



# Message **Transcript**

## Wake Up!

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So let's pray and go before the Lord. Let's get ready to hear what God has to say to us this very day. So, Lord, we give you praise, thanks, glory and honor for who you are. And, Lord, as we preach your word today, as we hear your word today, Lord, I just pray that our hearts would be receptive to the very things that you have for us, Lord, that this message would resonate in our hearts, Lord, that we'd want to align ourselves with who we are in you. And that, Lord, you would just have your way with us.

And so, Lord, for what you're going to do and how you're going to shape your church through this word, we give you praise in advance, for you are the almighty God. You're the sovereign creator. You're the God of the universe. We give you praise. We thank you for your living and active word that speaks to each one of us.

And, Lord, we want to be receptive to hearing you. So, Lord, if there be anything in our life right now that would distract us from hearing your word, we just confess that to you. Lord, if it's sin, Lord, if it's just an idea, Lord, if it's just we're thinking about something else, Lord, help us align our thoughts right now with you. And, Lord, for what you're going to do. We give you all the glory, all the honor, and all the praise, and all God's people who are ready to hear his word today.

Agreed. And said, amen. Amen. I invite you to open up your bible to one corinthians, chapter three. One corinthians, chapter three.

And we're in this series about growing stronger and what it looks like for us to be a stronger disciple of Jesus Christ. In this particular chapter, Paul is addressing the issue of carnality. Carnality is when a believer who loves Jesus acts independently of Jesus. Somebody who knows the Lord, but acts as if they don't know the Lord. Carnality is another way of saying christian selfishness, or maybe christian childishness is when I think that Christianity is all about me, and so I'm going to act independently of God.

Even though I know God, I'm going to act as if it's all about me. And what we talked about is that this carnality can cause division in the church. This carnality results in a loss of reward when we meet Jesus Christ face to face. And today, what we're gonna take a look at is how this idea of carnality actually angers our Lord, because it's through the church that he wants to get his work done. So I'm entitled this sermon, wake up.

Okay? Really, I've entitled it this wake up. Okay? That's what I've entitled it. Because there's really four things here that Paul is calling us to wake up, too.

Now, I got to tell you before I start the message that I don't know if you're like me, but many of us, we don't like to be woken up until we're ready to be woken up. Amen. I mean, I think about people that go off in the military. I mean, they don't usually call in the night before and give their time that they would like to be awoken or how they would like to be awoken. It just happens whenever somebody's ready to wake them up.

I remember being a little boy. I can still picture being seven and my mom coming in in the morning, maybe kind of rubbing my back and saying, rise and shine, young man. Give God the glory. And then she would go over to my shade and she would open it and all the sunlight would come rushing in. I'd be like, come on, mom, just like five more minutes.

You know what I'm talking about? I mean, we don't like being woken up. We think it's funny waking other people up, but we don't like it when it's us, right? A number of years ago, my sister, who's in her thirties right now, she was nine years old, and we were at this family gathering, and my cousin, who loved to sleep in, we were joking when we were out in the hallway someday one morning that say somebody should just go dump water on him, you know, just kind of wake him up. And my nine year old sister is like, I'll do it.

So I kind of helped her fill the bucket, you know, and opened the hotel door, and in my sister went and I held it open. I watched her dump water all over my cousin and she came back to me. And all of us were laughing in the hallway and we thought it was all well and good until my cousin, who was in his thirties at the time, took that same bucket and brought it outside the room and dumped it all over my nine year old sister's head, turned back around and went back to bed. Right? It wasn't funny to him.

That's what this message is about. The problem with the church is not the church. The church has never been a problem. The church is where Jesus Christ dwells. It's who he is.

The problem with the church is that the church is asleep and doesn't know who the church is. We don't realize the power that's available to us in the church. That's the problem. So this message is wake up, right? So there's four things we're gonna talk about that we need to wake up to, to experience the fullness of God.

So in one corinthians, chapter three, I encourage you to open up your bible, and we'll start reading in verse 16. Just so you know, verses 16 and 17 are verses I was going to include last week. And I said, you know, they just troubled me so much that I spent so much time on them. I'm like, we can do a whole sermon just on these two verses. So that's why I've waited to include them here today with us.

Listen to the word. Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the spirit of God dwells in you? If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are. Let no man deceive himself.

If any man among you thinks he is wise in this age, he must become foolish so

that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness before God, for it is written, he is the one who catches the wise in their craftiness. And again, the Lord knows the reasonings of the wise, that they are useless. So then let no one boast in men, for all things belong to you, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas, or the world, or life or death, or things present or things to come. All things belong to you, and you belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God.

Now, as Paul is addressing and really kind of finishing up some of his argument here in chapter three, he's really telling them to wake up to four things. And the first is this. Wake up. Wake up to this fact. Wake up that God dwells in his church.

If you ever want to know. Where's God? Where's he at? He's in his church. That's where he dwells.

Now he starts this verse in verse 16 saying, do you not know? Do you not know? Now, carnal people are people who are wise in their own eyes. Carnal Christians are people that have all the answers for everything. When you're around people that think they have all the answers, and you start a sentence saying, do you not know?

It's a bit offensive to people. There's about ten times Paul's going to use this word to the corinthians. Do you not know? I mean, you're so smart. Do you not know this?

Do you not get this? What don't they know? He says, do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the spirit of God dwells in you right. Now, how many people have heard that before? Okay, the spirit of God dwells in you now, in chapter six, when it's talking about sexual immorality.

And don't be sexually immoral. Cause the spirit of God dwells in you. He's talking about the individual. He's talking about. When you trust in Jesus Christ as your personal lord and savior, God deposits the Holy Spirit in your life.

He's there forever. He indwells you. Beautiful. I mean, the third person of Trinity is inside of you. That's not what he's saying here.



He's not talking to an individual. He's talking to the church. You say, well, how do you know that? Because he's been talking to the church the whole time. I mean, the first part of this section referred to the church as a field.

And then he went into the church as a building. Now he's going into the church as a temple. Okay? Now, what was the temple? The temple was the holy place of God.

It's where he dwelled. Now, in the original language, there's two words for the word temple. One word for temple describes the entire temple where Jews and Gentiles would come and give worship to God. Another word for temple in the New Testament was to describe the inner sanctuary, or the holy of holies. Okay?

That's this word. When he's saying, do you not realize that you are a temple of God and that the spirit of God dwells in you? He's talking about, you are the holy of holies. You are the place where God dwells. Now, in the Old Testament, that was a very significant place, right?

Because that's where the very presence of God dwelled was in his temple in the holy of holies. As a matter of fact, he took it so serious that the priests could only enter in there once a year, and he had to enter in such a way that was aligned with how God wanted him to enter. Or he could actually die in God's presence. Right? I mean, that's what he's saying the church is.

Now, you're still probably saying, well, how do you know he's talking to the church? Not just contextually, but grammatically? This you here is not singular. It's plural. If Paul were writing to the Texans instead of writing to Corinth, here's how verse 16 would read it would read this.

Do y'all not know that y'all are a temple of God and that the spirit of God dwells in y'all? That's what he's saying to the church. He's saying, where's God at? He's in his church. He takes his church seriously because he dwells in his church.

He dwells in his people. He fills his people. And there's something special that happens when his church gathers together. And let me tell you, he takes his church very seriously. He takes his presence very seriously.

In the Old Testament, his presence took very seriously in the holy of holies. So much so that you remember what happened when Jesus Christ died on the cross. I mean, one of the things that happened was there was a temple curtain that was several inches thick that was torn from top to bottom, indicating that the holiness of God is now available to all people who would go through his son, Jesus Christ. Right? Y'all realize that.

I mean, people are always looking, where's God? Where's God? Where's he at? Where can I find him in his church. Now, why does God take his church so seriously?

Because he's made an investment in his people and it's where his name dwells. Right. So what should be going on in the church? What should be going on in the church is that the name of Jesus Christ is elevated. What should be going on in the church is Jesus Christ being exalted.

Why? Because the church is about the reputation of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ. It's where he dwells. And where else are you going to get that? CNN?

You're not going to get it on Fox. You're not going to get it on ESPN. You're certainly not going to get it on MSNBC. I mean, you're not going to get it anywhere. Where are you going to get it?

You're going to get it in the church where Jesus Christ is high and lifted up and exalted in all of his glory. Why does Jesus care about his church? Yeah, because he cares about it more than any other vehicle on the planet. Now, it's okay to pray for politicians. It's okay to pray for politics.

We should. Okay, it's okay to pray for educators and the educational system and who gets elected to local school boards. We should. But if you were asking Jesus, hey, Jesus, what do you care about? What do you pray for and what are you all about?

What does he say? I care about my church and I intercede for my church and I care about my church because it's the vehicle where my name is elevated and my name is lifted up above any other, right? That's what his church is all about. See, in God's church, he's got a few things going on. It's his name, but he's got what, his message or his word?

You know, what God wants trumpeted in his church? His word. I mean, through the Holy Spirit. He penned all 66 books. They're all in errand.

He's like, I got a message. There's something I'm trying to tell my people. So I got a message to give to my church so they understand what the truth is in the world. That's the purpose of God's word. So, in the church, what should be happening is Jesus name is elevated because we're proclaiming what he's telling us through his word.

Know what else is going on in the church? Bible says he's giving us all a ministry. So through the people in the church, God is using that group of people who are elevating his name, who are hearing his word, to let the world know. This is what it looks like if you're a Christian. This is how you treat one another.

This is how you love one another. This is how you steward resources. This is what generosity looks like. This is what it looks like to be saved and born again. Just come to our church.

It's our ministry. Then we got a mission. You know what the mission is? The mission is to the world. That Jesus Christ loves the world, that he was willing to die for the world.

And who's going to tell the world if the church doesn't tell the world? The answer is, no one is. So does Jesus care about his church? It is the most important thing on Jesus Christ's mind. So Paul's writing them in all their carnality and all their selfishness and all their backbiting, in all their divisions and all their selfishness, saying, hey, do y'all not know that the presence of God is dwelling among you?

Do you get that? That you're the holy temple of God and that he's invested in it? Now, we don't think about church that way because we approach church many times the same way we approach other venues in our life, like how we go to a restaurant or how we go to a shopping center. Now, I don't know if you're like me, but when I go to a restaurant, I choose the restaurant I want to go to, and I select it based upon the price, the type of food that they have, whether or not they can get me in. In a timely way.

Right. What other people are saying about that restaurant. And when I go, I have some expectations, okay. I expect to be greeted at the door and have somebody take my name, right. And tell me that it's going to be a short wait.

I don't want to go somewhere where there's going to be a long wait. I expect to be seated in a table that's suitable for me and my family. Then I expect somebody else to come and start taking my orders and asking me what I want. Then, while all that's going on, I expect them to come and make sure that I'm okay with everything taking place. Then I expect my food to be there in a timely manner, and I expect it to taste

really, really good, too.

I expect service to be well the whole time. And at the end, I expect the bill to be something that I can afford to pay. And then when I leave, I form an opinion about the experience that I had. It was awesome. It was okay.

It'll probably be back. It wasn't very good. It was awful. And then I like to tell other people about the experience that I had at that restaurant. You know what I'm talking about?

Stores are the same way. When I go into a store, man, I expect to be greeted in the store. And I expect you to know whether you're the kind of store where I want you to come up and ask me if I'm okay or just leave me alone. And I expect you to know what kind of store this is. Right.

Because there's times I want you to come ask me if I can help you find anything. And there's other times I really wish you'd leave me alone. And I hope you just know



what kind of mood I'm in that day. Right. And then I want to see the items displayed that I want to see displayed.

And I hope that the things I need are in stock, because I'd hate to have to order them and wait three or four days while you ship them in. Right. Because it's about me, and we can bring those same attitudes into church, can't we? See, I expect the church to be about me, and I come at the times. It's good for me.

And I wanted the church to be about me. And I want. I got my list of 37 things that meet me, and if they meet all my 37 things, then I'll consider being a part of your church and maybe even speaking nicely about it. And Paul is saying, do you not realize what you're saying? We're servants.

Of the most high God and the spirit of God dwells in us. And to the extent that we serve as church, we get to experience the power and presence and protection of God in greater ways. So here's a rhetorical question. If everybody else's commitment to the local church was like yours, what would the outcome be? I mean, if everybody served Christ church in the exact same way that you serve Christ church, if everybody

gave sacrificially out of their finances the way you do, percentage wise, if everybody gave their time sacrificially the way you do out of your time, if everybody gave with the right attitude like you do, right.

If everybody's here as often as you were, then what would the church be like? I mean, that's what Paul's telling the corinthians, because what he's telling them is that they're carnal and that they're selfish and they're not committed to the very thing that God cares about the most. These are people that are saying, therefore, I'm committed to my needs being met when I want my needs met. And to the extent that they are, I'm happy. And to the extent that they're not, I don't care.

Right. Wake up is what he's saying. Now, I know people that will travel all over Europe and go visit cathedrals and do all that sort of thing. There's nothing wrong with that. I mean, it's kind of a fun trip if you like, looking at architecture and doing that stuff.

I've even seen some cathedrals and things in Europe. Can I tell you what you won't find? You won't find the spirit of God alive and well in those churches. Once upon a time, you would have. Now you just have a really beautiful building.

Let me make it more local here. Let me explain something to you. When our church breaks today and we go our merry way and we go, go where we're going to go, let me tell you. I mean, God's everywhere, but he's not like just here, like chilling out for the week. Like, man, I can't wait till next Saturday night when everybody comes back and I can show them who I am again.

That's not what God does. God indwells his people. And what God's looking for is a church where he indwells all those people, where all those people are gathered so that God can do all of his work among us. Like, that's where he's at, right? A lot of churches build statues and relics or have pictures of all the pastors we don't do that here.

Why? Because we're not about relics and pictures and pastors. What are we about? We're about the lordship of Jesus Christ and who he is. And when God's people who are filled by his spirit come together and begin to worship him and honor him and hear his word and say, God, I want to hear what you have for me because I'm going to put that into practice.

Something special happens in the church and God begins to grow. People who give him more glory. And there's excitement going on. And we begin to see God at work. And let me tell you this.

He dwells in his church, which means he cares intensely about it. Wake up. Where's God? He's in his church. He cares about his church.

If there's anything he cares about, it's his church. What's it mean that you're holy? Because you may read that and be like, well, I'm not all that holy. That ain't me. I'm not a holy person.

Yeah, you are. Holy simply means this. I'm set apart for God's purposes. That's what a church is. A church is set apart for the purpose of God, to declare the word of God for the people of God so they can live out the mission of God in this world.

Wake up. Now here's the second one you need to wake up to. I don't know what you do for a living. I don't know how you spend your days. I don't know how you spent your Wednesday.

I spent about 7 hours on this next verse. I'm about ready to read to you on Wednesday. Because it first I didn't understand it. Then it started troubling me. And then I said, that can't mean that.

And then by the end of the day, I'm like, it totally means that. And then I was even more troubled than I was before I started studying it. I've never heard a sermon on verse 17, never heard anybody preach verse 17. But at harvest, I'm not afraid to preach the word of God. So listen to verse 17.

See what it means. Listen to this. If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are. Well, what the heck does that mean?

I mean, I've heard people say, well, he's talking about nonbelievers there. And if non believers go after the church of God, then God's going to get them. He's going to send them to hell someday. There's several problems with that line of thinking, number one, let me tell you something. Nonbelievers can never stop the work of God in his church and never have, never will.

What nonbelievers do when non believers start rising up against the church, the church actually gets really, really strong, and the church actually stands on the foundation of Jesus Christ. And they say, you can hurt us, you can malign us, you can say bad things about us. Hey, you can even kill us. But we're not going to stop talking about Jesus. And what happens?

What happens is carnal christians either repent and become part of the body, or guess what they do? They leave because they want nothing to do with Jesus. And you have a pure bride who's standing on the truth of Jesus. And the world's never been able to stop the church. I mean, people are always looking outside.

Well, the church, look at the world. It's getting worse. It's getting worse. Oh, man, the world's. Yeah, it is.

And guess what? It means the church is going to glow even brighter in this season than ever before. I'm not worried about non believers. God's not worried about nonbelievers. Plus, in this section, there's not one verse prior to this verse that's talking about a non believer, and not one verse after that's talking about a non believer.

It's all talking about carnal believers. Notice verse twelve. If any man builds on this foundation, who's that? Carnal believers. Verse 14.

If any man's work that he has built remains, what's that, believer? Verse 15. If any man's work is burned up, what's that, believer? What's verse 18 say? Let no man deceive himself, believer.

So what is verse 17? If any man, any Christian. Now let me. Let me look to you

like this. If any Christian destroys the temple of God, what's the temple of God?

The church. We already said it was the church. It's the holy place, the people that are set apart from God. So let's read it the way God wants us to read it. If any Christian destroys the church, God will destroy him.

For the church is holy. And that's what you are. You cool with that? I've never heard a sermon on that. Wait, wait.

I thought we were just. We were in this love relationship with God, and God loves us no matter what. And let me tell you something. Let me be crystal clear. If you've trusted in Jesus Christ as your personal lord and savior, you're his for all eternity.

No one can snatch you out of his hand. You cannot lose your salvation. You cannot lose what God granted you. And he does love you with an unconditional love. But let me tell you something about our God.



God is a good father. He's a good parent. Many of us have the attitude as Christian. Well, I'm a Christian now. I can do whatever I want.

I'm going to heaven no matter what. Any of you guys good parents in here. You have kids that you love unconditionally. Does that mean that your kid can tell you, I'll do whatever I want whenever I want and dad, shut up. And then we, as father said, yeah, cool.

Whatever you want, man. Is that a good father? No, it's not. See, God loves us enough to discipline us, and God loves us enough to show us that we're wrong. And God loves us enough to say, that's not the way, that's not what I have.

That's what verse 17 is. And I want to tell you this. When we're talking about the power and the presence and the protection of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we're in a line with what he wants, I'm telling you, this verse is so comforting because what this verse is saying, nothing can come against you. I will not let anybody get in the way of

what I'm getting done in my church. Christian or non Christian, I will stand with you.

I will stand for you because my church is, is what I care about. So you just keep serving me, I'll take care of the rest. It's great comfort, great protection. If we're living carnal and we're living in a way of destroying God's church, it should be a terror in our heart, like, holy cow, I'm messing with the very one God loves the most and it should cause fear, right? And Paul wants him to cause fear.

Paul's not telling the corinthians, you're horrible, you're bad, you're no good. He's telling them they're saints and you're dearly loved and you're holy and your identity's in Christ. But live it out because there's consequences if you don't live it out. Now you might be saying, well, how do you destroy God's church? How do you ruin God's church if he's talking to christians?

Let me tell you the warning. The warning is there's more danger from those inside the church to destroying the church than those outside the church. Did you hear what I said? There's more danger with us hurting and devouring and backbiting one another than there is for non Christians to do it. That's what he's saying.

So how do we ruin it? Let me just give you a couple ways. This is not an exhaustive way, but allow the Holy Spirit to speak to you. And here's what I'm telling you. If you're listening to this list and you say to yourself for just 1 second, I wish so and so was here to hear this this weekend, you're carnal.

Cause I'm guilty of every single one and so are you. So as you hear these rhetorical questions, just ask yourself this. Has there ever been a time you participated in gossip towards a pastor, towards any church, towards any leadership in any church, or towards any person in any church that's trying to serve the Lord? Let me define gossip. Gossip is not even saying something.

Gossip is I'm listening to other people that are speaking bad about somebody that's serving Christchurch. Has that ever happened to you in your life where you've ever listened to that? I mean, if you're not nodding your head yes and thinking, yes, it's me, you're carnal. Cause it's true of you. How about one step further?

Has there ever been a time where you've heard gossip or seen things or something's happened to you and you've then opened your mouth to tell other people about the pastor, the church, the last church you were at, the last five churches you were at, the people in that last church. The people in this church ever done that says maligning the bride of Christ. How about this? You ever had a poor attitude or motivation in your service for Christ? Ever?

Poor attitude? In other words. Hey listen. Don't you dare ask me to serve. I do.

Enough. I got a ministry in my workplace. I got a ministry in my house. Don't you dare ask me to work. I've done enough for you now.

You would never say that to Jesus, would you? Because Jesus would stand here in all of his glory and say, hey man, I've laid down my life for you. I came, became human for you, identified myself with humanity for all eternity. I lived a perfect life in your place. Not only that, I was beaten for you, stripped for you, whipped for you, hung on a cross for you, shed all my blood for you, died for you, then got out of the grave

three days later and rose for you, offered you eternal life, granted you eternal life, put the Holy Spirit in your life.

I've given you everything you need in this life. And all I'm asking is that you would care about what I care about, would you say no, I don't have time for that? We'd never say that, but we can live that. How about this about having a personal agenda first? Much like the restaurant example or the shopping center example.

It's not that you don't love the church, it's just you want to make sure all your needs get met first. So when I come to church, I have my laundry list of all the things that this church better be. There's very few things a church needs to be. It needs to be godly, it needs to proclaim the word, it needs to be worshipful, some of those things. But I'm talking about the things that are like, yeah, I hope they have, you know, special ministry for age seven year olds, and I hope they have a Wednesday night gathering for this.

And I can only do Thursdays at ten, so they better have that for me. And, you know, if they don't have all of my 73 wish lists, that church really stinks. I'm gonna find

a real one. You ever have that personal agenda? How about this?

How about this? I mean, there's so many we could talk about. Indifference, bad theology. How about this one, though? How about unforgiveness?

Any unforgiveness in your heart towards any other believer? Now don't be so quick to answer, because before you say no, I forgive everybody. Ask yourself this. Anything that comes to my mind, if you could fill in the sentence. Yeah, I'm still hurt by fill in the blank.

I'm still bothered by fill in the blank. I still dislike fill in the blank. I mean, do you have any of that? That's called unforgiveness. Now let me ask you a question.

This is not rhetorical. This I want you to participate in. How many here, by show of hands, have ever sinned against Jesus? Okay, now hold on. Just keep your hand up.

Let me make him high. Look around. Keep your hand up. If you've done it more than once. Okay, more than twice.

All right, you can go ahead and put your hands down. Okay, now you just told me that you're imperfect and that you're not righteous and that you're not good and that you're a sinner, and yet you've sinned against a perfect, holy God who's done nothing but perfectly love you from all eternity past. You just told me that you did that. Okay, so how can. Who's forgiven you everything?

So how can it be that a sinner that sits next to you, that's not perfect, that's imperfect, has wronged you in some way that you can't then forgive them. You know what it is? It's pride. You say you can treat the lord of the universe that way and expect his forgiveness, but you can't let somebody else treat you this way. Say that thing about you do that thing and you can't forget.

That's pride. If you didn't have pride, you wouldn't care. You just say, lord, I'd

entrust them to you and I'm going to pray for them and I'm going to love them no matter what. It's unforgiveness. See, forgiveness is the bedrock of the entire church.

Forgiveness is the bedrock of all of Christianity. For you to say I'm receiving Christ's forgiveness as the bedrock and then not be able to forgive somebody else or harbor bitterness or resentment is to start maligning and destroying and ruining the church of God. You can't do that. And I think unforgiveness is kind of like this. I mean, I've always said it's like drinking poison and hoping the other person dies, but I think of unforgiveness as a lot like bad breath.

Pride's a lot like bad breath. I mean, everybody knows that you have it except for you, but it's still there, right? That's what unforgiveness does. I mean, do any of these resonate at all? These are the things that ruin the temple of God.

These are the things that malign the temple of God. These are the reasons why people would look in a church and be like, I'm not going to be part of that. I see the way they are and I see the way they treat people and I see the way they don't really serve God. And I want nothing to do with that. And God's in heaven saying, no, this is



my bride.

This is my church. So wake up. Let me give you the second thing you need to wake up to. God responds to your treatment of his church. Wake up.

He responds to the treatment of his church. He's not just passively indifferent. This is really a warning. I mean, I think about this story I heard one time with a burglar that was breaking into somebody's house. And as he was ready to take out the CD player and undo the tv and get him out of the house, he heard this voice and it says, jesus is watching.

Kind of jumped back out of his skin. Was like, what the heck was that? Showing his flashlight around. Couldn't see anything. Thought to himself, man, I need to get a vacation after I steal this stuff.

And he went back to taking the stuff away, and he hears the voice again, Jesus

is watching. So he starts walking through the house. All of a sudden, he notices this parrot off in the corner. He said, is that you? He goes, yeah, I'm just trying to warn you.

Jesus is watching. He said, well, who are you? He said, I'm Moses.

He said, moses? He goes, what kind of owner would name their parrot Moses? He goes, the same kind of owner that would name their Rottweiler Jesus.

Right? This passage is a warning. This passage is a warning for those to say, God cares about his church. He loves his church. He cares about the treatment of his church, and he cares about the way his church treats his church.

If you've ever said, I love Jesus, but I hate the church, it's incongruent. It's like me saying, I love my wife. I just hate our marriage. It's one and the same thing. I'm doing this for Jesus.

Pastor Jeff. I'm not doing it for the church. It's bad theology. The church is the dwelling place of God. It's what he cares about the most.

I was talking to one of our staff this week. They said, yeah, I heard a sermon one time, and I watched it where a pastor took a wedding dress, a bridal gown, and he put it up on the stage. And then throughout the sermon, he just slung mud at it the whole time. And I was thinking, I'm like, that's kind of a good idea. So I went home and talked to my wife.

I said, I know you had that thing washed and dry cleaned, and it's vacuum sealed. What would you think if we just used it as an illustration this weekend? Do you see the dress? I mean, late last night I was looking for a Dodgers jersey, but, you know, that's a whole nother story.

But it's not even like that. Because the more I thought about this week, the more I thought about. It's not like bringing my wife's wedding dress up and slinging mud at

that. That's just a dress. It would be like inviting my wife to come forward and say, hey, come up here and stand here while all of you insulted her, said mean things about her and threw mud on her.

You think I'd ever let that happen? Never in a million years. Why? Because I love my wife. I will protect my wife.

I hate it when people gossip about my wife. I love her. Right. So does God love his church more than I love my wife? Oh, you can bet your bottom dollar that he does.

So he's going to protect his church at all costs. So if you're serving his church, if you're a servant of his church, it's great comfort to know no matter what happens, God's with us and he's going to protect his church. He's gonna get his work done. If you're not and you're working to destroy his church by some of those things that I mentioned, just know there is retribution for that. God will treat you that way because he's gonna protect you.

Now, this is something you're not gonna hear in many churches. This is something you're not gonna hear many people tell you. So I'm gonna use the word to teach you this because you need to see this because there's ways that God handles people that treat his bride badly. Okay, I'll give you four things that he does. One is excommunication.

One is excommunication. In the Old Testament, you can read this in numbers, chapter 19 and verse 20. If people came in to the temple in a way that wasn't right, they were asked to leave. You can't be here like that. God is too holy.

You're like, but that's Old Testament. Pastor Jeff, everybody's welcome at church now. Yeah, you are. Every sinner is welcome at church. Here's the kind of sinners that aren't welcome at church.

Unrepentant, continual, habitual sinners that are hurting God's people are not welcome. Because when you start making your life more about you than you do about God, God's given us one thing that we can do. It's called excommunication. It's called

exiting people out. Matthew 18 gives us the greatest example of how to do that.

First go have a conversation, say, hey, this is your sin. You know, if they don't listen, you bring a couple, three others along with you and say, hey, listen, this is your sin over a course of period of time. Then you bring the leadership of the church. If that's still there, you know what happens? The church gets to say, hey, listen, you're no longer welcome in the fellowship here because you have unrepentant sin in your life.

See, every sinner is welcome here. Adulterers are welcome here. Murderers are welcome here. Ex prisoners are welcome here. Gossips are welcome here.

Slanders are welcome here. Everybody's welcome here. So long as you hear the voice of God and you want to align your life with him. I mean, if we kicked all the sinners out, we don't even have a church. You have no pastor, you have no staff, you have nobody, right?

That's not what excommunication. And I know some of you are hearing the verse

in your head, because I know what you want to say. Where two or three are gathered, there is God. That's what I've been thinking about this whole message. See, that's not a verse that says, God shows up where two or three gather.

That's not what he's saying. This verse is saying, God's in his church no matter what. Where two or three gathered in my name, this means this. So when it gets to the point where an individual and a group of people and the entire church have confronted somebody in their sin and they refuse to repent, Jesus says, well, where two or three gather in my name, I'm right there with them. In other words.

So then when the church makes a decision to say, you can no longer be part of the fellowship, I'm also standing with you saying, you can no longer be part of the fellowship. That's why you'll never hear one of our worship pastors, or it'll be their swan song. Get up here and say, hey, where two or three are gathered, there's God. Aren't you glad you're here today? No, that has nothing to do with it.

God goes with me wherever I go. God's with me all the time. God's with me and my wife. When we get together and we're four or five of us gather, he's there too.

That's not the purpose of that passage.

The purpose of that passage is that's where you discipline and excommunication is offered. And you'll see it in one corinthians five when we get there, you got a son that's sleeping with his stepmom, and Paul's saying, expel the immoral brother. Get him out of the church. Turn him over to Satan. He cannot be here living in that sexual immoral lifestyle without being repentant and actually celebrating it.

Get him out. He's going to hurt the church. That's what excommunication is for. And it should be done in love, and it should be done over time, and it shouldn't be like, well, I met with him at 08:00 this morning. At 830, we met with two or three other people.

845. We had the church in there at nine. They're gone. That is not what the passage is saying. Right.



The heart is restoration. I'm gonna give you time. I want to see you repent. I want to see you come to Christ. I want to see you think about this for a while.

There's excommunication. How about this? There's loss of rewards. There's loss of rewards. We already said in the previous section that people can lose rewards based upon the fact as to how they serve Christ's church.

I mean, how tragic would it be if you have this individual ministry where you say, well, I love Jesus, I love Jesus. I just hate his church. And you get up there at the beam of seat of Christ. Second corinthians 5:10 says, we all need to stand before the judgment seat of Christ to give an account in our life. And you go to give your reward, and there's nothing to give it with because you hated Christ church the whole time.

You don't have a reward to give him. You have nothing to present before him. Now you're saved to the full, and you're loved dearly, and Jesus loves you, and he's glad you're there, but you got nothing to present because you've been against his church the whole time. There's lots of rewards. Now, here's two that you won't hear about very often, but I'm going to share them with you.

Okay, how about this one? When you try to destroy the temple of God, how about sickness? How about sickness? Can God make you sick? I mean, in the Old Testament, we see it.

I mean, there was a time when King Uzziah, who was the king of Israel, got really prideful after an amazing win in war. We read it in two chronicles 20 616, it says, but when he became strong, his heart was so proud that he acted corruptly and was unfaithful to the Lord, his God. For he entered the temple of the Lord to burn incense on the altar of incense. He's the king. He wasn't allowed in the holy of holies.

Only the priest was. And the priest was like, dude, don't go in there. You're not allowed in there. That's not what God would have for you. Don't do that.

Don't let your pride get the best of you. But he went in anyway, and guess what happened? He got leprosy. And the Bible says in two chronicles 26 21, King Uzziah was a leper to the day of his death. And he lived in a separate house being a leper, for

he was cut off from the house of the Lord.

Cut off? What happened? He got sick. God put sickness on him. Now, let me be clear on something.

If you're sick, it does not mean that you're not walking with the Lord. Can I be clear on this? If you have a cough, if you have an illness, if you've got cancer, it doesn't mean that God is putting that on you because you're wrong and you're bad. Many christians that walk with the Lord suffer in this world with an illness. Can we just get an amen on that?

God does those things. I mean, those things just happen in a fallen world. But it's a call to us as a christian, if we have a chronic illness, a chronic sickness. Is there any way in my life I've gone against the presence of God? Is this lingering because of something I've done, or is this just a general sickness, something we should ask?

I remember one time when I was in India, I was doing ministry in India, and somebody came up to pray with me at the end, and we were talking through a translator, and this guy was just holding his stomach, and he was just writhing in pain. And he said to the translator, whatever he said. And the translator said, pray for his stomach. He's got stomach pains. And, you know, like, when the Lord shares something with your heart, you just know is the Lord.

And just out of the clear blue, I said, I asked the translator. I'm like, ask him if there's somebody he hasn't forgiven. And so I heard the voice of the guy, and all of a sudden I see this man's face. He just starts crying, just tearing up. And as he was crying, I told the translators, like, tell that guy that God will heal him as soon as he goes and gets this thing right, but he's not going to heal him with there being unforgiveness in his heart.

And that man turned around and went out of the church and took care of business. Can you be sick from unforgiveness? Yes, you can. That's Old Testament stuff, that Uzziah stuff. God doesn't do that in the New Testament.

Flip over to one corinthians eleven and verse 30, and leave your finger there. People that took the Lord's supper in an unholy way, it says, for this reason, many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep. You're sick and you're weak because you've been going against the church of God. You're not going to have full vitality when you go against God's work. So there can be sickness.

How about this one? How about death? Does God ever take anybody out of the way? I mean, this verse we just read says, he does. Some of you have died.

Some of you are sick. Some of you are weak. Some of you have died. Why? Because you are not serving the church of God.

Right? Does God take people out of the way in the New Testament? 100% he does. I mean, this church is going on when God establishes the church and it's growing and numbers are being added daily to the people that are being saved. And what happens?

There's this couple named Ananias and Sapphira in acts chapter five, and they sell a property, and they bring it to the church. But instead of just bringing the whole gift to the church, they lie about it. They say, you know what? We're going to tell the church we brought it all because this is a good gift, but we're going to keep some for ourselves. In other words, they could have kept it for themselves and said, this is part of the gift, and we're bringing this to the church.

But no, they had to lie. They wanted themselves to look good in the sight of God. So Ananias comes in, and Peter says to him, he goes, is this the whole gift? He says, yes, it is. Boom.

Dropped dead right at that moment, right? God killed him. So what has to happen? They live in a culture that's not like our culture, where we embalm people and make them look better three days later than they did when they were first alive. I mean, what you do back in that day is you just bury people.

So these men have to go bury this guy, so the disciples go bury ananias. And to do that, they didn't have bobcats in the day, so they're digging ditches. I mean, they're

sweating. They come back like, oh, it was a tough day. Right?

At that time, Sapphira, his wife's there, and Peter's like, hey, did you and your husband give the whole gift? And she says, yes, and she drops dead. I mean, you can imagine the disciples like, are you kidding me? You got to bury another one. And then they got to take her out and bury her, too.

And guess what happened to the church? It flourished because people saw, God is holy, and his name is to be revered. And these people believe in his name. You see it in the Old Testament when Israel has taken over the land, in Joshua chapter seven. And Achan keeps things for himself, and what do they do?

They stone him, and then they move on, right? God takes it seriously. You say, well, that doesn't happen in our day. I can tell you a story after story after story where it does. A good friend of mine helped plant a church in the inner city of Chicago.

And there was an elder there one time that was like, hey, no way I'm voting for that. No way that thing's going to happen. I'm going to shut that thing down. I'm going to stop it when that vote comes around, there's no way you guys are planting that church. Wouldn't you know it that during the three days that they were going to vote on it, he was sick and couldn't attend the meetings, and they went and planted the church anyway?

Would that be just like our God? I have a good friend who's a methodist pastor that told me this story. When he came out of seminary, he had a church of about 100 people, and it was a little old wooden building where the floors creaked when people walked on it. And guy sat right about right there, and during the middle of each sermon, he would get up, stomp out of the room, slam the door. I mean, everybody's like, oh, man, whatever.

Well, they had a desire to buy this building, and this guy gave a lot of money because he was a businessman, he was well known, and they just kept praying, God, give us the building. God, give us the building. God, give us the building. This guy kept saying, there's no way. You'll never get the money if you don't have me.



No way. A week before they voted on the building, that guy died. The pastor says, he goes, I know that God took him out of the way. Does that mean he didn't go to heaven? No, I think God took him to heaven.

I think God took ananias and saphira to heaven. Right, but what were they doing? They were stopping the work of God in his church. Does God take believers out of the way who are stopping God's work? I believe he does, which gives me great comfort as a pastor.

So long as we're aligned with what God wants, we don't need to fear whatever else is going on. We have the protection and comfort of almighty God in our back pocket, doing what he wants to do, protecting his church. I mean, you'll see this thing like ads. Like, isn't it the under armour commercial? It's like, protect this house.

You know, guys, like, nobody comes in our house. That's how God feels about his house. God loves his house. It is the church. God wants us all to be there.

God wants us all to participate. God wants us all to know that he's dwelling inside of us. And here's what he's saying to the church. Wake up. Wake up.

This is the most important thing you'll do with your life. And I'm not talking about your vocation. You can be an attorney, you can be whatever you want to be. You can be a coach, you can be a teacher. But at the end of the day, here's what God's saying to you.

Your first and foremost priority needs to be to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. And all these things will be added. We need the church. Like you say. Well, I'm part of a ministry.

It's not really the church. I'm saying without the church, there's no such thing as a quality disciple. Perhaps you didn't hear me. I want to be crystal clear. Without the church, there is no such thing as a quality disciple.

Yeah, you can pick your ministry where you can get fed from another group of people and feel good about yourself. But I'm saying if you're not serving the church, you're not a full disciple because the church doesn't allow for niche ministry wise, do kids wise, do men wise, do women wise, do bible study wise, do whatever. Church won't allow for that. From cradle to grave, people who are mature in their faith, immature in their faith, people who are sick, people who are healthy, people who are upset, people who are aligned, it doesn't matter. You don't get to choose who you disciple.

You can't say, well, I'm not going to spend time with them. I don't want them in our church. The church is for everybody and God aligns things for us to grow in our faith. It's the church. It's the church.

It's the church. This is why he says, wake up. And I'll give you these last two rather quickly. He says this, wake up. Wake up to this fact.

God regards worldly wisdom and boasting as stupid. God regards worldly

wisdom and boasting is stupid. Now when I turned my notes in this week, my assistant called me and she said, are you sure you want to say stupid? Why don't you say foolish? And I'm like, no, I want to say stupid.

There's something else I want to say, but I can't say it on a Sunday. Worldly wisdom and boasting are stupid. Notice what he says. Let no one deceive himself. Let no man deceive himself.

If any man among you thinks that he's wise in this age, he must become foolish so that he may become wise. In other words, if you're like man, I'm so smart, I've got the world by the tail. I know how to run a business. I know how to run a family. I know how to run all this stuff.

You might want to become a fool so that you can honor the Lord. I don't know if you're like me, but I was so much smarter about 25 years ago. Anybody like that? I mean, just ask me. When I was 22, you asked me anything you want about the church.

Ask me anything you want to know about raising family. Ask me anything you want to know about marriage. I knew it all. I found that the older I get, the more foolish I become, because God's wisdom's wiser than that. Why?

For the wisdom of this world is foolishness. The biblical word, I mean, it means stupidity. It's where we get the. The greek word is moros, which is where we get our word. Moron.

If you're living by the wisdom of the world, you're a moron, is what he's saying. For it is written, you get job 513. He is the one who catches the wise in their craftiness. And again, psalm 90, 411. The Lord knows the reasonings of the wise, that they are what?

They're useless. They're useless. Worldly wisdom is useless in the church. I gotta say that again. Worldly wisdom is useless in the church.

Hey, here's what the world does in the business sector, so we gotta do this. Useless. Useless. What the church has going on that no business will ever have is the glory of God that is descending and answering prayer and doing all sorts of things that we could never, ever dare dream, ask, or imagine. I'm telling you, first Tuesdays when we do our prayer meeting, our elders were praying for some people this last week.

Some young girl that had a migraine has been having these serious migraines. She doesn't have her migraines anymore. Some of, we prayed for brain cancer this last week. Guess what? She went in for the MRI this week.

There ain't no, they can't find it. They're baffled. Right. See, that's not worldly wisdom. That's God almighty at work.

Amen. And when God almighty is at work, you don't need worldly wisdom. You need the presence, power, protection, and provision of almighty God. Right. Don't bring your worldly wisdom in here.

Become a fool when you come here and be dumb enough to believe that Jesus Christ is Lord and that he can get all his work done if we just be his servants. Because here's what I find in the church. I mean, we look for things like, when it comes to, like, let's say, getting married. I want a pastor. I want him to help me out.

I want to get some premarital counseling. I want to take weeks of your time, and I want to plan for months what the wedding looks like. And I want to make sure we can rent your facility and decorate just the way we want to and all that's great. But when they hit a rocky road after they get married, we don't hear from them. Because why?

Because I need a worldly counselor. No, you don't. You need the church to show you what it looks like to be a servant of the living God in your marriage so that you can make it work. Yeah, but when it comes to finances, I need the world. Financial people are way smarter in the world.

No, they're not. Financial people in the world are never going to tell you how to be generous and how to give more than what you're bringing in so that God can

provide the rest. They're never going to teach you that. They're not going to talk about giving when you can't give. They're not gonna talk about how storing up and spending less than you make.

I mean, this is not what the world does. The world says it's about you. You put it on credit. You do whatever you can. Just get a lower interest rate, make it all about you.

I don't find that the world can help all that much. I find that Jesus Christ can. And I don't care whether you're talking about ethics. I don't care whether you're talking about your marriage. I don't talk about whether you're raising kids or doing all these things.

It's the Church of Jesus Christ, where he's brought people together and aligned them that have godly wisdom that can pour into your life. That's what God's looking for. Amen. And what about this? Boasting in people.



So then let no one boast in men. What's it mean to boast in men? Oh, I know this doctor. He's so good. I know this gal.

She's such a good teacher. I know this person. Quit boasting in people. People are nothing. We are nothing but dust, and God breathes life into us.

Don't boast about people, carnal. Christians do two things all the time. They boast about what they know, and they boast about who they know. They're wise in their own eyes, and they know the right people. Just listen to people.

When you hear people talking about who they know and what they know, just know this. Just chalk it up. If they're a Christian, here's what they're saying. I'm totally carnal. That's who I am.

That's all they're saying. They name drop and they wisdom drop. That's all they do. That's what carnal people do. They can't help it because they're not aligned to the

one that has all wisdom.

That is all wisdom that's worthy of being boasting in. Let not the wise man boast about his wisdom. Let not the strong man boast about his strength. Let not the rich man boast about his riches. But let him who boasts boast in this that Jesus Christ is the Lord boast in that when you get around a godly believer, they'll boast in Jesus.

They'll boast in his wisdom. They'll boast in what he does. Wake up. Wake up. Don't continue to live your life with worldly wisdom and boasting other people.

And then finally wake up to this one final thing. Wake up to the fact that God provides all things for you. Wake up to the fact that God provides all things for you. In the gospel, they're all yours. Notice what he says.

So let no one boast in men. For what? For all things belong to you. All things belong to you. What things?

Whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas. Who's Peter, in other words? You know what? You don't belong to a teacher. The teacher belongs to you.

Let me say another one. This is not Pastor Jeff's church. This is Jesus Christ Church. Pastor Jeff is Jesus servant. To do what?

To belong to you. To feed you the word so that you can be the fullness of what God has. You don't belong to me. I belong to you. Apollos belongs to you.

Cephas belongs to you. Paul belongs to you. What's he saying? He's saying, don't start your stupid factions about who you like, who your teachers are. I follow so and so.

I follow no. They all belong to you. To help you grow in Christ. That's what it's all

about. What about this?

But I got some needs in this world. Oh, good. Glad you do. Because all things are yours. In the what?

In the world. God will meet all your needs in this world. How many believe that? God may not meet every single want that you have, but he'll meet all your needs. That's who our God is.

What about things pertaining to life? The Bible says God's given you all things you need for life and godliness you have it all. But what about after this life? What happens then? Well, that's so cool, because he says then death too.

Cause if you have the gospel, then even if you die, there's no death. You just get translated into being in the presence of Jesus. How awesome is that? So you don't need to worry about this world. You don't need to worry about this life.

You don't need to worry about your death. Or what about this, or things present which is today, or things to come which will be tomorrow if you're still living here. In other words, God has you today, he has you tomorrow, he has you the next day. There's nothing in your life that can come along that God doesn't have. You have all things in him.

So quit boasting about your wisdom and where you're going to go and quit boasting about this person that's come up with all this incredible logic for leading. You just lean into the Lord. He's got this world, he's got your life, he's got your death, he's got the present, he's got the future. And how about this? In verse 23, the best of all, all things belong to you.

And you belong to Christ. And Christ belongs to God. Did you hear what I said? You belong to Christ.

The king of the universe says, you're mine. I have you on my heart. No one can

snatch you out of my hand. You're mine. The king of the universe says, I'm with you all the time.

You're mine. You belong to me. You have significance and value and identity because you belong to me. All things are yours. Isn't that awesome that we serve that God?

Isn't it awesome that we can celebrate who he is? This is a wake up message to the church saying, church, wake up. God dwells here. Wake up. He cares about his church.

Wake up. Quit boasting about worldly wisdom and people, wake up. You have it all. So the way I wanted to end our service and our prayer time today is to do an individual prayer time. Because I think this is one of those messages you can't just hear and be like, I needed to hear that.

I think this is one for the people of God to say, you know what, God? I need some healing in this area. I want to let you know something beyond a shadow of a doubt. God loves you no matter what. And even if you sinned every one of these sins, he hasn't stopped loving you.

Isn't that awesome? And I don't want anybody here to walk out with guilt and shame in their life, but to walk out of here with the fullness of the spirit, knowing that the guilt and shame has been washed away and it's gone. Somebody's asking everybody in here today, just bow your head and close your eyes for just a couple minutes. And as I read these things, if you say, well, that's me, I'd be guilty of that. Just extend your hand, not just kind of up, but kind of like this.

Like all the way up, like that's me. Because, God, I'm just telling you, I heard what you said today and just, we're going to pray about those things and receive his forgiveness. Let's start with this one. If this is you, I've listened to gossip about a church, about a pastor, about his family, about another church that I don't even go to anymore at some point in my life, I've just done that. I've just listened to people talk bad about Christ and his church or people in the church.

At some point in my life, Lord, you see all the hands, Lord, every hand that's raised. You love every person that's raised their hand and you rejoice over the repentance that's taking place in their life. So by the blood of Jesus, I just pray you'd forgive them. Go ahead and put your hands down. What about this?

I've gone one step further, Lord, I've talked badly about the church. I've talked bad about some pastor or some other church or somebody in the church. I've spoken ill of another person in the body of Christ. I've done that, God. I know I have.

So, Lord, we just pray your blood over that. Lord, we just thank you that we're totally forgiven in this moment when we confess our sins to you and we just. We love you in Jesus name. How about this one? I've just had a poor attitude and motivation for service.

I'm pretty indifferent when it comes to my serving the church to Christ. I don't really have a good attitude about it. I don't generously serve the Lord in the church with all that I have. If that's you, go ahead and raise your hand. And, Lord, we just love you.



We love you that you love us enough to know that all that's forgiven in Jesus name.

What about this? I attend church with my personal values first. I make it really about me. And I've come to church asking for me. I really don't care about Christ Church.

Would you raise your hand so, Lord, you see all the hands just Lord, we ask your forgiveness in that moment, too, for all those things. We praise you, Lord, that that's all forgiven. And, Lord, now we just ask one, two, just. Lord, I know when I was listening today, I had unforgiveness in my heart. I'm bothered by someone.

I kind of dislike someone, I'm kind of hurt by someone. That's me. That's who I am. I got some unforgiveness that I need to deal with. Lord.

Lord, you see all those hands, and we just ask your blessing, your peace, your release and your strength for every hand raised. We're not saying that it was right. We're not saying that you feel like forgiving. We're saying, God, they hurt me. But I'm bringing it to you.

I'm no longer going to harbor that anymore. I want to end with this final one because for some of you, there may not be a specific thing, but the Holy Spirit was sharing something with you that wasn't even mentioned. You're like, you know what? You haven't mentioned mine yet, but it's there. And I'm raising my hand right now.

There's just something in my heart that God's doing. Okay. Lord, it's great to know that your holy spirit speaks and that you know all things. And so, Lord, we just give these things to you right now and we celebrate who you are.

So, Lord, as we close our service today, we want to be reminded of this with the same mercy and grace you extended to us when we first met you. It's the same mercy and grace you extend to us now. Lord, we thank you that through Christ we are

completely forgiven and we're whole. We thank you. We don't have to go work this stuff off, that you already took care of it and you worked it all at the cross.

We thank you that we're alive in you and that you set us apart with your word, with your ministry, with your message, and your mission to a lost and dying world.

Lord, let us treat each other as holy. In Jesus name. Amen. Amen.