, our sun, stopped just where it needed to be. The earth stopped just far enough from the sun not to freeze us or fry us.

[ 27 : 44 ] The moon stopped just right, right, the right place so our tides don't flow over and wash us all away and our earth somehow is stopped just from the right tilt.

Urge! So it sustains life as it goes. Okay.

I feel like Columbo. Something I don't understand. the spiritual goos of the world who offer insights into living in the universe based upon their speculation and internal gazing and signs inside themselves and reading the stars.

What seems good? The new atheists like Richard Dawkins and the late Christopher Hitchens who attack all religions but especially Christianity is being bad for humanity. they seek a world that is independent on belief in any type of deity.

Of course, the new gurus of identity and sexuality who say there are no rules. There are no norms. Be and do what seems right to you today because tomorrow you may be and do something else.

[ 29 : 13 ] what seems right. The book of Judges said that was a problem. He said it ends by saying every man did what was right in their own eyes and it led to disaster for the people of Israel.

This is where we are. We want freedom but really we want autonomy to make our own laws and rules and be accountable to no one or no thing.

The scriptures, Paul is talking about such people and he says those that follow them they are all perishing. Why are they perishing? Verses 19 and 20 and 21 because God has determined personally to frustrate, nullify, and confound their wisdom and intelligence.

You got to understand God is fighting against the world. I'm telling you the scriptures this is not Kevin Smith riffing off against humanity.

No. I'm trying to point you to scripture to let you see what God is saying about our situation. It's dire. It's dire, brothers and sisters.

[ 30 : 27 ] We are spinning and spiraling down, down, down. We're killing ourselves. prophets. Proverbs 1, 7 and 9, 10 say the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge and the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

That means if until I come to grips with the fact that I am a created being made in the image of the creator, until I acknowledge him as great and glorious and good and my savior, I don't know what I think I know.

I can know things. Yes, yes, yes, deep things, great things, but I'll never get to the bottom. I'll never go deep enough. I can create things, but I don't know why I should.

I can do things with technology, but is it the right thing to do? That's what we are. In medical technology, technology, and all kinds of things, we are doing things that we just, and we have no moral box to put it in.

And so we end up doing things that hurt people while trying, really trying, to help people. Because God is fighting against us.

[ 32 : 01 ] The perish and do not fear or revere the Lord, and therefore the perishing create things that are dangerous. Some good, yes, but many things that end up hurting humanity.

Paul is saying that all our pursuits for wisdom and knowledge will ultimately end in frustration. We won't be able to get where we want to go. Without the cross, he says, the perishing cannot know God.

All of the reason and scientific understanding and philosophies and religions cannot bring the true knowledge of God. In reality, all those pursuits end up rejecting the one true God for one made in our own image.

church, we end up worshiping ourselves, our wisdom, our technology, and our power because only the cross reveals God clearly.

And Paul says the non-Jews, the Greeks and the Romans and Americans who are perishing review, we view the cross, first of all, as foolishness. the Romans that day said, what kind of God allows himself to be crucified?

[ 33 : 23 ] That was the most hateful and horrible execution of that day. What kind of savior is that, they said? What kind of wisdom is that? The cross is madness.

The very thing that can save us is madness to us. Then you have the Jews, for whom the cross is a text, a stumbling block. That means it's a scandal.

The Messiah was crucified? They never put those terms together, Messiah and crucifixion.

Because whoever is hung on a tree, according to Deuteronomy 21, 22, and 23, whoever is hung on a tree is cursed by God.

And so the idea that the Messiah will be hung on a cross, Paul, like is it, Galatians 3, 13, to a tree, because of that, they couldn't not get their heads around the fact that you're telling us the Messiah was cursed by God?

Scandal! Ah! But Paul says Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by being a curse for us.

[ 34 : 33 ] He became a curse for us. Remember God pronounced a curse upon Adam and Eve?

The curse, that curse swept all of creation, and Jesus comes, and on the cross, he bears the curse for all of us who believe that we might be made right.

We might become uncursed. The cross is ultimate, but the cross is weakness. It's death.

It's powerlessness. forgiveness. And that's insulting. Because we're not that bad that God would have to send his son to die for us.

We're not that bad. I can save myself. You keep your Jesus. Okay, lastly, but then we have the view of those who are being saved, who see the cross as God's wisdom and God's power.

To be saved is to be rescued from danger. The danger of the holy justice of God for our many sins and thought, word, and deed. We're all in danger.

[ 35 : 55 ] We were born estranged from God. That means we're in danger. We need to be rescued. To be saved is to be rescued.

rescued from God himself. Not because he's mean and terrible and vengeful, but because he's a good judge, a just judge, a holy judge, and all of us are terribly guilty.

Hate to tell you, I hate being guilty, but yeah, yep, I'm guilty. So why aren't the saved here, the ones who are being saved, why aren't they perishing like everyone else?

Because God called them. Front 24, but those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

You see, the being saved are the called. You say, what do you mean? You called me the other day on the phone. I heard you.

[ 37 : 00 ] You're saying God called me? Really? Well, see, there's two types of calling in the Scriptures. One is the external call where you hear the gospel with your ears. A lot of people have heard the gospel with their ears.

I heard the gospel for many years with my ears. But then there's the internal call where we hear the gospel with our hearts, where the Spirit of God does some holy surgery and goes right in there. And the gospel hits my inner being, hits my heart, my mind, my will, my emotions, my ambitions, and it goes to the core of my humanity.

And the gospel hits it and light flares. My chains fell off. The dungeon filled with light.

I rose and went forth to follow Jesus. Jesus. Come on, somebody. See, that's what happens when you are the called.

[ 38 : 03 ] You see, you were perishing too. So don't get uppity. You don't get to do this. The call comes sovereignly.

That was God decides who he will call. You don't get to choose you being called. God will be saved. They're being saved, therefore, by grace, unearned and undeserved, not because they're better, because we're not. God's God's name.

And now the saved can see the cross for what it is. Maybe we thought the cross was stupid and foolishness and weakness. Maybe we thought that at one time.

I just dismissed it altogether myself. Fantasy. but when the call came, then I saw the cross for what it really is, the power and the wisdom of God.

[ 39 : 11 ] My only hope of salvation, my only hope of living a life of true fullness and true depth and true hope and true joy and dying with a smile on my face because I know I'm going to be with my Savior.

No fear in death. No guilt in life. This is the power of Christ in me. The cross does that because it shows me Jesus.

In Galatians 3 14, after that passage about the curse, he says, so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles so that we might receive the promised spirit through faith. Why was he cursed? That's why he was cursed. We might become children of Abraham. We might become part of the covenant that God made with that great man of God who was, by the way, a pagan before God took him.

He wasn't following God but God snatched him up and said, I'm going to give you descendants that you can't even count, son.

[ 40 : 33 ] Kings will come for you. Nations will come for you. We are that great nation. All of us who believe in Jesus are children of Abraham. We are that great nation from every tribe, language, nation, and people.

This thing, his family blew up. And we have been given the spirit of God and the righteousness of God. The spirit of God making us children of Abraham but more than that, children of God.

The righteousness of God. So we stand before God not based upon my resume saying, Lord, I did many good works. See, look at this. No, my resume stinks. Your resume stinks.

We stand before God with Christ's resume applied to our account. When God looks at his children, he sees those who are perfect in his son.

And that can never change. Yeah, you go up and down in your walk with God, but your position will never change. You are standing before God in Christ because of the cross perfect.

[ 41 : 40 ] I'm trying to get done. I'm almost done, y'all. I'm almost done. I'm almost done. I don't know how long I've been preaching, but I'm getting into that 30 minute war. I can sense it. I love what Paul says in verse 21 of 1 Corinthians.

It pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. preaching is falling on hard times today, even within the church, because it seems like foolishness.

A man standing up there having a monologue, you don't get to ask questions. You just sit there and listen. I hope you're doing more than just sitting there. I hope you're doing more than just sitting there.

open. Hope you're engaged, active listening. Don't preach to me, we say. Don't preach to me. And yet Paul said, and Paul admits it, it's folly.

Preaching is foolishness. Does this make sense? He says, I'm running around the Roman empire, this is Paul, and I'm telling people about this Jesus, and preaching is so weak.

[ 42 : 59 ] It just seems like, come on, really? Some people will call it a lecture. I mean, and yet Paul says, it is the foolishness of preaching of the cross that is saving people.

And today, in churches around this country, shorten the sermon. Much as possible. Because we got to go to the buffet.

We got to get to the football game. we got to get to the event for our kids. So, because preaching to many Christians is folly too.

But Paul is saying, to those who are being saved, the preaching of the cross is life, is the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

Preachers are giving people what they want to hear. How to be successful. How to create wealth. How to have the best kids. How to improve my marriage. How to have great self-esteem. How to vote.

[ 44 : 18 ] I'm not saying the Bible doesn't touch on those things. It does. The Bible touches on everything in life. But that's not the message of the cross. The cross is not a how-to message.

The cross goes deeper. Listen, when you are walking with Jesus, you will address those issues in your life. When you are walking with Christ and the gospel is living in you, because the word of God is living in you, you will learn how to be a better parent.

When you are walking with Christ, you will learn how to be a better spouse. When you are walking with Christ and the gospel is filling and transforming your life and you're coming to the book, you will be a better person.

So you're not going to get how-to messages from me. For the most part. It's much deeper.

The gospel goes to your motivations. It goes to why you want that. It goes to what you really want. It gets down to the desire, your real desires.

[ 45 : 30 ] You see, what we tell each other is a lie. We will say things to each other because we think that's what the person wants to hear, but that's not our real motivation.

Sometimes we're ashamed of our real motivation. Sometimes we don't even know it. but the gospel, the word of God goes down and will expose you.

I've seen it happen here. I just keep my mouth shut sometimes. You know, that people talk and they expose themselves.

You can't hide this. It's going to come out. I can't hide. I get exposed too, okay? Can't hide.

But in the cross, because of the preaching of the cross, we surrender ourselves, not just giving intellectual assent. We believe, believe, trust, faith.

[ 46 : 33 ] It's more than just believing the facts. It is believing the person. We give ourselves to him and we surrender our destiny to the crucified and resurrected hands of Jesus.

This shows the power of the cross to change people, to change lives, to change perspectives. And it shows that God is wiser than we are.

It shows that, yeah, you thought you had it all figured out, but no, you don't. It shows you thought you knew who you were, but no, you didn't. Now you know I'm a child of God.

I'm created in the image of God and recreated in the image of Christ. I am destined for glory. Death is not the end for me. We just buried a dear sister yesterday in our church, Amy DeWall, 30 years old.

We're going to have a gathering tomorrow night for those of you who knew her, want to come talk about her and how God used her in your life. Wonderful girl.

[ 47 : 44 ] But she closed her eyes in this world and she opened them in the face of Jesus because of the cross. Because of the cross.

We see the truth now. what Paul says in Romans 1, 16 and 17. I am not ashamed of the gospel for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes.

The word of the cross is the power of God into salvation. The word of the cross. This is what we must hold out before this culture. I know you're thinking, ah, they won't listen.

Listen, don't worry. God will open ears. Your job is to be available to speak of him. Don't worry about answering all the questions.

Speak to them of the cross. Speak to them of, speak to your neighbors of how dead inside they feel. Speak to them about their fears. A man stopped me in the street the other day.

[ 48 : 47 ] My wife and I were going, I got to admit, I'm going to follow him up this week. He stopped me and said, pastor, can we talk? I said, yeah, what's up? He said, I was in my car and I felt like this demonic presence was telling me to kill myself.

Put my hands on his shoulders and I prayed because I can't save him. I was on my way. We were on our way to the Atlanta area. Yes, it was Saturday.

Friday, excuse me. And I had to pray. I said, you and I are going to talk when I get back. I want to sit down with you. Pray for that. I won't tell you his name, but pray for that meeting because that's what's happening to people, young people, and he's not a young man.

He's got to be somewhere near my age. I'm older, but he's somewhere near my age. Being told to take his own life. That's a compulsion.

That kind of thing is a compulsion. Something is pressing in on him. That he feels like, maybe I should. demonic?

[ 49 : 59 ] You better believe it. You better believe it. Your neighbors are hearing those voices, saints. Tell them about the cross.

This is where the power is. The only power you got. God. So we really are insufficient in ourselves. We can't be self-sufficient. Only God is self-sufficient. And he sends to us a sufficient gospel to train, change our lives and give us hope and joy.

the message of the cross. That's all we got. Father, take your word now, I pray, and drive it home to all of our hearts.

May we go back and reflect upon the passage ourselves, even this Lord's day. May we go back.

Maybe they'll see something I missed, Father. I'm sure I missed a lot. But speak.

[ 51 : 12 ] And there's someone here today, Lord, who's hurting and they don't know you. Right now they're in the perishing group. They don't have to stay there, Father. Will you bring them into the saved? Today, will you touch somebody today, somebody who's here, may have been coming to church here for years.

Will you touch somebody today and show them that there's hope and life in the cross of Jesus?

There's hope and life in the death of Jesus? Wow. Open our eyes.

Open all of our eyes. To see where our hope really lies. In Jesus' name, amen.