



Message **Transcript**

Fight for the Kingdom

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Pastor Jeff:

Our Father in heaven, we give you glory, honor and praise for who you are. And Lord, we are so thrilled about all that you're doing in and through your body here and around the world. And Lord, we pray today that as your word is proclaimed, that you would speak directly to us. Because Lord, we believe that every time your word is faithfully and accurately proclaimed that you speak and you will speak to any heart at any time. And so our prayer this morning, Lord, is speak for we are ready to listen. And so now for all those who have gathered who desire to hear Jesus speak directly to you, who will believe what he says and who will by faith put into practice what he tells you? Will you agree with me very loudly this morning by saying the word Amen? Amen. We've been doing this series called Waging War against Our Enemy, and we spent the first four weeks talking how to prepare for this battle and what all of that looks like.

And then last week we began to talk about what it is we're going to fight for. And last week we talked about why we should fight for the church, how the church is the primary vehicle for what Jesus uses to gather his saints, to equip them, to send them on mission. Jesus said, I will build my church and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. The church is Jesus Christ's idea. The church is not a building, the church is not a place. The church is God's people who have gathered to put the Lord Jesus Christ on display to ask to hear him and then to be sent out into what we call the mission field, sent out into our culture. And so today we want to talk about what do we fight about next? Because what I believe is that even if church is doing a good job and

churches are doing what they're supposed to, it doesn't always translate into what the purpose of the church is.

Because the purpose of the church is not just to gather the saints. The purpose of the church is to build up the saints because we're an army that's supposed to go out and transform the culture for Jesus Christ. That the very things that are happening here when we pray, let your kingdom come, let your will be done on the earth as it is in heaven. God is wanting and desiring to use us to go out into the culture so that what is being done in heaven is also done in the earth. So today we want to talk about why we should fight for the kingdom. And the kingdom by definition is God's visible manifestation for all of his comprehensive rule on this planet. It's where we see a visible demonstration of how God is at work through all of his people. So when people see God's people, they have a visible demonstration or a manifestation of Jesus Christ into how each and every area of life is supposed to work.

So it's one thing to come to Christ and be a Christian. It's another thing if you're a married man, what does it look like to be a godly husband? Or if you're a married woman, what does it look like to be a godly wife? Or if you're a single woman or a single guy, what does it look like to be a godly single? Or if you're a kid, what does it look like to be a godly child? Or if you're an employer or an employee, how do I live out the very values that God teaches me in his church when I'm out there so that I'm living out the values in front of people and I'm telling people this is where I get my values. I get my values from Jesus. Because if the church doesn't live on mission, then

the culture is never transformed and culture is what we celebrate and what we tolerate.

And here's the thing, when it comes to our culture, you have to understand. It is so clear that people are either dead and apart from Christ or they're alive and they're in Christ and there is no in-between. And a majority of the culture is made up of those who are dead and apart from Christ. And so what they celebrate and what they tolerate is different than what born again believers celebrate and tolerate. And so if we as a minority are going to impose our values on a culture that's hostile to them, wouldn't you like to know how to fight for the kingdom? Wouldn't you like to know how to do that? Because what I find is for as many opinions as there are on the church, there's just as many opinions as to how we should get that work done. So I think it's important that we look in God's word and let him tell us how he wants us to get the work done that he desires.

And to do that today we're going to be in the book of 2nd Corinthians. 2nd Corinthians chapter five. We're going to be in verses 16 to 20. It's one of my favorite passages in the New Testament. I know I've preached this here before, but I think it fits everything that we're talking about, probably better than any other passage that I could have picked for today. And as we read this, then we're going to clarify five areas that God wants us to understand if we are going to fight for his kingdom. If we are really going to pray the prayer, let your kingdom come, let your will be done on earth as it is in heaven, what specifically am I praying for and what does God expect of me? So hear the word of the Lord from 2nd Corinthians chapter five starting in verse 16. He

says, therefore, from now on we recognize no one according to the flesh, even though we have known Christ according to flesh, yet now we know him in this way no longer.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature. The old things passed away. Behold new things have come. Now all these things are from God who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and he has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ as though God were making an appeal through us. We beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. He made him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf so that we might become the righteousness of God in him. And Paul is writing to the Corinthians and he's writing to defend his apostleship and he's writing to correct things that were going on in the church so that they would be aligned.

But really nestled here what he's going to show them is here's how you fight for the kingdom. Here's how you live the values that Christ wants. And he clarifies these five areas. And I want to clarify all five for you this morning. And if we're going to advance Christ's kingdom, if we're going to be people that live out the kingdom in front of others and tell others where we get our values, it starts with a proper understanding first of your view of the world. Your view of the world. Everybody has a view of the world. It's called a worldview, right? We have to understand who created this place? Why am I here? What's the problem in the world? Where's all this stuff going? How you answer those questions determine your worldview.

A biblical worldview would be God created all of this place in six literal days. He created all of us. He wanted us to respond to him. We're here because he's chosen the time and space exactly for us to live and he sustains our life. The problem is that we're sinners and we're separated from Christ. So we need to repent and believe in Jesus. And this is all heading towards culmination when Jesus Christ is going to come back and judge both the living and the dead and set up and rule his kingdom. That's a biblical worldview. But we have to understand our view of the world matters. How we see the world matters. And notice what the apostle writes to the church as he's telling them, here's how you should see the world. He says, therefore, from now on we recognize no one according to the flesh. We don't recognize anyone according to their worldview. We don't recognize anyone according to their status. We don't recognize anyone according to their political party that they affiliate with.

We don't recognize anybody by how they define their gender. We don't recognize anybody by what they say they believe. We don't recognize anybody by the amount of money they make, the status they have, the groups that they run in. We don't group people that way anymore. He says, we even used to group Christ this way. When we knew him first all we knew him as was a religious teacher and a good man. We know him that way no longer, we know that he is God in flesh. We know he's the resurrected glorious Christ. And because of that we know he created the whole world. And so here's how we see the world. And you need to see the world this way too. You need to see every single person that you run in and every single group of people as either apart from Christ and in desperate need of him or in Christ and in desperate need to

grow in him.

Those are the only two groups on our entire planet. There are no other groups. And one of the reasons we have a hard time fighting for the kingdom is we in our sinful nature have a way of trying to group people by categories according to what we see by our eyes, and oftentimes we're wrong. Let me say it another way. Most of the time we're wrong. When you group all people and you say things like all Baptists are, all Catholics are, all white people are, all black people are, all Republicans are, all Democrats are, you're going to make an error no matter what you say next. We can't group people according to the flesh. We need to look on people as individuals. Why? Because every single person was created by God and every single person matters to God. So when you come into contact with somebody, here's your worldview.

I'm meeting them and I know they're either in need of the grace of Christ for salvation or they're in need of the grace of Christ for growth and I'm bringing both. That's what you think. That's how you view the world. And here's what happens. We can develop prejudice over time. And I'm not just talking about skin color. We can develop prejudice based on political parties. We can develop prejudice based upon certain groups of people that think opposite of what we think and then we think, well that whole group and that group of people there, and we start launching these verbal assaults towards groups, but there's individuals in that group that are in need of Jesus that don't hear that they're in need of Jesus because all they hear is our verbiage as to how much we hate them. Paul says, we don't view people that way anymore.

Every single person we come into contact with, we view the way Christ views. They're either in need of his grace for salvation or they're in need of his grace for growth. See, the Bible says in Ephesians two, eight and nine, for it is by grace you have been saved through faith. It's not your own doing. It's a gift of God. So no one should boast. It's a gift. God wants to give all people that gift. Or Titus 2:11, it's the grace of God that teaches us to say no to unrighteousness and worldly things and live self-controlled upright lives. So as believers, we need the same grace to grow us and that's how we have to see the world. And if you don't start there, you'll miss advancing the kingdom because you'll start with your prejudice or you'll start with your opinions or you'll start with your false ideas and you'll lob verbal assaults or grenades against groups of people and they won't be able to hear your love of God for them in the conversation.

Amen? It means everywhere you go, no matter where you go, you can be at a sporting event, you can be at a grocery store, you can be in a shopping center, you can be at a restaurant, you can be in the church, outside the church. Every single person you meet is in need of Jesus for salvation or growth. Everyone. Why? Because Jesus Christ is Lord over all. He's telling us change your worldview, change your view of the world. It means every single person that you meet, it means this. They're needy. Every single person you meet is in need. I'm in need and you're in need. Every single person you meet is in need. And sometimes people can be so hostile that you'll miss the fact the reason they're being hostile is because they're in such desperate need. And when you respond to their hostility or their violence or their with violence and vitriol,

you miss out on the kingdom.

The kingdom is understanding Christ died for them and they're in need of salvation or they're in need of growth and everybody you see has that deep need in their heart and God's put you right in their sphere of influence so that you can do that. Oh, by the way, let me just tell you this. Every one of you has a different sphere of influence. I don't have influence with the people that you have. You have influence with people I'll never have, and the people you have influence with I won't have influence with and vice versa. So God brings people into our lives so that we can live this out before them. Amen? So when you start thinking about the world, it's easy the longer that you walk with Christ and the more you see the cultural values that don't reflect the kingdom to get angry, to get mad, to get upset, and then start launching out against groups of people rather than remembering that every single person in that group's in need of Christ for salvation or growth. Don't ever forget that.

Don't ever forget that. Your view of the world matters. Second is this. Not only does your view of the world matter, your identity in Christ matters, your identity in Christ matters. The next verse, probably one of the most shared verses in the New Testament, certainly one of my favorites. It says, therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature. The old things passed away. Behold new things have come. I've memorized this in so many different versions. I don't know which version I share when I share it. If anyone is in Christ, he's a new creation. When a person is transferred from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's beloved son, when they exit the kingdom of Satan's power into the beloved arms of Jesus, everything fundamentally

changes. The Bible says you're a new creature. In the same way that a caterpillar becomes a butterfly, it's fundamentally altered.

Now the reality is, physically we look exactly the same. I mean, wouldn't it be cool if when you got saved, everything outside changed? It's like as a guy, you go home at night and you look like Thor for your wife? She'd be like, baby, what happened? I got saved. Aren't you excited? Right? I mean nothing happens on the outside, but fundamentally, more transformation like that happens on the inside than what we realize because the Holy Spirit comes and makes a deposit in our life and he owns us forever. And Jesus Christ comes to live his life through us and we're new fundamentally from the inside out and we belong to Jesus in a way that we've never belonged to him before. Everything about us is fundamentally changed. That's why when Jesus talked to people, I mean Jesus, think about this. When Jesus entered the world, he's the only living being.

The Bible says, we've all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God and sin is what leads to death and that we're all dead in our transgressions and sins. So spiritually, Jesus Christ as a God-man is the only one who's spiritually alive during his ministry. And yet how did he view the world? As people in need of him? So even people that were hostile towards him, what did he do? He loved them. He spent time with them, but he was truthful with them too because when people didn't respond, he said, you're right. Your father the devil. Why would he say that? Because you're still in the realm of darkness with your father, Satan, the enemy of our soul. That's your dad. That's why you see the world the way you see it.

Apart from Christ, you cannot see a biblical worldview. Apart from Christ, you can't understand what the world is supposed to look like. It's impossible. And the reason we know that is before we were saved, we all had our ideas of what the world should look like too. We all had our own opinions about what the world was supposed to look like too. As a believer in Christ, if we're open to the word, our worldview begins to change because Jesus has a lot to say about what the world is and how we're to live in the world. We can't expect people who are unsaved to create a godly culture. It can't happen. They can't do it. Ungodly people cannot create a righteous culture. Only the church filled with born again saints can advance a culture of righteousness. So if you're waiting for others in the world to change things, you can wait until Jesus gets back and they're never going to change.

The only people that can change the world are those who are born again and bought by the blood of Jesus. That's why the church is imperative that we're here being taught and we're a team together so that when we go out in the world, we know how to fight for what's real. And here's what the Bible says. You're a new creation. Old things have passed away. Behold all things have been made new. You're fundamentally different in every single possible way. You're not the same as you used to be and you need to own your identity, at brave, B-R-A-V-E. We use the letter R to be resolute in your identity. I'm preaching to your identity. I'm not preaching to your behavior. I'm not telling you change all your bad behavior and become good. I'm not saying you used to be bad and now you're better.

I don't care about your behavior, I care about your identity. Because I know if you get your identity right, all your behavior will catch up and follow. I'm telling you who you are in Christ. You've been given a new name. Even in my Bible, and I believe we have this out at our resource center, and the fact I'm telling you that means they're going to run out this week, but we have a card. It's called Who Am I? I have it in my Bible, listed probably 50 different Bible verses. I'll pull this out from time to time just to read and remind myself what I already know, that I'm a child of God and I'm Christ's friend and I'm part of Christ's body and I'm a saint and I'm a holy person and I'm God's masterpiece and his handiwork and I'm a born again in Christ and the evil one, the devil can't touch me, et cetera, et cetera.

When I live that way as to who God says I am, rather than what I see in the mirror, everything about me begins to change. And for too many of us, because the devil's constantly lying, when he loses you from his kingdom and to Christ's kingdom, he lies to you in Christ's kingdom and says, you haven't changed that much. You're the same loser you used to be. And yeah, you go to church, but if everybody knew who you were, they wouldn't really like you because you say this, but you act like that. Anybody ever heard that lie? 100% of you have heard that lie that are born again. That's why we need to go back to our identity and say, no, that's not who I am. That's who I was. And I'm forgiven. I'm completely forgiven. And God can't love me any more than he already does. And I'm a saint and I'm holy and I'm totally forgiven and I can't screw this thing up because I'm not the one that gave it to me. Jesus did. That's my identity. Amen?

And one of the reasons we have a hard time advancing the kingdom is we really don't believe who God says we are. And here's a little free tip. If you go out and tell people how miserable, lonely, lousy, awful, and all these things that you are, and then ask people, would you like to become a Christian too? You're probably not going to have great results with that, right? It's when you go out and people are like, yeah, I know you. I knew what used to be. And you're like, you're right. That's what I was. But I'm not that anymore. And even in the areas God's working on me, I was dead and now I'm alive, I was lost and now I'm found. God's made me part of his family. You can be part of it too. That's a different type of gospel share. When we go out in advance of kingdom, we're not telling people change all your ways and become like me.

We're saying there's a better way. You're in need. I know you're in need because I was in need too. And Jesus is who you are looking for. Amen? That's living out your identity. Your view of the world matters. Your identity in Christ matters. Let me give you a third. Your position in the family matters. Your position in the family matters. Notice what he says in verse 18. Where do we get all this stuff, this new identity, this new name, this new view of the world? He says it clearly to us. Now, all these things are from God. Who's the one that gives us all good things. God. Who's the one that saved us? God. Who's the one that deposited His Holy Spirit? God. Who's the one that promises to be with us forever? God. Who's the one that's changing us from the inside out? God. All these things are from God.

They're not from you. You can't hand out the gospel. You can proclaim the

gospel, you can live the gospel, but you can't make somebody a Christian. All that is from God. He does all the work. Now, all these things are from God who did what, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely that God was in Christ. Now, this tells you about the Lordship of Jesus. Jesus didn't become God. Jesus is God. In case you want to become God, here's one thing you need to put on your resume. That you've always existed and that you're self-sufficient. Okay? That would be like the first plank of that resume, right? That's what you need. Jesus has always existed. He is always been self-sufficient. Second person in the Trinity always existed. Nearly 2000 years ago, he put on flesh and came and lived among us. But God was in Christ because Jesus is God reconciling the world to himself, not counting their sins or trespasses against them.

And he has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Now, reconciled. Reconciled, reconciliation. What's that? Reconciled means this. It's the restoration of a relationship to a harmonious state after a dispute. So reconciliation is coming back after a dispute to a harmonious state. It's more than saying, I forgive you. It's being we're good, right? That's what it means. God made a way for our relationship with him to be good, and here's why it's grace. Here's why it's different than any other relationship. If you've lived for a while, you have relationships. Inevitably in those relationships, they get strained. If you're married, your marriage relationship from time to time will get strained. If you have kids, your relationship with kids from time to time will get strained. This is a great place for amen. Just let me, I'm not preaching to myself, am I? Okay. They get strained.

Well, even when you're the one that causes it, which I'll give you, in my marriage, I've caused some problems from time to time. I'm just being honest. When you're the one that causes it, even when you recognize what you've done wrong and even when you say, I'm the one that did it, and even when you say, I'm the one who's sorry, it doesn't necessarily mean that everything just immediately, oh, great. Awesome, thank you. Sometimes there has to be some work to prove that, hey, I met what I said and now here's what's true about a relationship with God. The problem in our relationship with God has always been us. It's never been him. From the time that God created the planet and created human beings, the problem has never been God. The problem has always been you. The problem has always been me. For we've all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

We are the ones that have turned our back on him. He's never turned our back on us. He's the one who's desired a relationship. Even though we're the ones that when he sent his son spit in his face and scourged him and put him on a cross. Even though it was our sin that put him there, God never stopped loving us. So reconciliation between these two parties means when you repent and say, it was me, I was wrong. And you by faith put your trust in Jesus, guess what happens? Immediately you're reconciled. Immediately there's harmony. Immediately there's nothing you have to keep working off. There's nothing else you have to do. God's like, I'm totally pleased now, we're good. We're family. I mean, think about it. When Jesus told the story about the prodigal sons, the one son that was near God that was just religious, and the other son that went off and squandered all of his living, when the younger son came home, all he

wanted to do was get back in the family.

He said, dad, just make me a slave. I'm not worthy to be your son. He had this whole rehearsed speech and what does the father say? Quick, bring the best robe and put it on and put a ring on his finger, sandals on his feet, kill the fattened calf. My son was what? Lost. And he's found. He was dead and now he's alive. We got to celebrate this and you ain't coming home as a slave, you're my boy. You're in the family. Now family's special, isn't it? Family's different than anything else. I mean, in my family, my family's welcome in my house. My kids don't have to knock on the door to get into my home. Maybe if they miss curfew, but they don't have to knock. They're welcome there. Their friends are welcome there. They can bring whoever they want there. They can decide what they want to do when they're there.

It's as much their house as it is mine, they're family. Why am I telling you this? Because there's too many Christians that the enemy has lied to and says, yeah, you may be in, but you're a second class Christian. You'll never be like this guy or that gal or any of these things. You might be part of the family, but you're kind of like that strange uncle that nobody really wants to hang around. That's a lie. Ladies, listen to me. When you come to Christ, you're his daughter. You are a daughter of the king. And everywhere you go, you need to think about Jesus putting his arm around you, walking with you everywhere you're going like, this is my girl and I would do anything to protect her because I love her with an unconditional love. And if you're a guy here, here's what you need to picture. You need to picture your God's son. That he's proud

of you, that he'll honor you, that he'll protect you, that he'll walk with you. You don't need to be in fear. He thinks you're pretty special even though you may not feel it on the inside. That's who we are. That's what it means to be children of God and we're all part of his family and everybody is of equal value and equal merit. Isn't that good news?

That's why I get fired up when certain religions say, well after you die, you got to pay this stuff off or... It negates the cross and the word of God, the word of God says, when you repent and believe Jesus, you're all the way in and you can't get any closer to God than what you are then. It's free. It's a gift. Come, have it. That's the gospel of Jesus Christ. You're part of the family. God's inviting you into his family to eat with him. When Jesus Christ comes back for his church, you're part of the family. We're going to have a huge banquet. You're welcome there in the fullness of everything that you are.

And then notice what he says. He's given us a ministry of reconciliation and a word of reconciliation. What that simply means is this, if you've been reconciled and you have peace with God, then you've been given two things. Ministry and a message. Ministry and a word. Ministry means serve. It means to help. It means we've already said everybody in this world's in need of help. It means in your sphere of influence because you love God, and these people that you meet are in need of help. What do you get to do? Help them. Help them. Now I want to tell you something. As a church, we're trying to put together some systems so we can help you discover your spiritual gifts a little bit better and help set you on mission a little clearer and all those kinds of things. And that can be helpful.

But if you're just looking for a place to start, where would I get started in this helping thing? Here's what I would say. When you leave the church today and you go out to lunch and you take about three steps and open your eyes and there's somebody there that's wearing a sign, even though you won't see it, said, I'm in need, help me. Everywhere you go, there's people in need of Jesus. They're in need of encouragement. They're in need of hope. They're in need of joy. They're in need of peace. They're in need of all sorts of different things. They're in need of a savior. They're in need of a Lord. They're in need of growth in Christ. They're in need of somebody caring for them. They're all around us all the time if you just open your eyes. That's called a ministry of reconciliation. And if you're in the family of God and he says, invite anybody you want to our house, come on, bring them in, that's the ministry of reconciliation.

Then there's what's called the word of reconciliation or the message of reconciliation. When people say to you as you're serving them, why are you doing this? Don't say, I don't know. Guess I'm just kind of nice. It was a random act of... No, here's why. Because Jesus Christ saved my soul and he's my Lord and he loves you with an unconditional love, and I want you to know that. You speak it too. You speak the gospel. People can't hear about Jesus if you don't tell them about Jesus. And we're not giving a sales pitch here. Well, what do I have to have? Just tell them what he did for you. Start there. That's all you have to do. Now, some of us can err as Christians on the side of service, that comes very easy to us and we serve and serve and serve, but we never really tell people what they need to hear and it ultimately does no good.

And then there's others of us, we're really good at speaking. I'll tell you whatever you need to know, but we have a harder time living it out, a harder time looking to care for people. And here's what Jesus is saying. I've given you both. I've given you a mantle of ministry and a mantle of the message. I'm asking you to live it out. I'm asking you to demonstrate it and declare it, share it and speak it. Do both equally well. Grow into both of them. Where everywhere you go, you're looking for someone. Everywhere you go, you see what the need is. Everywhere you go, you're ministering to that need. And in your sphere of influence, it may not always be inside of the church. It's going to be somewhere that you don't expect it to come. And you notice that someone has a need and you're like, hey, is there anything I can help you with that? And you're just serving them. And if you serve people, they'll wonder, what is your motivation for doing what you do? And then you can tell them, it's Jesus.

Others of us, we have an easier time just going out and telling people about Jesus and using proclamation and doing that. God honors that. But if that's you, then you also have to live it out too. Both are equally important. That's your position in the family. God wants you to know this morning as Christians, you're welcome in his family and you have all rights and privileges and access because of who Jesus Christ is and what he's done for you. Amen? And you need to know that. Because if you leave your house in the morning, your spiritual house on the weekend, and you're like, I'm lousy, I'm no good, I'm stupid, I'm terrible. It's very hard to advance the kingdom. It's very hard. But if you know, hey, I'm crowned with glory and honor. I'm completely forgiven. I'm a saint. I'm a holy person. When this world comes to a close, Jesus Christ is

coming back for me and he's going to take me as his own. He's going to present me faultless before his father with exceedingly great joy.

And he's really proud of me and he can't get enough of me in spite of the fact that I've tried to screw it up many times. He still loves me no matter what. I mean, that's how we're called to live. And you have to get these three things right if you're going to do the next couple. You have to. Your view of the world matters. Your identity in Christ matters, your position in the family matters. Let me say one other thing about this because when it comes to worldview, here's what we tend to do in the church. The longer that you walk with the Lord, you start to think that groups that are not necessarily Christian are Christian and groups that are definitely unchristian have all non-Christians in them. And that's just not true. Let me just tell you this. There are some people here who believe that if you're part of a certain political party that you're Christian. Let me tell you this, you can be completely conservative, align with biblical values and spend eternity in hell because you never responded to Jesus Christ's offer of salvation.

That's why your love for Jesus Christ and his church better be far superlative to any political party that you have passion for. Amen? I'm just telling you. Otherwise you fight the wrong fight. Well, if you vote this way, then we're going to change the world. You can vote this way and the world may not change one iota for the Lord Jesus Christ. But if you live out kingdom principles, I promise you the world can change because Jesus Christ is in the transformation business and he wants to see his values get out into the world. That's why your view of the world matters. Your identity in Christ

matters. Your position in the family matters. This fact that we're reconciled matters, let me give you a fourth. Your assignment in the kingdom matters. You've been assigned a mission in the kingdom and it matters. It says, therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ.

There's your mission. As though God were making an appeal through us, we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. Now, let me just point out a couple of things from this passage. Number one, here's what an ambassador is. An ambassador represents a president or a head of state, a king, from another land that goes and serves in an embassy in foreign soil. Not so that they can become more like that foreign soil, but so they can live out the values of what they believe on that foreign soil. As an ambassador for Christ, it is Jesus Christ, the king of the universe who has called you as his representative on this earthly soil. And even though for a temporary time, the prince of the power of the air, our enemy, has some reign, Jesus says, everywhere you step, I want it to be kingdom soil.

I want you to represent me everywhere you go. If you're single, on your dates, I want you to represent me. In your marriage, if you're married, I want you to represent me. At school, if you're a student, I want you to represent me. If you're an employer or an employee and your job, I want you to represent me. Everywhere you go, you are my personal representative. You are my ambassador. Now let me tell you how important that is. I remember about a couple decades ago, Kim and I were out in New York City. We had just been married and we were there trying to figure out what to do one morning, we went to see Good Morning America get taped. And while we were

there, I saw this fleet of black SUVs pull up, about five to seven of them. All these security guys jumped out, formed a perimeter on the car.

They're all looking up, talking into their sleeves, doing one of these. I was fascinated. I thought, this is totally cool. Who's in the car? And all of a sudden, Condoleeza Rice got out of the car and she walked in, she filmed Good Morning America, got in the car and walked away, drove away. And I remember thinking, as Secretary of State at the time, she's so important to our nation. That's the kind of security she needs to back her. And this verse went off in my heart while I was watching that and I started thinking, Jesus, this is how you think about every single believer on this planet. These are the lengths that you would go through and go to make sure that they're your representative on this world. And we represent you and we're going to report back to you. And Lord, how special are we to you?

Because we look at the world sometimes, and I'm just like you. I can read the news and see all the same things that you see and get sick into my stomach about all the same kind of things. And when I see it, here's what God's saying. Yeah, I'm trying to make my appeal through you, the church. If you're waiting for people that are not born again to make the change, you can wait until Jesus comes back, no changes will ever be made. And oh, by the way, in every single culture, from the time Jesus was here, until he gets back, there's always going to be a culture that is opposite of him. There's always going to be a clash of the kingdoms. And sometimes we're too afraid to stand up outside the walls and say what values we believe in and why they're

necessary to get outside the walls of the church.

Friends, the church functions best when it's offensive and sometimes it can be a little offensive. We're not just playing defense here and waiting for the world to change and praying it. We pray, we worship, we do all that, and then we go out and we influence the world the way Jesus wants it to be done. See, here's what I know. I know if I'm going to talk about any issue in here that represents Christ, you would all cheer for it. We would celebrate it. I mean, we go through all these all the time, people say, Pastor Jeff, you're so courageous to say this. I'm not that courageous. I'm just biblical. I'm just telling you this is what the Bible says. So this is how God rules. This is not only how he wants his church to be. This is how he wants his world to be.

So let's talk about it. I mean, you can't even read through Genesis one without offending our entire culture. In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. Why are we here? Because God created everything out of nothing. Why are you here? Because God created you. Why do you still breathe? Because God still has a purpose and plan for your life. It's God. We don't know if we believe in God. Well, God believes in himself, and he was the only one here at creation, so he knows. I mean, it's offensive to everybody. I mean we talk about gender. I mean in Genesis one, God created two, he's never changed his mind. There's male and female. That's it. There is no other. You'll clap for that. I know you will. But that's why when we address things like homosexuality and feminism and LGTBQ and how marriage is only between a man and a woman, we're just getting our values from the Bible, it's really clear. That's just how God designed everything.

When we talk about life, the reason we're against abortion is not because we are against your opinions, because God created life, and so life matters to God. And so we want to proclaim that we shouldn't end it in utero. And how about racism? Genesis chapter one takes care of that too. God created the human race. There's one race. We all have different pigments of skin based upon genetics and geography and where we lived and all that stuff over the last 6,000 years. I get all that. But if you understand from the Bible there's only one race, you know what you can't have in the world?

Racism.

Now I know what's going on. I think because of different pigments of skin and all that, that there has been vitriol and hatred and all sorts of different things that we have to address. But here's the way God would address it. You're all the same race. Quit messing things up because you're seeing your race. God gave you the exact skin color he wants you to have. Celebrate the skin color you have. Celebrate everybody else that has a different one than you, and we'll all get along just fine. Amen? I mean, that's biblical. If non-Christians, those who aren't born again, serve in government, you can have a godless government. When government is doing things to overreach and say, here's what the church can't be, and you can't do this in our society, that's when we have to step in. If you have non-Christians running schools, you can have corrupt schools and indoctrination to all sorts of things that go against biblical values.

We have to speak into it. And yes, I'm against churches that don't preach the resurrected Christ, and I'm for all other churches that do. But I'll tell you what I'm really against is when a church that says that they believe all the true things about God are

so passive, they won't go out in the culture and stand for it out there. That's just as wrong as not believing it in the first place. If you believe these values, they're not values for Christians. They're values for the world. They're values for the world. And oh, by the way, as an ambassador, as Christ's representative, what do we do when we see people live opposite of Christ? We love our enemies and we pray for those who persecute us.

We don't have hatred for groups. Why? Because Jesus died for every single person in that group. He loves every single person in that group. Here's why we're against it, because if you're not living out biblical values, the values that you're living out lead to your death, not only your death here, but your death for all eternity. And that's a big deal. I mean, just think about this just for one minute. Think about all the people you know in your sphere of influence that don't know Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior. And I'm asking you to include all the ones that you would say, I'm not so sure they know Jesus. Then they don't. Okay? Because it's kind of like pregnancy. You're either pregnant or you're not. If you're pregnant, it's going to show up. I mean, if they're Christian, they're going to become Christian. I mean, I get it.

So think about all those people that you think are almost Christians, all those people that don't know Christ, just think about who they are for a moment. Now, if they were to die today or Jesus came back, here's what would happen. Here's what they'd hear. Depart from me, you worker of iniquity, I never knew you. And they'd be cast off into hell and they would await final judgment into the lake of fire. And there's no coming

back. And if that doesn't break your heart, you don't have the heart of God.

God's desire and the reason he hasn't come back yet is he is longing with great patience to see all people come to repentance and faith. The reason I'm not for the LGBTQ agenda is not because of the people in it. It's because of the people that are stuck in the sin of it that is hurting themselves and will lead to their eternal destruction. And I love them too much to say, oh, just do whatever you want. It's not good for your soul. It's not good for it now, and it's not good for eternity. The reason I champion marriage between a man and a woman is that's how God designed it. That's what brings the greatest joy. That's what brings the greatest life. Do you understand the difference?

I mean, it's very easy to lob verbal grenades at groups of people and say, we can't stand that group. Can't stand those people. Can't stand... It's easy to do that. It's much harder to go in among that group of people and show Christ's love to them, but don't ever change your values. Isn't that what Jesus did? I mean, Jesus never sided with sin. The woman that was caught in adultery, he didn't say, hey, we all struggle. Don't worry about it. That's not what he said. He started saying, hey, if you're without sin, you go ahead and cast the first stone. In other words, quit judging what you yourself don't fully live out. And then when they all left and dropped their stones, he said, woman, where are your accusers? And they say, they've left. He goes, I don't accuse you either. Go and sin no more. You think she felt reconciled? Do you think she felt free? Do you think she asked him the question, well, can I still commit adultery and still be loved by you?

No, she didn't. Because she understood love in a way she had never understood love. And Christians, we have a sphere of influence where we can show love in a way that nobody else can get into. We're not called to change the world. We're called to change our sphere of influence in the culture, in the world that we're in. So people see us living like Jesus, living for Jesus, living with Jesus and showing incredible love to people that disagree with our convictions. Do you have friends that disagree with your convictions? I got a lot of friends that disagree with my convictions. They're wrong, but I love them anyway. I mean, that's how you need to see it. And at the end of the day, that's how God wants us to do it. Don't take yourself so seriously. Take Jesus really seriously. Take Jesus really seriously. You have an assignment.

In Acts 1:8 it says that we are his witnesses. Witness doesn't just mean to talk about, witness means to bear witness to. It means everywhere we go, when people see us, we are bearing witness as to what it means to serve the Lord Jesus Christ. And yes, all of us have those moments that we're ashamed of, or I didn't represent him well, we all have that. That's why at the cross of Jesus, we've been completely forgiven. But from this moment on, then we get back up and we say, Lord, from this moment on, I want to live for you in every area of my life that represents who you are. Amen? You're an ambassador for Christ. There's no higher calling. I would encourage you if you have a place above, like on your bathroom mirror somewhere where you're getting ready in the morning, put I'm an ambassador for Christ. If you wake up every day and know that the God of the universe selected you to go out and make a difference in the world and that you're his plan A for what's going to get done, it will

change the way in which you operate.

And then finally, is this one. Not only is your view of the world matter, your identity and Christ matter, your position in the family matter, your assignment in the kingdom matter, but here's the fifth one. Your knowledge of the gospel matters. Your knowledge of the gospel matters. This verse, verse 21, in 2nd Corinthians five may be the clearest, succinct verse in the New Testament on salvation, it says this talking about God, he made him, Jesus, who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf so that we might become the righteousness of God in him. God made him who knew no sin, who had never experienced sin, who didn't ever sin. God the Father put all of our sin on him. Notice this. Jesus didn't become a sinner. Jesus never sinned. He just took on our sin and was punished for our sin. The one who had never experienced it, the one who had never done anything wrong.

Jesus Christ took all our sin, so all our deadness, all our rebellion, all are I'll do it my own way. I don't need you, God. I'll just do my own thing. All that was put on Jesus 2000 years ago, and Christ died once for all the righteous, for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. God made him who knew no sin to what? Become sin for us, the very sin that you are to be punished with. When you get to heaven, you're like, I don't know if I'm going to be good enough. Jesus said, I'll take it all Dad, so that in him, you might become the righteousness of God. One of the ways that God cloths you as soon as you get saved, even though it's not on the outside, it's internal. He robes you in his righteousness so that when you meet him face to face, you can enter heaven.

You're welcome into the family because God sees the righteousness of Christ in and through you, not because of anything you did, but because of his grace in your life that drew you in. That's the gospel. I know there's people in here that don't know Jesus. I know some of you may come just to watch baptisms and other people get baptized today. Here's what baptism is. There are stories or testimonies about people who knew I was in this kingdom of darkness and I was dead, but God revealed Jesus to me, and I realized he died on the cross for all my sin, and I turned from my old way of life into Jesus, and I'm now a new creation, and it was nothing I did. It was all because of God. Amen? That's the gospel.

At Brave Church, we're not telling you to get religion and do all this stuff and join these groups. I'm telling you this. By no effort of your own, if you believe that Jesus died for you and rose from the dead, you can have all your sins forgiven. You can be completely reconciled right now in a moment just by saying, Jesus, I want you to be my Lord. Lord, save me. Isn't that good news? That's really good news today. Amen? Amen. I want to pray for us. When I finish praying, I'm going to show you a video. Like I said, we have, I think 19 getting baptized in this service and 50 overall this weekend. We're so excited about that, but this video will show you some of the testimonies that you're going to hear live from two of them on each campus. Then we're going to baptize. It's going to be a huge celebration today. Would you pray with me?

Father in heaven, we give you all the glory, all the honor and all the praise for who you are. And Lord, we ask in this moment that you would do a mighty work. If you're here today and you say, I don't know that I've ever trusted Jesus. I've just been

religious, or I'm so far from God. Here's how you can pray. You can say, Lord Jesus, save me. I want to turn from my sin and turn to you. Come into my life and be my Lord and Savior. If you pray that, and that's what you mean, then God has a purpose and plan for your life to go advance the kingdom in this culture and be part of his family.

Father, we thank you for your word that is so, so clear, so, so clear. We thank you for your word that tells us that we not only belong to you, that we're not only part of your church, but that Lord, you are building your church for your glory. Father, we're your ambassadors. Father, use us. We give you all the glory, all the honor and all the praise. In Jesus' name, amen. Amen.