

Boasting in Weakness

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 02 October 2022

Preacher: Alan Barts

[0 : 00] Thank you so much. Yes, my name is Alan. I'm one of the pastors here at One Harbor Church. Again, it's just a great honor and privilege that you chose to be with us today because there are so many great churches in the area proclaiming the good news or gospel of Jesus Christ.

One thing that we failed to announce is that next Sunday, we will be having baby celebrations. And so if you've had a little one in the past few months or whatever and would like to be recognized for that and kind of like commissioned and just Jesse mentioned the term family, we are definitely a family here.

And so it's just us praying over you and us as a church body saying, hey, we're with you. We're here to support you in your endeavor to point your little ones to Jesus Christ as the ultimate source of hope.

So we are actually wrapping up our walk through 2 Corinthians today. And we label the strength and weakness. And this last sermon is called boasting in weakness.

And so I spoke a couple of weeks back about giving, which is always a great topic to preach from, which, you know, Jesse threw me under the bus with that subject.

[1 : 09] And now today, wrapping it up, he gives me almost two chapters worth of material to cover. So I'm like, there's this little pattern going on here kind of thing.

So thank you so much. Appreciate that. These last passages that we're going to walk through today, we're seeing Paul kind of double down on this big idea, this kind of totally upside down idea that worldly power is bad and weakness is good.

If it means we find our strength in God. We shouldn't run away from it. We should embrace it. Paul is stating that we should embrace our weaknesses because that is where God shows up the most.

We see this throughout the Bible where God uses the weakest to do the most impact. Moses had a speech impediment, and God uses him to communicate to Pharaoh and lead Israel out of bondage. David becomes the greatest king of Israel.

And when he is introduced in scripture, his own father recognizes him as being worthless. A reminder, too, that this is a personal letter written to a church that Paul helped start, and he deeply loved.

[2 : 20] However, there has been quite a bit of relational strain between the church and Paul, and this is actually one of two that we have letters. But there are four or maybe even five letters that he did write to them.

As I said, there's been a lot of relational strain, other unhelpful voices that have come into the relationship to cause harm to the Corinthians. These are referred to here as super apostles because they are great orators and flamboyant presenters.

Paul was seen as inferior. That is not much different than today. We put so much emphasis on outward appearance and how well someone speaks or looks.

These guys probably wore the latest fashions, were in top physical condition, and had like booming voices. There were no PA systems back then. Paul has talked about his whippings, his imprisonments, his stoning, being adrift at sea, shivering at night, facing danger, etc.

He probably looks like a beaten down fragment of a man with tattered clothes. Definitely not what was looked highly upon in the Corinthian church. However, he is pointing them back to God as the true source of hope and also God's word.

[3 : 43] And while I had a lot to say to them, it has a lot to say to us. God, I just pray that today we would have ears to hear. Lord, that we would step aside from our pride, our arrogance.

Lord, and we would understand that you are worth boasting about. Thankful for that, God, in your name we pray. Amen. Amen. So today, like I said, it is a long passage, but it has some parts you probably likely know very well.

Paul here speaks to someone a bit exasperated, and he decides that they want to play the game of bragging about their wisdom and accomplishments. He's like, two can play that game. But he plays different.

He's factious. He's sarcastic. But he's going to the bottom. 2 Corinthians 11, verse 1. I wish you would bear with me in a little foolishness.

Do bear with me, for I feel a divine jealousy for you since I betrothed you to one husband to present you as a pure virgin to Christ. But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.

[4 : 55] For if someone comes and proclaims another Jesus than the one we proclaimed, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or if you accept a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it readily enough.

Indeed, I consider that I am not in the least inferior to these super apostles. Even if I am unskilled in speaking, I am not so in knowledge. Indeed, in every way, we have made this plain to you in all things.

Or did I commit a sin in humbling myself so that you might be exalted, because I preached God's gospel to you free of charge? I robbed other churches by accepting support from them in order to serve you.

And when I was with you and was in need, I did not burden anyone. For the brothers who came from Macedonia supplied by need. So I refrained, and will refrain from burdening you in any way.

As the truth of Christ is in me, this boasting of mine will not be silenced in the regions of Achaia. And why? Because I do not love you? God knows I do.

[6 : 01] And what I am doing, I will continue to do in order to undermine the claim of those who would like to claim that in their boasted mission, they work on the same terms as we do. For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising himself as an angel of light.

Sorry. Disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it is no surprise if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness.

Their end will correspond to their deeds. I repeat, let no one think me foolish. But even if you do, accept me as a fool, so that I too may boast a little. What I am saying with this boastful confidence, I say not as the Lord would, but as a fool.

Since many boast according to the flesh, I too will boast. For you gladly bear with fools, being wise yourselves. For you bear it if someone makes slaves of you, or devours you, or takes advantage of you, or puts on airs, or strikes you in the face.

To my shame, I must say, we were too weak for that. But whatever anyone else dares to boast of, I am speaking as a fool. I also dare to boast of that.

[7 : 17] Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they offspring of Abraham? So am I. Are they servants of Christ? I am a better one.

I am talking like a madman with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless beatings, and often near death. Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one.

Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked. And night and a day I was adrift at sea on frequent journeys in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers, in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure, and apart from other living things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches.

Who is weak? And I am not weak. Who is made to fall? And I am not indignant. If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness.

The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, he who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying. At Damascus, the governor under King Aretas was guarding the city of Damascus in order to seize me.

[8 : 49] But I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall and escaped his hands. I must go on boasting. Yeah, boasting in his weakness. Though there is nothing to be gained by it, I will go on to visions and revelations of the Lord.

I know a man in Christ who 14 years ago was called up to the third heaven. Whether in the body or out of the body, I do not know. God knows. And I know that this man was called up into paradise.

Whether in the body or out of the body, I do not know. God knows. And he heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter. On behalf of this man, I will boast.

But on my own behalf, I will not boast, except of my weaknesses. Though if I should wish to boast, I would not be a fool, for I would be speaking the truth.

But I refrain from it, so that no one may think more of me than he sees in me or hears from me. So to keep me from becoming conceited, because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited.

[9 : 58] Three times, I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he said to me, my grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.

Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities.

For when I am weak, then I am strong. I'm done. Phew, that was a lot.

So there's a lot in here. A lot of talking about boasting and weaknesses. Their world, and our world too, is a world that boasts in power and looks down on weakness.

Leaders, leaders, hide weaknesses so they look strong. People are willing to do whatever is necessary to stay in power.

[11 : 01] So the world of Paul and the Corinthians has that in common with us. Paul's been made to look foolish and weak because he won't give in to the bragging and boasting that other super apostles are doing.

Now, Paul decides to play along and show them that he can boast too. However, his boasting follows this pattern. He starts boasting in his qualifications, then stops to say how ridiculous this kind of thing is, then shows them how to really boast by talking about his suffering.

You can't begin to understand Paul here until you know the back story. So let's step back for a moment from Paul and the Corinthians. Before Paul met the Corinthians, Paul met Jesus.

Paul was a legend within Judaism, maybe the smartest of his day. He had succeeded in every way, had a lot of things to brag about. He was known as a Jew's Jew, a Hebrew's Hebrew, moving up the chain of command quickly.

But one day, while persecuting Christians, Jesus showed up. This was the turning point for the rest of Paul's life. It looks very different from here on out.

[12 : 18] He'd fall out of favor with the powerful. The approval he enjoyed for being so diligent and ruthless would be exchanged for what we see him describing here with the Corinthians.

In another boasting moment, writing to another church, Paul says in Philippians 3, put no confidence in the flesh, though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more.

circumcised on the eighth day of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews, as to the law, a Pharisee, as to zeal, a persecutor of the church, as to righteousness under the law, blameless.

But whatever gain I had, I count it as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus, my Lord.

For his sake, I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish. That word rubbish doesn't mean trash. It means animal dung. In order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes from through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith, that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, they may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death.

[13 : 47] Now that is a change of heart. That is counting all of the accomplishments of the world and recognizing it as a temporary joy. Recognizing that all of that will be gone.

Now he is investing his life, his knowledge, his talents, his abilities, all of it for the sake of the gospel and his promise for eternal hope. Paul had really encountered Jesus and that changed everything.

He had been someone who boasted in his heritage and accolades. However, when he met Jesus, everything else looked like bear scat. Did y'all catch that?

Bear scat. New Bern. There. So what we have here, I'm going to pray for you while I'm taking it. So what we have here isn't Paul's style versus the Corinthians.

Paul's a follower of Jesus. What he's proud of is the gospel. In his opening words to them in 1 Corinthians, he says, all we do is we preach Christ crucified.

[14 : 56] A stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles. God chose the foolish of the world to shame the wise. And God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong.

That's all we have. There is nothing else. So to really understand all of this, you must look to Jesus. You and I aren't going to be able to stomach Paul's actions unless we encounter Jesus in a similar way.

Not a road to Tabasco moment, but a moment where we realize the love of God and his grace extended freely to us. There is nothing else. This is necessary to know, by the way, if you're checking out Christianity.

If you're checking out Christianity, you need to understand this. It's unfortunate how often folks try to compare Jesus' leadership to kingdoms of this world. There has never been and will never be another like him.

His kingdom is the total opposite from start to finish. Jesus' kingdom is an upside-down kingdom. Starts out with Jesus born in a manger, a stable.

[16 : 03] Announced to people to whom? Have a past. Those on the wrong sides of the track. He wasn't announced to the authorities, to the kings. He was announced to the shepherds, the outcasts, the nobodies.

Not long into his ministry, Jesus tells a rich young ruler to do what? To sell everything and give it away. That's not what the world does. We try to befriend those of influence and power.

Right? I've said many times, it's not what you know, it's who you know. He tells a prospective follower that foxes and birds have it better.

Jesus rejects the fickle approval of crowds and the religious elite. He often says things that causes masses to abandon him. One time it was about 20,000 people just out of here.

And at that moment he turned around to his disciples and said, do you want to leave too? Jesus confuses a political leader named Pilate who couldn't understand why Jesus wasn't willing to fight to save himself.

[17 : 13] In the end of his life, Jesus dies on a borrowed criminal's cross. hanging naked after having been abandoned, mocked, beaten, and spit on.

Tough for even his own followers to see this as a victory. They all ran and hid. That's what Jesus was really like when it came to power.

All of those things. That was what he was really like. So don't fall into the trap of thinking things on earth are equal. Philippians 2 verse 5 says, have this mind among yourselves which is yours in Christ Jesus who though he was in the form of God did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped but emptied himself by taking the form of a servant being born in the likeness of men and being found in human form he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death even death on a cross.

Only Jesus would do what Jesus did. Lay down his power his rights he emptied himself became a slave willingly died shamefully.

Yeah you're not going to find that anywhere else so don't try. But it didn't just stop at Jesus along the way Jesus told disciples Jesus' disciples were told to embrace weakness and resist power.

[18 : 40] Along the way Jesus also said crazy things to his disciples they'd assumed that Jesus would overturn the political stronghold of the Romans and that they'd be living in the lap of power and luxury.

Instead Jesus consistently let them down and rebuked them. He told them if they wanted to be great be humble like a child. He told them that whomever would be first must be last.

At one point two of his disciples asked to sit at the right and left hand to which Jesus tells them all he can promise his suffering and they should just serve. If someone steals from you give him the clothes he didn't take.

Have no man call you rabbi. Reject fancy seats. Don't love praise. Pray for your enemies. Pray and don't curse them. Turn the other cheek. That's a good one.

Let somebody strike you and say you missed this side. Nah. Tell you what. Whew. That's a good one for me.

[19 : 50] Yeah. Seemed like foolishness then. Kind of seems like foolishness now. Right? As often as we try to equate Jesus with earthly powers we also fail to connect the dots that this kind of attitude is to be ours too.

All of those things is to be ours. Christians little Christ have this mind among yourselves wasn't just for Jesus.

Those who follow Jesus are meant to take up our cross. So that's a massive part of the backdrop here for this passage. And I tell you that because you won't be able to do what Paul did if you don't see that it was coming from an encounter with Jesus and an understanding of what it meant to be a faithful follower of Jesus.

Paul wants them to see that boasting in power is foolishness. But not just that he's desperately wanting them to see it's actually evil.

Verses 1 through 3 I wish you would bear with me in a little foolishness. Do bear with me for I feel a divine jealousy for you since I betrothed you to the one husband to present you as a pure virgin to Christ.

[21 : 13] This is key. But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.

Verses 12 and 14 And what I am doing I will continue to do in order to undermine the claim of those who would like to claim that in their boasted mission they work on the same terms as we do. For such men are false apostles deceitful workmen disguising themselves as apostles of Christ and no wonder for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light so it is no surprise if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness.

Their end will correspond to their deeds. The real enemy here isn't the super apostles it's Satan. These guys don't just have a different style they are Satan's servants.

This is an escalation in the argument not just style it's not a style thing it's satanic. The devil is very deceptive and uses power to tempt us.

The serpent deceived Eve. Their thoughts right back to the beginning of the Bible comes full circle. Do you really believe he did that back then?

[22 : 35] He's doing it right now. Can you believe they fell for that? Adam and Eve fell for that little lie? For a piece of fruit? What? Well they that seems insane how ignorant can you be?

Well guess what? We're doing it right now. We're falling for that same temptation. Paul's worried that their sincere faith will be destroyed by Satan who will not be coming with pentagrams and pitchforks.

No he will use what he's always used a false gospel soaked in worldly power and boasting that they will exchange the gospel of grace for a false gospel of worldly power.

What was he offering Adam and Eve? Power and knowledge. The same thing the Corinthian church is struggling with which is what we are all tempted with today. Power and knowledge.

are still on offer. The gospel. The good news. God's gospel is the good news that we have had our debt paid in full. Totally forgiven.

[23 : 39] Not because of us but because of Jesus. For this the work we have to admit that we have a debt we can never pay. Paul says Satan's got his own version of this.

One where you get the power and you get the credit and you get the boast in what you've done. Like in the garden they moved from dependence on God to independence. These two gospels are totally opposed to one another.

Ephesians 2 8 and 9 says for by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing. It is the gift of God not a result of works so that no one may boast.

pretty clear. Paul is saying there are two gospels one in which we get the power and praise and one where God gets the power and praise. That's it. There are two gospels yes but only one is real.

Paul doesn't want them to think that the only time Satan tempted anybody was back in the garden. That the only ones susceptible are simpletons. Fools. No.

[24 : 47] That's you and I. He wants them to see that they too have been duped into a kind of message that is more appealing but it is powerless to save. Friends worldly power is intoxicating.

Boasting in your own strength feels so good. Everybody loves a little pat on the back. Everybody loves to talk about how good they are in their new car in their new house in their new whatever. But we are to reject this as followers of Jesus.

One thing we don't need to miss here is that Paul is writing to a church. The Corinthian church is falling prey to this lie and we need not think that we as a church are not susceptible.

Jesus coming here is not enough. I mean sorry just coming here is not enough. We are to be diligent in reminding ourselves of the true gospel. So if we are going to follow the way of Jesus we have to learn how to handle our boasting and our weaknesses in a totally upside down way.

we don't not boast we choose to boast in the right things. 2 Corinthians 11 verse 30 says if I must boast I will boast of the things that show my weakness.

[26 : 03] Chapter 12 9 and 10 therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ then I am content with weaknesses insults hardships persecutions and calamities for when I am weak then I am strong.

We must fight the devil by being proud of our weaknesses. I want to make this practical because that's what Paul does here. He doesn't just say boast in dot dot dot he shows them how to do it.

We got to learn to boast in external circumstances and internal turmoil. We have to learn to boast in external circumstances and internal turmoil. What exactly are the weaknesses that Paul is facing?

Paul lists an impressive list in verses 23 through 28 and then others in 12, 7 and 10. In these lists we see a lot of suffering and trauma to say the least.

Paul recounts a brutal workload. Great labor, toil, hardships. He talks about imprisonments plural which is not just you know hanging out in the cell and watching TV and playing games lifting weights.

[27 : 18] No, these prisons were absolutely horrible places to be. Countless beatings often near death. Five times with the 39 lashes.

Three times beaten with the rods. One time stoned till they thought he was dead. Three times shipwrecked. A night in the day drifting to sea. Frequently in danger from rivers, robbers, his own people and others.

In danger in the city, in the countryside, at sea, false brothers. It must have seemed like all creation was out to get him. Many sleepless nights, hungry, thirsty, often without food, cold.

Apart from all that he thought non-stop about the churches. He loved them deeply and unstoppably. Even the Corinthians. It wasn't just mean religious people.

It was false brothers. He was abandoned by some of his best friends. That hurts. Can you imagine seeing Paul's body would be covered with horrific scars?

[28 : 23] One of the plastic surgeons. He would have shown signs of age well beyond his years. You can imagine his frame being gaunt, black circles under his eyes, chronic pain from all the beatings and hardships.

his mind was plagued by anxiety, insomnia, fear. His soul would have been weighed down from so much disappointment. When life gives you lemons, make lemonade.

What about when life gives you hornets? That's what Paul had. You can't imagine Paul wearing a live, laugh, love shirt.

Maybe you're thinking, this guy is amazing. Who without that? Well, a world where the strong don't suffer. That was his world. But if this, but if that list impressed you, have a look at what Paul brings up next.

Verses 30. If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness. The God and Father, the Lord Jesus, who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying.

[29 : 34] At Damascus, the governor under King Aretas was guarding the city of Damascus in order to seize me, but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall and escaped his hands.

What's going on here? We must be willing to boast in moments of frailty and fearfulness. He ran and hid.

Nobody wants to boast about that. Paul bragged to a bunch of folks in a very aggressive society that was all about how you look, how you presented yourself, that he had to run away.

Not making him look very good, they had doubts. I mean, if you're trying to make yourself look good, you kind of leave this out. Right? I think that's a big point.

Most of us can get behind telling some version of the story that makes us look like Jesus was helpful. We kind of did it. You know, Jesus kind of came along on the side. But there are parts of the story that we refuse to tell.

[30 : 37] We don't want people knowing that about us, you know. I fell on my face. Those kind of things. This is a great example of something Paul didn't have to tell.

No one would have known. The rest of the story was really good. The Bible is full of this. Look at Gideon. Look at Jonah. Choose to tell.

Why would Paul choose to do this and why would he choose to do this? Well, power in itself isn't bad. We need power. We need God's power.

And this, according to Paul, is the sure, fast way to get it. 2 Corinthians 12, 7 and 9 said, So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited.

Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.

[31 : 46] Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. How thankful are you for this verse?

I know I am. Sometimes we imagine men like Paul, great spiritual leaders, don't know what it's like to struggle. Don't know what it's like to have their prayers not result in what they'd hoped for.

Kind of got like this force field around them. Paul says, a messenger of Satan harassed me like a thorn in my flesh. He wanted it out.

He wanted that gnawing pain gone. So he prayed. But Jesus knew that this was a useful situation for Paul. Paul was brilliant.

Paul was gifted. And Paul was a man who could fall. Just like you and I. So Jesus rejected Paul's request. This was a crucible that would cause Paul to rely on God's power.

[32 : 48] And that was what he needed most. This is the secret of getting this truth. When you finally embrace weakness, you finally find God's power.

power. How many of us are missing out on the power of God in our lives because we aren't willing to be weak so Jesus can be strong? His power is made perfect in weakness.

Which means that we don't experience that if we insist on fighting to look strong. If we don't turn the other cheek for me.

His power is made perfect in weakness. What on earth are we to do? Let go and let God? Yes, but it's a little more than that. That's a passive approach.

Where we see Paul here doing some things. Verses 9. Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, calamities.

[33 : 52] For when I am weak, then I am strong. We are to gladly brag about how weak you are, how much you need Jesus. And settle in and be content with thorns in the flesh, hardships and weaknesses.

That's the way to get the power of God activated in your life. However, one final tip is you said about bragging about your problems. Don't boast in weakness in a way that makes you look good.

Don't boast in weakness in a way that makes you look good. 2 Corinthians 12, 6 says, so that no one may think more of me than he sees.

The goal of our boasting is that God looks good, not me, not you. That's how you know, by the way, if you're getting this right.

If everyone thinks you're awesome, that should be a big red flag. If you think you're the hero, turn and run. You can't stop people from admiring you.

[35 : 03] People are going to do that. But you can stop yourself from believing all the press and letting that be where you find your identity. Right? God's the hero.

It's like getting baptized and thinking you're the star. You know, when someone gets rescued from drowning at the beach or wherever, we don't make the victim the hero.

We know the praise belongs to the lifeguard. Right? I wanted to share with you one of the best ways I've seen this done.

We support a lot of organizations in this area, but one of them is Hope is Alive. And they do a meeting every Sunday night in their homes. And one of the things that goes on is a celebration of goals met.

There's a gong, a literal gong, that gets rung as house members come forward. They have goals like, I finally called my dad after five years.

[36 : 09] The gong is rung. So it's a boast, yes. But it's run by someone who is in a recovery home, away from their family and friends because of addiction.

The goals are things that don't even seem celebratory to the world. I got a bank account. Gong! I kept the job for six months.

Gong! But the gong is met with absolute pandemonium. There is absolute celebration for every one of these goals met. And why is that?

Because they all know they should all be dead or in jail. But for the grace of God, these boasts are boasts that only God can get the credit for.

Then they turn to a time called brag on the bro or the sister house. Sister shout out. This is when they call on others to stand up and they say things like, I was down this week but Jesse notified me, noticed me.

[37 : 16] I needed a ride to work and you took me. It goes on and on and on and on. It's all this pandemonium celebration. It's the little things is what gets them over the hump.

It's the little things is what gets us over the hump. This is another kind of boast that the world can't understand. It's that Romans 12, 10, outdo one another in showing honor.

The kind of boasting that admits you don't have it all and others are a blessing. I think we can learn from them. Let's boast like that.

Let's do that this week in community groups. Let's do that in our families. So how do we respond?

The band comes up. If you're here, you're listening and you're not yet a follower of Jesus, the invitation to give up everything and follow Jesus kind of sounds crazy.

[38 : 20] I get that. Unless you realize that everything is actually nothing. And Jesus is the everything.

C.S. Lewis calls this the great exchange. He, Jesus, emptied himself, died on a cross to save you by grace.

And you know, I think deep down inside, if that's you, you probably already know it. You already know that this new job, this new boat, car, house, et cetera, you fill in the blank.

It's only temporary. That feeling of satisfaction and contentment only lasts for a season. And then the urge comes again. And again.

And again. That will never change. But the everything of Jesus will always satisfy. That everything will always be faithful.

[39 : 23] That everything will never leave you wanting more. If that's you, I would be greatly honored to speak with you as well as Elliot, Jesse, or Freddie.

We would love to talk with you. If you're here, you're listening, you're already a follower of Jesus. It's easy to think that Adam and Eve and the Corinthians, they're foolish. Right? Hindsight is always 20-20, right?

It's harder to see that this is the way Satan might be fooling us. We're getting ready to take communion. And that meal, it kind of actually looks foolish.

Christ crucified. This is the kind of thing that a worldly kingdom would be embarrassed of. Let's talk about the walking on the water moments.

Not the death on a cross. However, this is the moment we are to most celebrate. Because in this moment, Jesus, who looked defeated by evil, actually triumphed over evil by this death on the cross.

[40 : 37] Colossians 2, 13-15 says, And you who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses.

By canceling the record of death that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame by triumphing over them in him.

Friends, if you're weak and heavy burdened, come to a meal and celebrate your king. The one who died to make you alive and forgiven. The one who reigns now and forevermore.

Take 30 seconds or so to really ponder what you just heard. And then we'll take communion together. Amen.