



Now we are in 1 Corinthians 5 and let me just give you an overview of where chapter five fits into the book. If you back away and look at the book as a whole, you see it's the sin of pride that is destroying the Corinthian church.

Paul is going to confront this pride in its various expressions. We have already seen this church-destroying pride expressing itself in personality cults. Later in the book we will see it expressed in flaunting Christian freedom, we will see it expressed in being inconsiderate of poverty, we will see it in their selfish use of spiritual gifts.

But in chapters 5 and 6 we see this pride expressed in sexual sin. So that is going to be the focus here for a couple chapters. And we are really going to try in these messages to link in our minds the connection between sexual sin and pride. That's what Paul wants us to see. This will be the focus of our work in 1 Corinthians for a couple chapters. But I also want to draw your attention to two other events we have going on in parallel to re-enforce what we are learning in Corinthians.



First off we have our next 1st Wed talk which we are entitling Faith, Gender and Sexuality. We've invited Preston Sprinkle in to talk on this subject. He has a ministry around gender and sexuality issues and so we are excited to have a time where we can learn what does the Bible really say about this issue?

- Why is there debate?
- And how can we interact with those in the LGBT community in a meaningful way.
- Our theme this year is Gospel Priorities, Reach Up, Reach In, and Reach Out. How do we reach out to this community?

2018 MEN'S RETREAT

PURITY

INTEGRITY MATTERS

APRIL 20–22

SPEAKER: JOEL HESCH (PROVENMEN.ORG)

LOCATION: QUAKER HILL

COST: \$90 (SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE)

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I will walk with integrity of heart within my house;
I will not set before my eyes anything that is worthless.
PSALM 101:2–3

Secondly, as has been mentioned our men's retreat this year is on sexual integrity and being satisfied in Jesus' design for us. How do we as men honor the Lord in a world that is just bombarding us. Every man in the room here is under attack and we want to give resources and help in that way. So wives, encourage your husbands to go to this.

Ok, let's dive into the text here. Two weeks ago, Nate read chapter 5 and preached an excellent big picture message on this which gives me the luxury today of preaching a message with a more narrow focus. So remember from Nate's message, Paul rebukes the Corinthians because apparently there was a man in their church who was sleeping with his mother-in-law and it wasn't a hush-hush affair. It wasn't secret and in the corner. He was open about it. He was shameless. It was known by everyone.

Paul says not only were they not shamed, but the whole church was boasting in this twisted relationship. Now it doesn't take much imagination to understand the content of their boast? Their boast

must have been something along the lines, "Listen, we are not like those fundamentalist who wag their finger in judgment. I'm so tired of hearing nothing but judgment, condemnation and finger wagging. Let's get with the times folks. Things have changed. It's not like it used to be. We are progressive, enlightened, modern, tolerant and that makes us effective. Our church connects to culture because we are relevant. Look at who we are reaching because we are relevant?"

Now it's understandable how this happened. Who likes swimming against culture? Who likes being the bad guy? Who likes being labeled intolerant, judgmental, bigoted? Who likes making enemies by saying, "What you are doing is wrong."

You can hear the Corinthians rationalize, Listen, we've tried being that voice that tries to keep a standard and that doesn't work.

The more we try to uphold traditional values, the more hostile the world becomes and the less they listen. The more we try and uphold traditional views of sexuality the less relevant we become. And so you can imagine the Corinthian church justifying themselves, "What if we just concede this one point, won't we become more relevant?" What's the big deal. They seem to really care about each other. It's consensual. And so they caved and low and behold, it worked! Suddenly the world seemed less hostile. The verbal persecution evaporates in an instant. They got a write-up in the Corinthian Times, "Christian church welcomes the sexually diverse."

And I think you can quickly see the parallels in our culture, can't you. What we are up against today is a cultural dilemma so thick and messy it feels like there is no escape. What we are up against today in our culture is like one of those questions that the Pharisees put to Jesus that seems so unanswerable, so difficult, so impossible.

If Jesus lived in 2018 and he was thrust into the spotlight, and he began making waves like he did in Palestine, I'm certain that political leaders and interest groups would try to lay for him a trap question just like they did in the 1st century. And here's the trap question I can almost guarantee someone would try to ask him, "Jesus, are the gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgender welcomed into your church?"

That's a no-win question - no-win. Because if you say, "Yes, gays are welcome, lesbians are welcome, transgender are welcome, how is it really possible to do that without accepting their lifestyle. How can we welcome them without welcoming their values?"

- Don't you imply by that welcome that you are okay with everything they are doing?
- Do you feel some of that tension?
- What if you saw that 1/2 our church was gay couples? How would you feel about that?
- And you asked, so why did you come to our church and they said, "Well we say a sign outside that said gay couples are welcome here so we decided this would be a good church for us to attend."

Well, that doesn't feel right. But if you say homosexuals are not welcome that's an equal trap, I think an even bigger trap. For sure you open yourself to being unloving, hateful, bigoted. But far worse than that, if you say they are not welcome, don't you make this a works based religion where you have to get cleaned up before you're good enough to enter the church?" Do you see the trap?

Now this is not by any stretch of the imagination a theoretical question. Let me make this necessarily uncomfortable for a moment and force the point?

"Who is unwelcome in God's church?" I've seen signs in front of churches that say, "All are welcome." Is that true? Are there any who are unwelcome in God's church? Are we judgmental, unloving and hateful if we say to someone you are not welcome to come here? And if we are to tell certain people, you are not welcome here, what is the thing they are doing that makes them unwelcomed? And what can they do to then be re-welcomed? Those are like really important questions. It's hard for me to even think of a more important, more culturally relevant question than that.

This is the essence of the trap: Jesus, are gays, lesbians, bisexual and transgender allowed in your church? How would he answer? How should you answer?

Here's what I think Jesus would say: "All people are welcome to come just as they are; none are welcome to stay that way."

No person in this room is welcome to leave the same way they came.

You see, every one of us this morning came with some area where Christ needs more control, more say, more lordship. All who approach Jesus, need to come realizing the claims he makes. Jesus claims to be LORD. To be a Christian means by definition, that Christ as Lord owns every part of you. There is no area of any one of our lives that is off-limits to God.

You don't have to clean yourself before coming to church but you do have to come to church and let Christ clean you.

- Greedy people are welcome. Disobedient children are welcome. Adulterers are welcome. All are welcome to come as they are but

none are welcome to stay that way.

There are dozens and dozens of us in this room who came this week with deviant sexual thoughts. It could be homosexual thoughts or pornography or lust or adulterous desires. God says, you whose desires are twisted, you whose sexual desires are against my desire, come as you are, come, don't try to clean yourself up for you can't, you are welcome to come to table of grace. You are welcome just as you are, don't come any other way - what other way could you come, but as you come and as you receive receive grace, realize that accepting grace and forgiveness has implications. You can come as you are but you can't stay that way. You can't go back. You can't continue in sin. You can't leave the same way you came.

- All are welcome to come as they are. None are welcome to stay that way.

Leaven

So really, this is what we might call, the principle of grace. All people who receive grace will change. If you refuse grace, you refuse change.

But what I want to do today is look at what happens when we come as we are but we won't let Christ clean us. What happens when we come as we are and we leave as we come.

Paul in this passage says, that attitude is cancer. That attitude is like leaven. He compares this kind of sin to yeast or some other rising agent that leavens bread. And we will use that imagery as an outline for the rest of the message. Why is Paul so concerned about leaven?

The Nature of Leaven 1. Leaven grows invisibly

The reason Paul is so concerned about this unchecked sin in the church is because he says, the real problem is invisible. The outward problem here is obvious. The guy has this relationship that's inappropriate. But what is the heart sin? What is the actual leaven? The actual leaven is arrogance and pride. Remember we said earlier that one of the main goals of Paul in this section is to link pride with sexual sin.

And you can see the connection in verse 6. The boasting and the leaven are linked.

The pride that really causes all these problems is invisible. And what does pride do in an ultimate form? It elevates us ABOVE God. That is what pride is always trying to do, raise us up above God himself.

Now let me illustrate this in the passage by actually answering the question specifically that we asked earlier? Are there any who are unwelcomed in God's church? I mean if you look at 1 Corinthians 5 here's at least one guy. This guy in 1 Corinthians 5 clearly is not

welcomed.

- He says in verse 5 that we are to deliver this man over to Satan.
- He says in verse 7 that this man is like leaven and says we are to cast it away because there is danger of these sinful attitudes spreading.
- In verse 11 he says don't even eat or associate or eat with this guy or people like him.
- He concludes in verse 13 by saying, "Purge the evil person from among you."

So is this guy welcome in the church? Definitely not. Why? What did he do? What was the thing he did that got him into the category of being unwelcomed? What was the big heart issue? And the big heart issue was PRIDE.

Here's what he did. #1 He claimed the name brother. He claims the name Christian. What does that name mean? We are followers of Christ. Jesus is my Master/Lord/King.

So that's the CLAIM. But here's the second thing he did and where the problem lies. #2 When the Master/Lord/King says, "Follow me here!" He says, "who are you to tell me what to do? Who are you to tell me what is going to make me happy? Who are you to interfere with my private affairs?"

1 Corinthians 5 is not about sexual sin. It's about the sin of prideful rebellion and insubordination. It's about the sin of pride that elevates self above God. That is why Paul in verse 11 broadens the application. Sure this particular guy is unwelcome, but you are not to welcome anyone who has this attitude.

- it has application to a guy whose pridefully greedy, who thinks that

the money God gave him is his and he won't humble himself. - it has application to a guy whose an pridefully an idolator, the guy who commits spiritual adultery and has an emotional affair with money or power or people and won't repent- and he won't confess it.

- it has application to the guy whose a pridefully a drunkard, the guy who looks to substance for satisfaction instead of Jesus and doesn't cry to the Lord for deliverance - and he won't confess it.
- it has application to the guy who pridefully cheats in his business to get ahead thinking that it's more important to make money or get ahead than to represent Christ in the workplace - and he won't confess it.

If a man won't repent of his pride then he needs to be removed?

Why

The Nature of Leaven 1. Leaven grows invisibly 2.
Leaven spreads quickly

Because sin spreads quickly. The old bakers would always start with a lump of leavened dough. They knew the leaven was in there. Before they would put it in the oven they'd pinch off a lump, and they'd take the lump and put it away to make sure it didn't infect any

other dough. Then they would bake the rest of the bread.

But that dough was needed when they worked up a new batch of dough. They would take that piece of leaven and stick it in there and, immediately, it would work itself in. Leaven spreads. Yeast spreads. It spreads very, very rapidly.

You will never keep sin in a corner in your life personally and as a church we can never keep it in a corner of this building with out infecting the rest.

It's kind of like m&m's. Can anyone just eat one? If you start eating m&m's how do you stop? You can't possibly stick it in a corner of your life and say, "Don't bother me."

You might do your best to ignore the sin you know is there but that sin will not ignore you. In 2 Timothy 2:17 Paul compares this irreverent, rebellious talk of Hymeneus and Philetus to gangrene. That's a powerful picture. If you have gangrene in your leg, you don't say, "Oh, well I don't mind. It won't be too bad." Oh no. You can ignore it all you want, but it won't ignore you!

So that's why God is so serious about dealing with it.

2 Thessalonians 3:14, If anyone does not obey what we say in this letter, take note of that person, and have nothing to do with him, that he may be ashamed.

Now to be clear. This is usually a very slow process. This is the Matthew 18 process of going to your brother and if he repents you've won your brother. If he doesn't take someone else with you and if he repents you've won your brother. But if he doesn't repent there, take it the church. And if he still doesn't repent, it's time to treat him like an unbeliever. This can take years.

In the 3-4 cases of this we've had in the history of our church, it always starts with some confrontation of some specific sin, but always ends with the pride of insubordination. They will not submit to God. And that's the invisible leaven that Paul warns against.

Do you see the issue? The only person who is unwelcomed in God's church - and I emphasize ONLY - the only person is the person who claims to be a Christian but whose pride will not allow Jesus to overrule his desires.

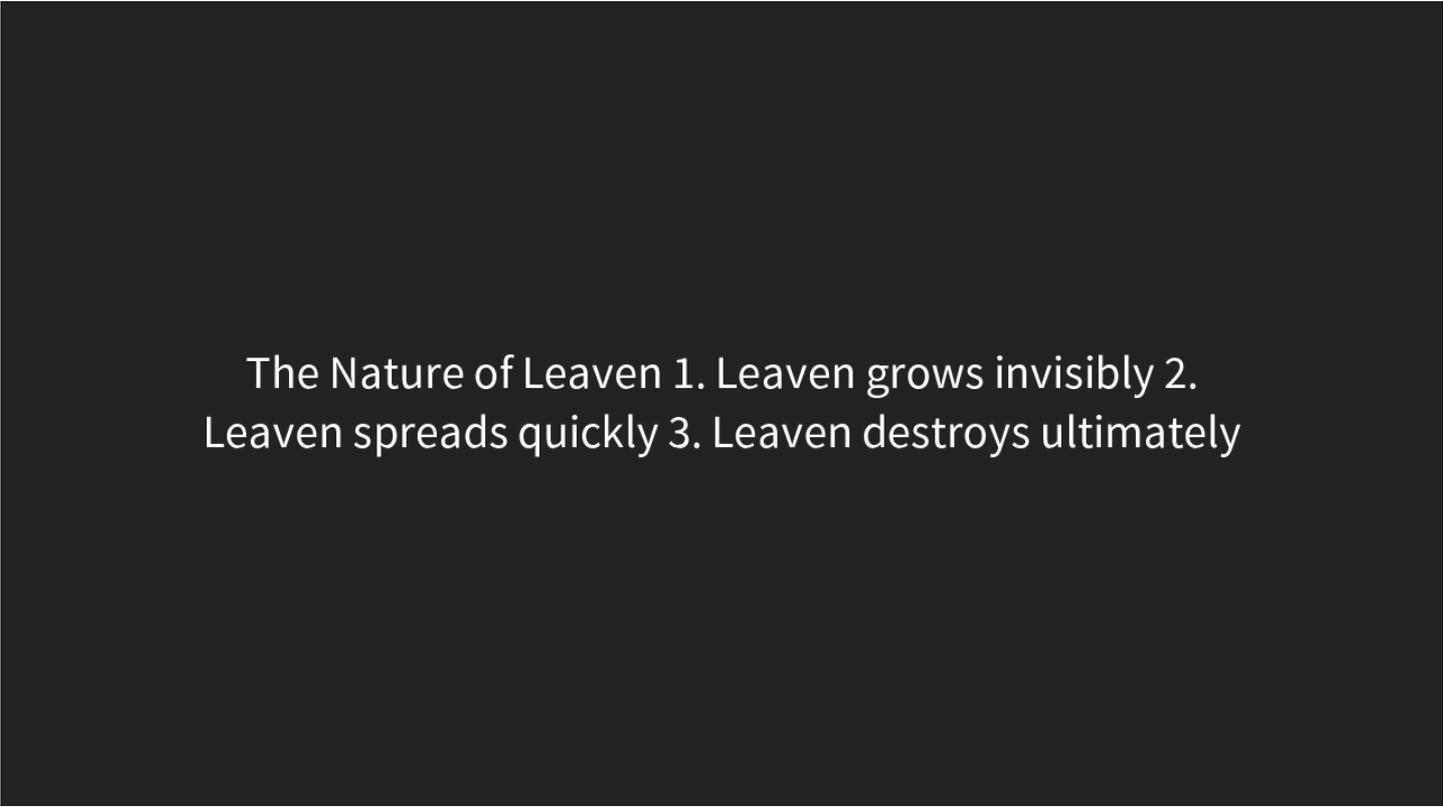
That is the gangrene that you must amputate. There is an unforgivable sin. There is an unpardonable sin. And it's the sin of

not receiving God's grace. It's the sin of not allow Jesus to take his rightful place of master and king.

If a person doesn't claim to be a Christian and is living the life of an unbeliever, of course he is welcome. Come, listen to the offer of the king. Come listen to what he's claiming will be yours if you surrender your life to him? Consider it.

But you cannot claim to follow Christ and reject him as having say in your life. That upsets everything.

Coming to Jesus means coming prepared to repent of any misplaced desire, any misplaced passion, any unlawful desire. We repent of it. Now there's a third reason we take sin seriously



The Nature of Leaven 1. Leaven grows invisibly 2.
Leaven spreads quickly 3. Leaven destroys ultimately

What is the goal of Paul's excommunication here in the passage. It's crystal clear. He's not trying to punish this man. He's trying to save him. And save him from what? From ultimate destruction. The

language sounds severe - turn him over to Satan. In other words, let this guy get rattled around without the protection of the church. Why? So that his soul might be saved in the day of judgment. That happens to be the goal of the 2 Thessalonians 3:14 passage as well. Look at the next verse.

2 Thessalonians 3:15, Do not regard him as an enemy,
but warn him as a brother.

Paul could see that this sin was consuming this man personally and the church he was in. And Paul said, we need to intervene quickly, urgently before the whole thing is destroyed!

One of the things about yeast that we now know from science is that it is a living organism. It's a living cell, and what yeast is doing in there is digesting the sugar in the dough, and by digesting the sugar it's breaking the sugar into two things: alcohol and carbon dioxide.

The alcohol evaporates, but the carbon dioxide gets stuck in the bread and, therefore, it rises. However, if you allow the yeast in there long enough, it'll take all of the sugar out. It will totally destroy it, become inedible and bitter.

And this perhaps is one of the reasons that Paul compares sin to leaven. Sin left long enough will completely destroy its host.

The Bible speaks in Romans 1 of abandoning people to their sin. It's a scary picture of ultimate consummation, where the leaven of sin has so consumed the host that there is nothing left to redeem.

The Scary Question.

Now there is perhaps a remaining question that plagues us. Isn't all sin rebellion? Don't we all have leaven in us? What is the difference between the sin of insubordination that puts you into that class of people who are unwelcomed in God's church and the normal cycle of sin and confession that we all experience? How do you actually identify this cancerous form of sin that causes a person to be unwelcomed?

It's a similar question to asking, what's the difference between anger and murder. What's the difference between lust and adultery. Isn't it the same leaven allowed to grow a little longer?

And the answer is yes. Exactly. That is what Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount. What was his point? Don't play around with it. Gouge out the eye. Cut off the hand. Because that sin is gangrene and it will consume and kill you.

You can repent of a lustful heart in an instant. And it's over and your healthy. But if you let it grow, before you know it you will have destroyed your marriage and if you continue, it will destroy your soul.

Every year people die of the common cold. And if you were to ask the family that lost their loved one, at what point did that cough turn

fatal. Nobody knows. But at some point it did. At what point does sin become rebellion? And what point does sin become unredeemable insubordination? It's very hard to say, but rest assured, it does. And when it does, it is soul-destroying.

Here's the principle.

- Jesus can be lord to sinners.
- Jesus cannot be lord to rebels.
- And the unconfessed sin of sinners leads to the Christ-rejecting sin of rebels.

Here's an analogy that may help. Consider the relationship between a coach and player. The coaches job is mainly to get you to do things you would never do on your own.

- You have to run harder than you want to,
- train longer than you want to,
- undo bad habits,
- think harder than you want to, etc.

The coach has to constantly discipline his player. He has to eat, rest, exercise in ways that are very uncomfortable.

Now as a player you are going to cave. You are going to ignore the coach and eat a bag of Jolly Ranchers. You are going to stay up too late and not get enough rest. And your coaches job is to rebuke you, to correct you, to remind you that this is not what's best for you.

And as an athlete it angers you a bit. It's a shot a shot to your pride and autonomy. But you concede, you repent, you confess. That confession helps you refocus on the goal, it helps to remind you why you are suffering to start with, it helps to remind you that your coach

has been there and knows what is necessary to get you to the finish line. He has wisdom you need to listen to.

But the pulls of the flesh are strong. Does that mean going forward, you will never fail again in your diet. No, you will likely compromise again, and you will be need to be reminded again.

But in that failure there is a fundamental submission, a fundamental agreement that I need to coach to direct me, a fundamental understanding that the coach is in charge, a fundamental agreement as to what the goal is.

But you can imagine the guy who is scolded by the coach and hardens himself. And then he's rebuked and hardens further and eventually, he spits in the guys face and walks out of the gym."

- Insubordination says, "Don't tell me what to do.
- "Who are you to tell me how to run a race?
- What right do you have to tell me what I can and cannot eat?
- What authority do you have over me that you dare suggest that you have idea what I should and should not do?
- I will pick and choose what I want to do.
- But let me just make it clear, "You are not in charge of me."

The second that sort of insubordinate attitude comes into any person that names the name of Christ, he is unwelcome in God's church. Why? Because it is a breach of the relationship in the most severe form.

Consider the relationship between a ship captain and his crew members. The relationship is based on absolute loyalty. Absolute. You give me all your loyalty, all your allegiance, your absolute surrender of your will and in turn, I will take all that allegiance and

use it to serve the entire ship. I will surrender myself to do what's best for everyone on board. I will be absolutely loyal to you.

And that absolute submission was so important, historically, mutiny was punishable by death. You destroy that relationship and the whole thing collapses.

All sin is mini-rebellion, but enough of the little forms and the Scriptures speak of an ultimate form which will absolutely destroy the soul.

So what do we do about it? How to make sure the gangrene doesn't spread, how do we make sure the leaven doesn't leaven the lump? How do we make sure this mini-rebellion doesn't turn into insubordination?

We confess it. So here's what we are going to do. Wherever you are at today, you can confess it. You can let Christ clean you. You can let Christ wash you. Today is communion Sunday, and communion is a more formal way of doing what we should be doing every, day, every hour, every minute, the act of resubmitting to our master/king/sovereign, the act of allowing God to change us and clean us, the act of receiving his grace, confessing his lordship, cleansing out the leaven, reconfessing his prerogative to decree what is best for us.

Communion

We do not come to the table perfect. We come to the table because we are imperfect. But we come in submission, don't we. We come to receive forgiveness, to confess that our idea of what will make us happy is inferior to his perfect plan.

We've structured the message today around this whole idea of leaven. Communion uses unleavened bread to symbolize that a perfect body, a body that is free of leaven was broken for us. So when you eat that cracker, remember it was a body free of sin that was broken so that the leaven from your body could be removed.

Now I want to remind us of the warning in Scripture around communion because it fits so perfectly into what we've been talking about. Don't you dare come to the table here as a rebel. Don't you dare touch this table with an attitude of insubordination. You are not welcome here with that attitude. No wife in the world welcomes the phrase, "I love you" while the husband is openly sleeping with another women. And in a similar way, "God will never welcome the person who claims the name of Christ and says, 'You are my Lord' while deliberately snubbing and scorning and doing what he has told us not to do.

God takes this uber seriously. When we get to 1 Corinthians 11 Paul says some of you God has literally judged by taking their life for so flippantly coming to the table.

So don't come as a rebel, but there's an equally deadly way to come. Don't come pretending you are clean either. This table is for sinners. This table is for those who have had mini-rebellions and thoughts and for a moment believed that they knew a better way. All are welcome and all must change.

Exhortation

Now I want to end with a word of exhortation. Our theme for the year is gospel priorities.



This whole message has been a combination of reach up and reach in. This whole message is a message of God let me put myself in submission to you and let me make sure that we are not letting the church be polluted by someone who claims the name of Christ and yet is walking in rebellion.

But be so careful in your heart not to think that this means we need to be unwelcoming toward sinners. No! Heaven forbid! The kingdom of God is all about welcoming sinners. That's the whole point. It is not the healthy that need a physician but the sick.

Jesus is not at all saying in this passage not to interact with sinners.

1 Corinthians 5:9-10, I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people-not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world.

The implication here is that of course you are interacting with sinners. Of course you are going to be living with them and talking with them. Of course you are going to be eating with them. Of course you are going to be going to events with them and working with them. Of course. And what is your job? To point them gently, winsomely, carefully to the all-satisfying person of Jesus Christ.

Now I know this is difficult. I know it is. And what we want to do here at the end of our service is do what I am going to call a soft close.

I'm going to ask the sounds guys to turn on some house music and I'd like you to end the service by giving you some space to pray. Maybe you turn and pray with the person next to you. Maybe you pray by yourself. We've also got a prayer team up here if you want to come up front and pray with someone. Nate will be up here and he can connect you with a family or two to pray.

My guess is that the message today has brought to mind someone in your life who you interact with regularly who has a totally different

view of sexuality.

What do you say? How do you help them see Christ? How do present him in his beauty?

- maybe the way you have approached this person in the past was unloving and you need to repent and find a way to ask for forgiveness.
- maybe you have just been scared to talk and you've put off a vibe that is unpleasant and unattractive
- maybe your conversations haven't gone great in the past and you don't know what to do next? How can I fan into flame a desire for Jesus, how can I create a hunger for him?
- maybe there is an event on the horizon where you will be interacting and it makes you nervous.

We want to leave some space at the end of the service for you to just pray about these things. Some of you will need to leave right away, that's totally fine. Some of you will want to take this conversation into the foyer. Others will want to stay back and pray for 5,10,20,30 minutes. We want to encourage this. So let me pray, sound guys when I am done praying, you can turn on some music, some come forward, some can move into the foyer, some can stay where you are.

The christian community is a community that tries in snapshot form to illustrate the Lordship of Christ. When someone rejects that premise it is leaven - poison - in the growth of that community.