



# Message **Transcript**

## Experiencing Christ

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Lord Jesus, thank you for who you are and all you're doing in our lives. Lord we gathered to worship you because your name is above every name. And you're the only one who is worthy of all of our honor and praise. And so Lord, we gathered today because we not only want to worship you, we want to hear you. And we believe that every time this book is faithfully proclaimed, that you speak, and so we're inviting you now to speak directly to our hearts, and give us a greater glimpse of who we are in you and what you want to do in and through us. And now for all God's people who have gathered, who desire to hear the word of the Lord, who will believe what the Lord shows you and will, by faith, put into practice what he shows you will you agree with me very loudly this morning by saying the word, Amen.

Amen.

Amen. The mission of Brave Church is to help you experience the fullness of Jesus Christ. Is to help you experience the fullness of Jesus Christ. Ephesians 4:11 says that our job is to equip the saints, for the work of ministry. We believe in the priesthood of all believers, we believe that every single person who is a believer, matters to God because God wants to use every single believer for His glory. And so what we want you to be able to do here when you're at Brave Church is to experience Christ to the full. Now here's the problem. In many Christian circles, there are people who regularly gather for worship services, oftentimes sitting in the exact same seats, trying to find the exact same parking space, only to leave the church unchanged, not much different than you were before. And some feel that no, that's the pastor's job to grow spiritually, or some of those special saints to grow spiritually. What we believe

here at Brave Church is that every single believer in Christ matters to God and that you can experience Jesus Christ to the full, that God will hold nothing back from you.

When you become a Christian, the Bible says that everything pertaining to life and godliness was given to you in Christ. You have everything you need. But for many Christians, what I find is even Christians that would say, I want to experience Christ, or I'd love to experience more of Christ, I don't quite know how to do that. And I want to do that. And my desire as your pastor and our desire as a church is to see you equipped, and know God well enough that as you continue to walk with them, that you could say, I am experiencing the love of Christ in my life, and I am experiencing it to the full, and I am continuing to grow in that. And if that's you here today, and you would say, you know what, I'm either experiencing Christ to the full, give me more, or you would say, I'm not experiencing Christ to the full, maybe you don't even know Christ yet.

Or maybe you know him, but you plateaued or you're plummeting in your faith. And you would say, I'd love to remember what it was like those first moments where I trusted Christ, and I want to continue to have that experience on an ongoing basis. So that's you today, the Lord has a word for you. I'm going to encourage you to open your Bible to the book of Galatians 2. And as you're turning there, in your Bible, in the New Testament, just want to set up this book, this was written by the Apostle Paul, to a group of churches in Galatia, who were struggling with this idea that even after they became believers, they were trying to keep all the works of the law. So in other words,

they realized they were saved by grace, but they didn't know that they could continue to live by grace. And so they were going back trying to keep all the rules and rituals and the apostle was writing back to them saying, no, you are saved by grace, you grow in grace.

And let me explain to you how all of that works. And when it gets down to chapter two, and verse 20, he has a thought about who he is in Christ that I believe is true for every single believer. Now for those of you have been coming to Brave for a while, we've been covering a lot of the landscape, we've gone from Genesis 1:1 all the way through revelation 22:21. We've covered a ton and ton of ground. Today we're going to be in one verse, Galatians 2:20. Many of you have it memorized, I know I have it memorized, but I've tried to memorize it in so many different versions. I'm going to read it from my Bible, so that we can be here and as you hear the Apostle Paul's word, as a testimony to himself, know that this word is true to every single person who calls himself a believer in Lord Jesus Christ.

And here's what he says, "I have been crucified with Christ. And it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. And the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me, and gave himself up for me." I'll read it one more time, "I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live but Christ lives in me. And the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me." And as we looked at that verse, from as we heard that verse before, I want to unpack four elements from this verse that I think are essential if you're going to experience the Lord Jesus Christ to the full in your life, no matter who

you are, these are true for you. And the first is this, if you're going to experience Christ to the full, it starts with death. Experiencing Christ to the full starts with death.

Notice how the apostle says, he says, "I have been crucified with Christ. I've been crucified with Christ." The challenge so often and leading people to the Lord is what we want to do, is we want to promise people all the blessings of Jesus Christ without them coming to the end of themselves. In other words, the gospel that we falsely proclaim is you can have all the blessings of Christ and continue to live your life the way you want to live your life. That is not the gospel anywhere, you won't find it anywhere in the New Testament, there will be no place where you meet Jesus talking to somebody who is a sinner, who he tells, just go continue to live your life of sin and just pray this magic prayer and I'll take you to heaven someday. It's not there. There has to be a death and why? Because the gospel itself, the good news of Jesus Christ, all centers on the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The only way that we can have relationship with God is through the death of Jesus, for Christ died for our sins once and for all, according to the scriptures, to bring you to God. That God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life. Right? God, the Father sent the Son to be the savior of the world. Jesus Christ, came into the world about 2,000 years ago, as incarnate flesh, fully God and fully man fulfilled the law. But what made our access to God possible began with his death on the cross, it started with his death. If Jesus Christ had not died, we could not have a relationship with God. That's why Jesus said, I am the way, the truth, and the life, and no one comes to the Father

except through me. You might say, well, I believe in God, or I'm very spiritual. If you don't believe that Jesus Christ's death is essential for the payment of your sins, I'm here to tell you, you do not have a relationship with the living God of the universe.

It's through Christ and Christ alone, that you can have life in his name. And it comes through the death of Jesus, but the way in which all of us may enter is also through our death. That's the New Testament teaching of how we come to know Christ. Jesus made no bones about this, in Matthew 16:24, he said, if anyone would come after me, that means if anyone wants to be with me, if anyone wants to know me, be my follower, be in relationship with me. If anyone would come after me, he must. Not he could, not it's a way, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. Jesus said, if you want to have a relationship with God, here's what you do. Number one, you deny yourself. It all starts with a denial of self. Why? Because from the time you're born, we are falsely taught that this world is supposed to center around us. Our needs, our desires, our wants, our goals, our dreams, our hopes, our desires, our spouses, our kids, our life.

At some point in time, you have to come to the realization, it's not about you anymore. God didn't put you on this earth to make your life about you. God put you on this earth, to worship Him and serve others. So there must be a time in your life where you deny yourself, then take up his cross, take up her cross. Everybody in the first century know what crucifixion was. Crucifixion was capital punishment. It was for those who had sinned the highest sins, who had gone against the government, broken the highest laws, who had once publicly rebelled against Rome, were now publicly

submitting to Rome's leadership all the way to their death. So the ones who have been public in their disgrace of Rome, were now publicly going and being willing to die in front of everybody else, here's what it means. It means to be a Christian means from the time you're born, you've been in rebellion against God.

Now, you might say, I've never been in rebellion against God, I'm a good person. The Bible would say, no, there is no one good, no, not one. And the reason you think you're a good person is because you're comparing yourself to the wrong thing. You're comparing yourself to other people, you're not comparing yourself to a perfect, holy, infinite, triune God. You start comparing yourself to Him and you'll realize, yeah, I'm not that great. I'm not good. There's nothing good in me. And so you have to deny yourself, take up your cross, meaning this, I was once outwardly outspoken public about my rebellion against God, now in my life, and in my words, I am publicly saying, I'm willing to go to my death for him. And then what? Follow him. Follow him. What does it mean to follow Jesus? It means take his word as authoritative, and do whatever he tells you to do whenever he tells you to do it. Even if you don't feel like it.

Jesus said, that's how you're going to be my follower. That's how you're coming after me. It all begins with death. Now, Jesus's death was different. When Jesus died on the cross, he was a substitutionary atonement for all of our sins, which means he took your place. All of us here have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Some of us think we are worse sinners than others. I met a guy the other day, I invited him into church. He was buying my friend's Harley, and he was there and he looked like a

Harley guy, was tatted up all over and I said, man, you need to come to Brave Church. He said, if I came to your church, lightning would probably strike. Right? And to which I said, I'll pay you if it does. So, I hope he's here today. Anyway, everybody's welcome. We have tears of sin as human beings, God doesn't. To break the smallest law the Bible says is to break it all.

And we have to realize that we're dead in our transgressions and sins that we're already dead and Christ wants to make us alive. But we don't get to come to Jesus and just take his blessings. All throughout the New Testament, that's what people wanted. They wanted him to feed them, because they heard about him feeding the 5,000. They wanted healing from him, because they heard that he healed diseases, they wanted demons cast out, because they heard that he had the ability to do that. They wanted their dead children raised because they heard that he did that. We want all the blessings of Jesus. And so even when Jesus would perform a miracle in the New Testament, often you'll see him say this, don't tell anyone. Don't tell anyone. Why would he say that? Are we not supposed to tell everybody about Jesus? Now what he was saying is, don't tell everyone about the miracles I can do because the story is not over yet.

Once Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead, then he said, now go tell the world. And that's when people were running away, I want to tell them that, I want the Jesus that heals, and the Jesus that blesses, and the Jesus that is good. I don't want the Jesus that hung on the cross and had to die for my sins, the one I have to come to in humility, I don't want that Jesus. That's the only Jesus that there is, and it



starts with your death. Now, your death is not dying for the sins of the world. Your death is coming to the end of yourself when it comes to sin, this world system and the devil. It's getting you to a place where you realize I'm done with sin. I wish I didn't do it anymore. I'm done with the devil lying to me. I'm done with this world system. This is not working for me, I need someone else, I need Jesus. Which is oftentimes why when you hear testimonial, people who get saved later in life, God engineers circumstances in your life, to let you hit rock bottom.

Well, you think everything's going along fine, until your spouse gets sick, until the death of a loved one, until your child is rebellious. Until that job you thought was going to bring you all the success no longer wants you there anymore. Until, until, until, and now you're on your face saying, I did everything right, I went this way. It's not working out for me, what's going on? And it's God screaming at you trying to get your attention, saying, you still don't recognize you're a sinner and in need of me. You're still living completely for yourself. And in order to experience the fullness of life in Jesus Christ, you must come to the end of yourself. And it's God's grace that gets you there. It's God's grace that shows you that you're not there. And that's what God wants to do. That's why Jesus very boldly said that I am the way, the truth, and the life. I'm the only way that you can get to God. I'm the only truth that's out there.

I'm the only life you can experience. Anything else you experience outside of me, is not true. And we're all born dead in our transgressions and sins as the Ephesians 2:1 tells us but I mean, think about this, all throughout Jesus's ministry, you never see him welcome people to himself that at first don't realize they're a sinner. That's what I

love about the New Testament. We see him with prostitutes, and they realize their shame. They realize their guilt, they realize they're no good. And what does God do? He pours out mercy to them. But when Jesus gets around people like religious, Pharisee people that think they have their whole act together, he just tells them truth, that they need to repent. I mean, think about the rich young ruler for a second. Case in point, the rich young ruler comes to Jesus and he says, good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?

And here's Jesus's answer, "Why do you call me good? There's only one good." Meaning God's the only good one. So why are you calling me God? So Jesus tells him, well, keep the commandments. And this guy who Jesus just said, there's only one good, me, meaning you're not good, Jesus tells him to keep the commandments. What's he say? I've kept all these since I was a kid, I'm good, too. Jesus said, no, you don't get it. And he looks inside of his heart and he says, go sell everything you have, and then come follow me and your reward will be great. And what does the man do? As Jesus looks at him and loves him and tells him that, that man walks away. Now to add insult to injury, many people in our generation would say something like this, like, ah, I don't want to leave. I mean, the guy's got bank, I mean, he can help our ministry, maybe we'll invite him back and tell him he's a good guy, plus, I'm looking at the other 12 I got and they're not all that great. Maybe we can bring them back.

I mean, if you don't need to die, then Jesus sends the rich young ruler an apology, because as he's walking away, then Jesus commands to the crowd, he proclaims to the crowd, how hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of heaven. I'll

tell you the truth, it's easier for the camel to go through the eye of a needle than it is for a rich person to enter the kingdom. So he basically says, that guy can't get in, because his heart is for this world. And there's no entrance when your heart is for this world. So the disciples are looking around, like he can't get in, then who can get in? He's a good dude. He's a good guy. He's trying to keep the commandments. He's trying to be nice to you, and you're sending him away, if he can't get in then who can get in? And what does Jesus say? With man, this is impossible, but with God, all things are possible. What does that mean?

God can save anybody that gets to the end of themselves. But the only way in, is to realize I'm at the end of myself, I need something other than me, myself and I, I need something other than this world supporting my life. I need something other than building my house upon the sand and all the things that the world promises, I need something different. I need the rock, you must die. It always starts with death. One of the reasons we have a hard time sharing the gospel with people is we don't want to tell them that. We want to tell them, hey, if you trust Jesus, he's going to bless you. If you trust Jesus, he will give you life, if you trust Jesus, you go to heaven. True. But if you don't die, you can't have relationship with him. If you're not willing to turn your back on sin, death, and the devil and this world, you can't have relationship with him.

That's what Jesus says in Mark 8:35 and 36. He says this, for whoever wishes to save his life will lose it. But he loses his life for my sake, will find it. For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and yet forfeit his soul? What good is it for you if

you live the life? What good is it for you if you prospered in every way and at the end of your life whether you live 50 years, 100 years, 150 years, what difference does it make if you built your house on something other than Jesus, and spend eternity in hell apart from God, because you chose to rebel against the God of the universe, what does that profit you? I mean, these are the ways that Jesus was bringing people to himself, he was showing people he was exclusive. He's the only way and there's only one way to him and through him. And yet he was inclusive and then he said, whosoever will may come. You want to come, you can come. You recognize you're a sinner, you can come.

You recognize your loss, you can come. You recognize your life's not working, you can come. You recognize that you're dead, you can come. But it's only through the cross that you can come. Now think about this for a while. Anybody here today have any fears on going in their heart? Any worries? Any anxieties? Paul said I've been crucified with Christ. Think about those things you worry about, or fearful about, frustrated about, angry about, if you were dead would you care? I mean, seriously, if you were dead, would you care? And the answer is, obviously, no, I wouldn't care because I'd be dead. Here's what Paul says, I've have been crucified with Christ. It's a perfect tense verb, it means it's already happened. I was saved. I was crucified with him, I was buried therefore with him by baptism and to death. So that Christ was raised by the glory of the Father, we too, might walk in newness of life. I've been crucified with Christ, and it has ongoing ramifications.

So just because I would say that this day doesn't mean it stopped every day, I

am putting my life to death so that Christ can be exalted in and through me. That's what it means. Many of us don't experience Christ to the full because we don't start with death. I mean, the reality is, when we hear stories, or we see television programs that show people on death row where you hear their story, and you realize, yeah, they deserve to die for what they did. And we realize they're living in a prison or a cell. And it's just a matter of weeks or months until they're going to be executed. And it does something in your heart, like that'd be a horrible way to live your life, knowing that you're going to die. Friends, let me tell you, from the time you were born, you're on death row. You've been in your own prison of sin, you're in your own cage, and you will die, and you will face the Lord and apart from turning to him, you will spend eternity in hell, all of us.

That's why there has to be a realization by the Spirit of God, that that's your condition, and that you have a need for the glory of Christ. It always starts with death. It always starts with coming to the end of our selves. That's why Paul was able to endure all that he did. So he could be stoned and shipwrecked and beaten and starved and all these different things. And Paul, how do you do that? He's like, well, these light and momentary afflictions are nothing compared to the weight of glory that is to come. Well, then Paul, they are going to kill you. That's great, for me to live is Christ, to die is gain. I mean, what can you do to a dead man? I'm already dead. It means that God has ordained all of your days before one of them came to be, Psalm 139 tells us that you get a certain amount of days, and you get to live those quality of life, either for yourself or for Christ.

And if you're really living for Christ, and you're already dead, then every day that you get to live is just icing on the cake. So we as Christians should live as if we've already died, and that every day we have is a gift from the Lord to glorify Him and serve other people. That's why he gave us life. Amen. Paul says, I have been crucified with Christ. It starts with the death of me. And then let me give you the second point. Experiencing Christ to the full also works from the inside out. It works from the inside out, notice what he says, I've been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live but Christ lives in me. What's he saying? He's saying, for many of us, as Christians, we think that the Christian faith is an outward thing, that it starts outside. If you ask most people what a Christian is, they would tell you, people that try to be good people, or people who try to follow the Bible. People that don't drink, people that don't smoke, people that don't chew, people that are really critical of all these other people that aren't like them.

I mean, that's what Christians are. They'll talk about the outside. They go to a church service, they do these different things, that has nothing to do with Christianity. Christianity always starts on the inside and works its way out. Here's the beauty of the gospel. Hear me on this, because you may know this, and you may not know this, but even if you know this, ask yourself if you're practicing this. The beauty of the gospel is this. When you come to the end of yourself, and you begin to say, Lord, I need to turn from myself and turn to Christ. That's called repentance and faith. That's the foundation of the gospel. That's the bedrock to the gospel. When you do that, it's not just that God promises to take you to heaven someday. It's not just any promises favor and

blessing in your life. Here's what he promises, "When you trust me, I will personally come to live inside of you." I mean, listen to this.

Christianity is not outside in and what God's doing out there, and I'm praying to Him up here, Christ is in me. I mean, think about Colossians 1:27 and following. Paul writes about this. He talks about the mystery that has been hidden from the past ages and generations, but has now been manifested to his saints. Well, what is it Paul, verse 27, to whom God will to make known the riches of His glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you the hope of glory. Remember, when Jesus rose from the dead, and he told his disciples, he was going to be going away, he told him that even before he went on, was crucified. And then he ascended into heaven? Before he left, the disciples were saying, well, where are you going and how come you're not going to be here? And what did Jesus say, it is good for you that I'm going away. It's good for you, because if I go away, I will send you another, the counselor, the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete to be with you for how long? Forever.

Here's what he was saying, right now, as fully God and fully man in the flesh, I can coach you, I can train you, I can be here, but I go to heaven, I'm sending the third person to the Trinity, not a force, God Himself in your life, so that everywhere you go, there I am. When you pray, I'm in you. When you're seeking me, I'm in you. When you're looking for wisdom in a decision, I'm in you. I mean, if you thought about that for a moment, I mean, what Paul was saying is different than any other religion in the world, every other religion in the world is what must you do to get right with God? What must you do to keep good with God? What are the prayers you pray? What are

the things you do? There's no other faith in the world that promises that their spiritual leader is God, who will come to live on the inside of you. As a Christian, that's exactly what we're proclaiming, Amen.

So when you become a believer, the excitement is not I get to go to heaven someday. That's good. That's a benefit, that's favorable. I'm looking forward to it. The benefit is, God came from heaven to you and lives in you, and you are now his vessel that he wants to use. I've been crucified with Christ, no longer I who live, I'm dead, but Christ who lives within me, it's his life. That's why when we get to Philippians, you'll read in Philippians 2 about the humility of Jesus and all the way that he was, did not consider equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, took the form of a man into being found, and being found a man became a servant, became obedient to death even death on the cross. And you hear God saying, so live like that. Well, how do I do that? He tells us in Philippians 2 at the end of that section. Philippians 2:12, says, so then my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling.

Notice what he doesn't say, he doesn't say work for your salvation. He doesn't say now that you're a Christian, be really, really good. Now that you're a Christian, try harder. What does he say, now that you're a believer, this salvation which is in you, work it out, let Christ out. Let him be everything in and through you that he wants to be. You are now his vessel to do that. And he goes on in verse 13, and says it this way, for it is God who is at work in you both to willing to work for his good pleasure. Here's the beauty of the Christian faith. I love this. Christianity is not simply sharing the gospel.



So you get some may say, then they can go to heaven. That's great. That's like kindergarten. That's like point A, that's fantastic. But there's too many Christians that have trusted Christ. And then they say things like this, what now? Barney trusted Christ. Okay, I've already told all my friends about Christ, what do I do now?

You get to allow the living God of the universe on the inside of your life to do things in and through you that only he could ever do. It's awesome. God's not somewhere out there. God is in here. And because of who I am in Christ, that's my identity. That's how God sees me. So every way that he sees Jesus is how he sees me. Now listen close to this, and then we'll make application. So I'll tell you this on the authority of God's word as your pastor, I am holy. I am completely forgiven. I am adopted. I am beloved. I am God's cherished possession. God can't love me any more than he already does. God thinks highly of me, his thoughts for me out number the grains of sand, I am crowned with glory and honor. He will say well, Jeff, I know you. I caught your kids out there in the parking lot on the way in and you are not holy. Sometimes you do things that are no, no, that's what I did. That's not who I am.

See, what began to shift for me about four or five years into my Christian faith is I stopped trying to be what the Bible told me to be by trying to commit to it. How many here have ever tried to commit to something Jesus said, you can't do it? If you didn't raise your hand, you lied. You can't commit to being holy. You won't even make it to your car. You have to believe that you already are and then he begins to work out your new identity. I mean, the analogies we use sometimes come from second Corinthians

5:17 says, therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation behold old things have passed away, all things have been made new. When we thought through the Genesis series, the alpha series, that God created the world in six literal days and rested on the seventh, he made everything out of nothing, he created. When you become a believer from the inside out, that's exactly what he does in you. He takes your dead life with the emptiness of the Spirit, and he fills you with himself, the Holy Spirit.

He makes you alive, he creates you, you're fundamentally different than you were before. God does it from the inside out, not the outside in, it'd be interesting if God did it from the outside in. I mean, if you got saved and you look totally radically different, you were totally chiseled as a guy, you're beautiful as a girl, oh, you got saved, right? But then God that did, He works from the inside out. You look exactly the same on the outside. But what begins to happen is you start walking it out, and then people like what's going on, you're different now. I mean, the analogy I've always used is the difference between a cat and a pig. Right? I mean, they're fundamentally different animals, fundamentally different natures. If you went to a farm, you would see a pig in its sty, rolling around and slop, doing all sorts of things and oinking and that kind of stuff. For those of you who own cats, we'll pray for you at Brave Church.

My dad's a vet, he's here. Cats as a nature tend to take care of themselves, are very independent animals, they would like you to know how independent they are. They clean themselves, you can put a litter box there for a cat, it will take care of itself. You don't need to let them out for a walk. I mean, they're very independent animals, but they function differently. But if you can reach inside a cat, you can reach inside a pig,

and you could change their nature. So on the outside, they look the same, but inside they were fundamentally different, it'd be weird. You might go down to your farm and you would see a pig and it might be up on the sty like prancing along, or another pig over there licking itself. And then you go over to pet it. And it's like... Then you hear scream from the house and you run into the house and there's this cat, just lying around, going the bathroom everywhere, and just total mud. And what happened? Well, the nature's got switched.

When you become a Christian, the Holy Spirit comes inside of your nature gets switched. And if you try to go back and live the way you were before, you can't get there. Man. It's like the illustration of the caterpillar and the butterfly, when a caterpillar becomes a butterfly, it doesn't go back and live as a caterpillar, it can't function that way anymore. It has to live as a butterfly. It now has wings. If a butterfly tried to cover its wings and go hang out with all of its worm friends and try to pretend that it wasn't a butterfly and apologize for being able to fly and all these different things, the butterfly would be miserable. Yet many of us as Christians with Christ in us go backwards and we try to live our lives the way they were before apologizing to our non-Christian friends for why we're a little bit different, or trying to explain to them that nothing's really different about us, other than I'm going to have it and you're not. No, no.

Here's the reality. Everything's different about you now. And what God wants you to do is live out your identity in such a way that as you speak it and as you live it, God begins to come through you in such a way where you own it. And everything that's true about you, you begin to practice. Now let's make a practical application. Because we

as Christians, we still sin in our life. There's some of you that genuinely know and love the Lord Jesus Christ, but you have the sin pattern in your life. And for some of you guys is pornography. For some of you in this room, it's alcoholism. You wouldn't call it that, but you just drink every night until you get buzzed. It's called alcoholism. Some of you it's drugs, some of you it's illicit sexual relationships. Some of you it's the way in which you eat, some of your anorexic bales ago. I mean, we could list all these different sins.

But here's what we try to do as new creations in Christ instead of living out the new creations and no, no, that's who I used to be. But I'm not that anymore. What we try to do is because we recognize God loves us so much, we try to go back and fix all those things. I'm going to commit to not drinking anymore. I'm going to commit to eating different. I'm going to do all this and I'm going to cover up where I'm still struggling so no Christian ever sees me. It doesn't work. If you had anger problems before you got saved, you'll probably still have anger problems after you're saved until you let your new identity in Christ change you. There's a difference between trying to fix your sin. Let me just tell you, it'll save you a ton of time and you'll thank me for it. If you can fix your sin problem, Jesus Christ didn't need to die on the cross for you. I mean, do you know what I'm saying? He said, well, Jeff, we're supposed to live holy. Yeah, here's how you do it.

You begin to tell the Lord, Lord, that's who I was, when you saved me. But Lord, I want to love what you love. And I want to hate what you hate. And I do not have the ability in myself to change these sin patterns in my life. Lord, would you please change

me. And Lord, I'm going to be authentic, and I don't care who knows, because I'm going to go public with this thing, I have no secrets, because I already know who I am. So I'm not ashamed about what behaviors I do, I just want to see them live more consistent than what they were. And people that do that will begin to see change. I know five years into my walk with Christ, I began to see change. Instead of being the guy that tried to be a Christian that was failing miserably. I became the guy that said, I am a Christian, and I am different. And Lord, help me understand why I do that. Because I liked that sin. And I know you hate it.

So teach me to hate it like you do, and show me why you hate it and teach me to love your new me the way I'm supposed to. And every time I've let Christ change me, he's got a perfect track record. Jesus can change me in a way I can't even change myself. And just to save you time, because I've told you this from the pulpit before. You can't change anybody else either. You can't change yourself. Living your new identity means that you are a new creation, and that your life is now hidden with Christ in God. It's Christ in you. So the desire that Jesus has is not for you to fix all your problems. The desire that Christ has is for you to let him lead your life in an authentic way. The desire he has is to let you continue to grow. And just because I'm declared righteous and holy, and when I know today, if I died, God would present me according to Jude 24 and 25, that Jesus would present me faultless before the Father.

I know all that's true. But I know in my life, if I look in the mirror, it doesn't seem like it's caught up yet. And I'll spend the rest of my life wanting to model what Jesus

wants me to be. Here's one of the reasons why many Christians don't experience the fullness of Christ. They spend all their time being shamed for the past, and then try to fix it. And they know they're saved. But they spend their whole life saying, I've tried that, I've tried to get involved. It doesn't change. I'm still angry, I still have outbursts of anger, I still have this like. Well, of course you do. Until you start saying, that's not who I am. That's who I was. That's what I was when I was a caterpillar now I'm a butterfly, and butterflies don't act like that anymore. I don't know why I was acting like that, Lord, thank you for your forgiveness, and that teach me how to fly.

That's what it means to walk with Christ. And that's encouraging. Because it's no longer me who's trying to do the work. It's me being humble enough to let Christ do the work in and through me. And it's a different lifestyle when you live the Christian life. And it's all about Jesus coming through you rather than what you're going to do for him. That's what God wants. And this is where you get in Romans 12: 1 and 2 about being a living sacrifice. What's a living sacrifice mean? That's a double entendre. I mean, you can't be alive and sacrifice at the same time. Sacrifices are dead. People and plants and animals that are alive, they're alive, you can't be both at the same time, but you can as a Christian, because a living sacrifice is someone who has died to themselves and the things of the world, but the risen Christ has come to live inside of them through the Holy Spirit, they are a living sacrifice.

It means this daily, I'm choosing to die so that Christ can be exalted in my life. That is a whole different way of living your Christian life. And even people that nod their heads and say I get it for many of those that nod their heads and say they get it don't

live that way. They still live in shame, and guilt, and fear and doubt, and they're trying to work out all their problems, which I'll just save you time you'll never change. You'll ever change. But I'll tell you this, the God of the universe, the Lord Jesus Christ, he can change everything about you. Everything about you, if you let him. Because for some Christians, they get so frustrated, what they begin to say is I guess this is the way I'm always going to be. Guess this is who I am. No, no, that's who you were. Don't let the devil lie to you. And here's how you know that you don't or do believe this.

Every time we sin and even as Christians, when we sin, we feel conviction from the Holy Spirit. That's a good thing. That shows that you're in the faith. If you can sin grievously, like I don't even bother me anymore. That's not a good thing. That just shows that you're not saved. Because if you're saved and you sin, the Holy Spirit will show you conviction. But here's what happens when the Holy Spirit shows you conviction. We also have an enemy that lies to us and here's what he says, man, you're a loser. God's mad at you. God's ashamed about you, God's disappointed in you. God doesn't want to be around you, hey, you better fix yourself up before you go to church again, you better get right with God before you go pray to him. You better do this, you better do this.

If you don't realize who you are, you're going to believe the lie rather than believing the spirit. Because if you believe the lie, you'll start running back to your old ways trying to fix things up so you look good for other people. But if you know your identity, here's what you'll say, Lord, you got me. Lord, thanks for loving me enough to convict me of my sin. Lord, thanks for your forgiveness for that. Lord, continue to do

work in my heart so I can live for You. Lord, I'm not buying the lie. I already know I'm completely forgiven. Past, present and future. I know I'm your son. I know I'm your daughter. I know you couldn't love me anymore. Thank you for your forgiveness. Help me walk out this new day. Thanks for being there for me and love me anyway. That's identity. And some of you have louder voices in your head than others. I mean, I got three kids. Two of my kids, they took the same math test and failed it.

One of my kids would say Dad, that was the dumbest test ever. Nobody should have to take that. And my other child would say, Dad, I'm the dumbest person ever, I feel horrible about that. Here's what I want you to do, when you sin, admit it, confess it. But also do it with your new identity. That's not who I am anymore. My sin doesn't define me anymore. Christ in me defines who I am. And because Christ is in me, I am holy, I am righteous, I am good. I am beloved, that's who I am. If you will start declaring those truths about you, because you've died to sin and resurrected with Christ, God will work out in and through you what he wants, and you'll experience Him in new ways. He'll take you to different places. That's what it's about. So it starts with death. It works from the inside out. Let me tell you this, it requires ongoing faith. It requires ongoing faith.

If you're going to consistently grow in this, it requires ongoing faith. Notice what he says, I've been crucified with Christ. It's no longer I who live but Christ lives in me. And notice what he says about this life he has now. And the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by what? Faith in the Son of God, I live by faith. I live by faith. It's important that we know that we have to continue to take steps of faith. I've said it from this pulpit



many times, the hardest step of faith that you will ever take is the next one. Because we as Christians think faith is a noun rather than thinking of it as a verb. So we'll say like, Joe has faith or Sally has faith. That's not how the Bible talks about faith often. Oftentimes, the Bible uses that as a verb like Joe is faithing. Sally is faithing.

Oftentimes, when people come to Christ, we haven't read the book of John, the reason we haven't read the book of John is because it's a book that uses the word believe about 97 times every single time as a verb. That's why personally, I call it the Porky Pig gospel, because we read John it's like believe, believe, believe, believe, believe. That's all folks. I mean, that's it. Right? Because what God wants us to know is, before you became a Christian, the hardest part of being a Christian was trusting Christ with your life. If I trust him, how's he going to take care of me financial, if I trust him, how's he going to help my marriage? If I trust him, how is he going to lead my career, if I trust him, how, how, how? It's hard to step into that. But just because you're there, God doesn't want you to stop, you continue to take steps. It's called a walk with Christ. And the Bible says in Hebrews 11, that without faith, it is impossible to please God.

Meaning just because you've trusted him doesn't mean you're pleasing to him and experiencing him, unless you're taking steps of faith. God wants all of us to be taking steps of faith. Here's what faith means. Faith means is on the authority of God's word and what I'm hearing in prayer, I am stepping out and doing this and trusting that Jesus Christ is coming through for me. That's how I'm living. Where in your life, are you

trusting God for that? Because what I find is if we're not seeking the Lord, we will build constructs around our life. So we'll do religious activity. And we'll say we're trusting God. But the reality is, if God doesn't show up, we are still going to be just fine. Trusting God with my finances, but I can't be that generous, because if I was that generous, I'd actually have to trust God. But I can do this in a way that even if he doesn't show up this month, I'll be okay.

Steps of faith require trust in God, where you radically trust in God in your life for faith. See, it's Christ in you that's trying to build something, here's the lie that we believe, the lie that we believe is, that real spiritual, Christian life, that's for other people. I mean, that's just not me. I'm at home with my kids, I work a job, building houses, I do other things. That's not what I do. God can use you to the full and let you experience Him, if you will continue to take steps of faith. When you believe that Christ occupied you, it's awesome. It's awesome. Because it means that all of the power and glory and majesty of Jesus Christ dwells in you through His Holy Spirit. I mean, that's miraculous.

That's amazing, that's beyond anything that we could have. Now we could see this. Imagine if that happened with people that have gone before us. If there was somebody that you looked up to in history, and their spirit could come live inside of you so that you could think like them and act like them and have all the power that they had, maybe some political leader, or maybe some brilliant chemist, or maybe some professional athlete, and then everything that they were able to do in their life could be deposited into your life. So while you still had your same frame, and everything that

you have, that the spirit of that person could come live inside of you. And so all the access to power and wisdom and strength and knowledge that they had, could come through you. I mean, growing up as an athlete, I'd love to see that. And wouldn't be cool if as a kid, you could have the spirit of one of the Hall of Fame professional athletes come to dwell you?

And so as a 13-year-old, people would look at you like how in the world are you doing that? And you say, well, it's not me. But it's the spirit of this Hall of Fame athlete living inside of me, and they're doing everything. And the more I surrender, the more my body just does stuff. It's awesome. That's what Jesus wants to do with you. And we're not talking about some person, we're talking to the Spirit of God. Remember, the living God of the universe wants to empower you for great things. That's why when Jesus went to heaven, He says, Good for you, I'm going away, because if I dwell with you, now I can send you, and now I believe that I can use you everywhere you want to go, and God gets great glory when his people humble themselves, and allow him to come through them, so that the world sees Jesus in a fresh way through you.

And it brings glory to the Father in heaven, that you bear much fruit. And as you heard from this pulpit last week, in John 15, because apart from Jesus, you can do how much? Nothing, nothing of substance. Now you can do some things where the world will look at you and say, you're pretty smart, you're pretty good. But in terms of fruitfulness for the Lord, that's just not true. See, it requires ongoing faith. I remember when I was entering the ministry. I'm like, I'm not a pastor. I'm not a preacher. I know what those guys are like, I'm nothing like guys like that. Don't call me. I remember

telling God to call my friend because he was a better speaker than I was. And he's way better. We spoke at an event one time at FCA thing. He was awesome, and I was terrible. And I told Lord, you need to call that guy, just make me rich, I'll fund him.

Right?

We can make all sorts of excuses, but God oftentimes prompts us in our gut, to say, take a step of faith, help out over there. And we're always waiting for the big thing even though we don't want the big thing. We want to move and change our jobs and do all that. But we're praying until that happens. What I find most oftentimes, it's a whisper from the Lord through His Word that just says, hey, get involved over here. Be a little more generous with your finances. Hey, be a little less critical with that. Hey, be encouraging to that person in your small group. Hey, join a small group. Hey, help out with kids. Hey, help out with students. Hey, get involved. Start praying more, I want to use you. And when we hear that, we're like, yeah, that's probably a good idea. But I'm kind of busy right now. I don't know. And then we don't experience the fullness of Christ. And God wants us to take steps of faith, which requires... Everything in the Christian life requires faith.

Every decision that I'm going to make requires faith. Where I'm going to live, who I'm going to marry, how we're going to raise our children, how I'm going to steward my resources? How I'm going to lead, what I'm going to say in any given situation requires faith. And what we like to do is we like to get programmatic and ask questions about what does God say specifically about this? Because I want to know exactly what to do. When really, we really don't want to know exactly what to do. We just want to have

somebody tell us what to do so we can decide whether we agree or don't agree with it. Because it takes the pressure off of us seeking the face of the Lord. God wants us to seek Him for everything. Did you know that? That's why in a Christian circle, the number one thing God wants is to be glorified in unity amongst people. Did you know that? The reason we gather at Brave Church is not something to talk about every social issue. The reason we gather at Brave Church is so we can bring glory to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Even if we have convictions on the opposite side of the aisle for many different things, it doesn't matter. We have to see Christ and say, Christ, what are you doing in me? And how are you developing convictions in me? And what does it look like for me? And I've got to be firm on those convictions no matter what. I mean, from this pulpit, we've talked about several things. In this congregation, we have people that are very convicted on both sides of these things right here. Drinking alcohol, tattoos, rated our movies, celebrating Halloween, owning guns, participating in a war, political affiliation, eating certain foods, list goes on, and on and on. Where do you send your kids to school? And I would encourage you as a believer in Jesus Christ, to seek the Lord and develop your convictions for what you believe. And then live them and speak them. But don't make your convictions, everybody else's convictions. If it doesn't center in the person and work of Jesus dying on the cross and rising from the dead, don't spend your time on that.

Develop your conviction, live your conviction and love people that have different

convictions than you. I'm never going to stand up here and tell you what you need to believe about alcohol or watching sports or doing that, here's what I'm going to tell you to do, you seek the Lord, and you decide what he wants you to do, and then glorify him the best way because guess what? You don't answer to me, you answer to him. That's why it's important that Christ is in us and that we seek Him. Wondering if Christian liberty that I think we need to address is vaccinations and mask wearing in the Christian community because I see this as totally polarizing, and I almost feel like everybody's wanting me to tell them, what do you believe and what are we doing, just so that we can empty the church and divide it and I'm not doing that. I'm not doing that.

I'm not a medical doctor, I'm not giving you medical advice. I'm not. Because in our church, we have some people and we have two different sides of people that are very convicted on both sides and I have convictions about these things for what I want to do. And I've sought the Lord for what I want to do and what I believe Christ has called me to do, but we have people in our church that have prayed and sought the Lord that have done research and are very concerned, and they're concerned because they would say, I'm compromising my health. And that's concerning to me. My family is compromised. It's concerning to me that we have people in our family that are compromised. When it comes to vaccines, I feel it masquerading is important. For my job, I feel that wearing a mask is important for me.

And they would say in seeking the Lord, I personally believe it's the right thing for me to do. And when I prayed, I've since the Lord leading me in that direction. Can you be a Christian and hold those convictions? You can. 100%. And if that's you, welcome

to Brave, we love you. And make your decision based upon the Lord Jesus Christ. Now we have other people in the congregation that would say something differently. They would say I prayed, and I've done my research and I'm concerned too. Here's why I'm concerned because I've had COVID-19 and I already have the antibodies and I don't think I need to take a vaccine. I'm also concerned because some research has reported that all US COVID vaccines where they're tested on are developed from cell lines derived from aborted babies and that troubles me. Most are concerned because several medical doctors, including leading neurologists, and epidemiologists, and journals have demonstrated that mask wearing and the vaccine is not effective.

As a matter of fact, I think it's more of an experimental drug, which has not been approved by the FDA. When I read the CDC guidelines, they change every single day. And I really don't believe they know what they're talking about. Some people know... Don't clap, don't clap. Some people say, women have a right to choose to abort their baby, but they don't have the right to choose not to be injected. Some would say because this is an aerosol, there's no way to stop the spread any more than the flu shot will stop the flu. And so when I've prayed to the Lord, I've sensed him leading me not to be vaccinated, and to not wear a mask because by faith I can't do that. And if that's you in this church, welcome to Brave Church, we support you, too. But we will not divide the church over where you land on this issue.

I hang out with people that have very different convictions than mine. I hang out with people that have different political convictions. I have homosexual friends that they know that I think that their behavior is wrong, but I love them as people. I have a lot of

people that are different thinking than me. I'm not going to try and change your conviction, I'm trying to lead you to Christ. And I'm not trying to change... I'm not going to stand up here and talk about social issues and critical race theory and Black Lives Matter and all these different things all day long, because we have way more important things to discuss, which is the glory of Jesus Christ. Totally okay for you to hold your personal convictions, it's totally okay for you to share those personal convictions to the extent that other people want to hear them. Okay? I'm a pastor, I'm not a policeman, I'm not going to police you, I'm not a medical doctor, I'm not going to make you.

But here's what I do say, I think it's really important that people would have their Christian liberties be allowed to be their Christian liberties. Hold on. Which means if people were telling you, you couldn't take a vaccine that you needed to take for your health, we would stand with you. And we would say that's wrong, you should be able to take it, you should have the liberty to take it. I also feel the same way for those who say I shouldn't have to take this. And I feel infringed upon in my civil liberties, and especially my Christian liberties, to not take that and we stand with you, too. So for those that fall into that category, you'll see on our website, we've written a letter, we will help you. We're not offering legal advice, or legal counsel, or legal help, but you are welcome to receive a letter from us from our church saying, hey, we stand with you to not get the vaccine. Why? Because we want your Christian liberty in Christ to be able to be put on full display for whatever God leads you to do. Does that make sense?

Yes.



Okay. So when you come to Brave Church, wherever you stand, stand there, stand firm. Do what the Lord's called you to do, we will continue to gather and meet to the glory of Jesus Christ. Now if we're going to require ongoing faith and believe that God's telling us to take steps of faith, and we got to act in accordance to what the Spirit of God is showing us, let me give you the final point here. If we're really going to experience Christ to the full, we got to champion the gospel. We got to champion the gospel. He says, I've been crucified with Christ, it's no longer I who live but Christ lives in me, the life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who what? Who loved me, and gave himself for me. Who did Christ die for? Everybody.

He died for the world. He created all things. He created all people, he created everything visible and invisible. He loves his whole creation. He loves the world, which means this, we're called to love the world too, even people that think differently than us. Even people that are hateful towards us. What does God tell us to do? Love them, and pray for those who persecute you. Just so you know, we're living in a post Christian era. Did you know that? Did you know that?

Yeah. Yeah.

Okay. So the majority of you didn't know that. I'm here to tell you that we're living in a post Christian era. I mean, when you look at the institutions that we have with our schools, or government or whatever, there are exceptions to this, but as a whole, they are not open to the word of God, the authority of God. Christians celebrating Christ, that's just not the world we live in anymore. And sometimes we could be troubled by

that. But since we're already dead, we don't worry about that. And the reality is, is because we live in that kind of a world, the darker it gets, the brighter the gospel shines. We have an incredible opportunity in this generation to show the love of Christ to people that don't like us. And that's what we're called to do. And show the love of Christ to people that think a lot different than us.

And by faith to exercise that right, even when people don't treat us fairly, because you know what, all we got to do is go back to our Lord and Savior and ask him, Jesus, were there ever people in your generation that didn't treat you, right or weren't for you? What are we going to say, yeah, I understand. And if they persecuted me, they'll persecute you. But if they listen to me, they'll listen to you, means there's people out there who still need to hear the love and hope found in Christ, that God loves them. Not only does he love them, he loved them so much he gave himself up for them. Means every person that would disagree with you that you'd have this heart to say, I'm going to see that they rot in hell and all this. No, no, they don't like us, and they hate us. But I want to tell them that Christ loved them so much, he actually died for them.

My Savior, the one I say that I love, died for them. That's how much he loved them. So my goal is to share the narrow road and the narrow gate to people that don't love Christ, and to champion the gospel. And the gospel is simple, it says I don't deserve God, but God made away for me. That I was unloving to Christ. But God was loving to me. That's the foundation of growing in Christ. And when you can begin to not only know that, but you begin to live it by hanging out with people that don't believe it,

and you start showing them love tangibly, even when they're not nice to you back. And instead of pulling away and saying, I'm done with those people, you still engage with them, and you still love them, and you still care for them. And you still smile at them all the time while you hold this line, and you don't change the word of God. You never change the word of God. You don't let government or school or political leader or secular culture tell you what the Word of God is.

I mean, remember Daniel and his friends, they got hauled off from Judah into Babylon. And they tried to get secularized in the Babylonian culture, they tried to get them to eat a certain way and do different things. But those guys drew a line in the sand. They said, we're not going to do that. We're going to continue to honor our God. And when Daniel heard the news that he couldn't pray anymore to his God. You know what he did? He left the window open and got down on his knees and prayed. Now, why did he do that? Because he could have walked around and be like, Lord, I'm praying to you but I don't want anybody to know and Lord just keep doing a good thing in Babylon. No, no, I've always prayed with my curtain open and I've always knelt down and I'm not going to bow to the cultures, I'm getting down on my knees so they can see that I'm for the Lord Jesus Christ.

What did Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego say, and if you don't worship the king we'll throw you in the furnace, oh king, whatever you want, we get it, I mean you can kill us, that's fine. But even if you do, we know our God's able to save and even if he doesn't, we'll be with Him forever. So that's cool. What did Paul say, he's like momentary afflictions are nothing worth compared to the weight of glory that's coming.

Well, then we're going to kill you, he's like oh, cool for me to live is Christ, to die is gain. Don't change biblical convictions to appease the culture, but never stop loving the culture that hates our God. That's how you grow in Christ. And so when we gather, we talked about experiencing Christ the full, we talked about dying to ourselves, we talked about working from the inside out and continuing to exercise faith and being a champion of the gospel. The reason that we do what we do, is because we believe that the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ is what's essential.

The reason we gather and where we can all be in common is that we believe that we were dead in our sins, but that Jesus Christ through his shed blood, and his body broken on Calvary, and his resurrection for that is what gives us life. And that's where we bank our truth. So the way I want to end our services today is by taking communion and I'll pray for you here. And then at the end of this service, I'll come back up here Inglewood, Pastor Justin will come back up in Broomfield and we'll take the elements together. But as you hold these in your hand, and as you hear this song sung, what I want you to consider is all that Christ has done in your life, and all the sin that Christ has forgiven, and all the things that Jesus wants you to know that he's done. So would you bow with me in prayers we pray together? Lord Jesus, we give you all the glory and all the honor and all the praise for who you are.

If you're here today, and you've never trusted Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior, you can begin to pray like this, Lord, I believe I'm a sinner. But I'm tired of my life, I want you. Right now I want to turn from my life and turn it to you. I believe you died on the cross for my sins. I believe you rose from the dead. Come into my life

and be the Lord overall. And Lord, for those of us who know you, may you teach us, this life is still not about us. It's about you living your life out in and through us. And Lord, for all you're going to do, and for all that you are, we give you all the praise in Jesus name. Amen.