

Colossians #5 - Jesus Our Warrior King

- Howdy, pastor Mark Driscoll here at the Trinity Church in Scottsdale, Arizona, really excited to provide for you the series of sermons based on the book of Colossians. It's an amazing book of the New Testament, where the apostle Paul is writing from prison to a newly planted church, and we took a few months here at the Trinity Church to go verse by verse through this book of the Bible. I've had the honor of preaching and teaching perhaps a few dozen books of the Bible in my career, and this is the first time I've ever been through Colossians, and I'm really excited that you can join me. All right, if you've got your Bibles, go to Colossians chapter two, starting in verse six. We're spending a few months going through the great book of Colossians, and a little bit of background. They're an early young baby church plant like ours. Things are going well for them as they're going well for us, and the man writing the book, his name is Paul. He is in prison. He's far away. He loves them and he wants to encourage them to continue flowing in the grace of God, and he is warning them about strong currents that can come and very quickly veer you off course, and it got me thinking about an experience we had some years ago. It was summertime, and the family and I were gifted this cool log home on this creek, and we spent a few weeks there, and out the backyard was this creek that you could throw a rock across, even if you didn't have a great arm, and it was maybe knee to thigh high at the deepest point. So not very dangerous, frogs all over, fish jumping and swimming, just sort of picturesque, apple orchards all around. It was pretty glorious, and people would float by sort of lazy, easy-going day trip down the creek in the back of this home, and I thought, well, that would be really fun. How do you do that? Because if you float downstream, then you have to walk home, and I don't feel like I want to do that with five kids in a bunch of inner tubes, and so I learned about this company that you could drive upstream, and they would give you an inner tube, and then you would float downstream, and they would pick you up on the right side, and then put you in the van and drive you back to your car, and I thought, well, that sounds great for our family. So we went upstream and they give us the inner tube, very little instructions. They said, "Oh, have fun." "Okay, we will." So we get in the creek and it's sort of meandering, beautiful, picturesque. It's warm out. The water is really cool. It's runoff from snow melt, and just feels great, and next thing I know, we're just totally relaxed and everything is calm, and the kids are doing a little swimming and playing in the sand bars and there's no danger in sight, so we kind of scattered. Some of the kids are over on this inner tube, some are on that. Some are 100 yards ahead of us, and we're all kind of spread out, but it's an easy, lazy day float, and this goes on for a few hours, and then we sort of meander around a corner, and out of nowhere, three or four creeks converge and create a full blown river, okay? And this is a wide river. I've got a good arm and I can't throw a rock across it, and it is really deep and it is moving really fast with this incredibly strong current, and you could see some rocks and some white caps, and there are people that are doing the crazy river raft, and they're in canoes and they have helmets on and stuff, and I'm thinking, "Oh, boy, our vacation just officially came to an end." My family's all separated, and one of the kids' inner tubes is deflated and barely floating. I don't have a life jacket on. They didn't tell us that the little creek turned into a quick, fast-flowing river, and we'd not seen the sign to get out yet, and as soon as we turn the bend and I see this sign, get ready to exit the river

soon, and I'm like, "Well, this sounds great, but some of us are here," and there was this strong current that slingshotted an inner tube with a couple of my kids, the tube that was deflating, to the complete other side of the river. Now, I can't swim very well. I know you're looking at me saying, "That's a shock." I know. That's why I told you, 'cause you wouldn't know by looking at me. I'm not a strong swimmer. I am not a strong swimmer. I don't have a life jacket on. My family is all separated and on inner tubes, and two of my kids are on a deflated inner tube on the other side of the river with a strong current, and we're supposed to all pull over to the right, and I'm thinking if I don't get my family together, those kids go downstream. I don't know where they go. I don't know how to pick them up, and it turns into sort of dangerous whitewater, and so I'm panicked. How many of you are dads? You'd be freaking out right now, Dad, right? I was freaking out. So I grab the inner tubes and I pull them together and work with them, and then ultimately sort of pull them, swim them over to this big rock, and I tell the family, "Everybody hold onto the rock. Now we're gonna swim across the river," because my other kids have been slingshotted all the way around by the strong current, and I figure I'm gonna swim across the river. I got to grab kids on a deflated inner tube. I got to swim back and reunite my family around the rock, and then get them into this little inlet so that then we can all get in the van and weep bitterly, so that's my plan. So it's adrenaline and the Holy Spirit. I get across the river and the kids are like, "Dad, we didn't think you'd make it." Me neither, and we still gotta go back. This is a situation, and, I mean, just by the grace of God, I barely got the kids to the other side, reunited the family and we got off and I thought, "Man, I wish somebody would have told me that eventually the simple day float comes with a strong current that can veer you off course into danger very quickly." Would have been nice to know. The reason that the apostle Paul writes this section of this letter to this church, and to our church, is because, for some of us, our relationship with the Lord feels like a nice, simple day float. I've got Jesus. I got my inner tube. I'm reading my Bible. I'm singing some songs. I'm praying. I'm resting in God's grace. Next thing you know, what? You're slingshotted out, strong current. Now all of a sudden it feels like everything's out of control and you're in danger. How did you get here? And he's warning them that there are strong currents that want to pull you out of God's will and off of God's course and into danger. Into danger. And I would say, having had the honor of preaching for 20 years, there are two primary things that happen that create a strong current to pull you away from your flow in the grace of God and the will of God. Number one is lust. Number two is like. What happens with lust is almost every theological problem is a pants problem in disguise, okay? What I mean is this: people want to sleep with other people and the Bible says no, so they create some new fangled doctrine or theology to sort of say that it's okay to do what the Bible says is not okay. That's why most cults and false teaching and false religions have some sort of illicit sexuality involved with it, and so in recent years, here are the strong currents. "Oh, Jesus was married and had kids." No, He didn't. No, He didn't. "God's a woman." Our Father? What's not clear about that? Let's redefine marriage. Well, why? I know the guy who created it and He seems to want to stick with it. All of a sudden these issues come up, and it's these strong currents that try to pull people aside in a way from the teaching of the Bible, and oftentimes behind the theology is a lust, a desire to do something that is wrong. So let me tell you what the next one's going to be. I'll just give you a little foreshadowing. It's going to be polygamy. That's what's coming next. The current is starting to swell, and it will be very strong, and there'll be people who open the

Bible and say, "Well, there were people that practice polygamy and we therefore support it." And it all ended very badly, just so you know, and it was not God's intent from the beginning, but strong currents come. Sometimes it's lust, and sometimes it's like. If you're on social media, it's really hard to be a Christian. Let me tell you why. The whole goal is that people would like you, and if you believe what Jesus believes, they may not like you. So if you live your life to be liked by people, it becomes very hard to be a faithful, biblical Christian, and so here's what happens. You meet Jesus and you say, "I love Christ." And then you realize, "Oh, not everybody likes that." And the backlash can be very strong. The current's going the other direction. So then what you do, you say, "Okay, I'll keep Christ, but then I'll add a cause. A cause is usually a very good thing. It's something that helps people and is social and is good, and I'm not gonna talk much about Christ 'cause when I talk about Christ, they don't like that. I'll talk about my cause, and we'll all agree on this good cause, then they'll think I'm a good person, and they'll like me in spite of my Christ because of my cause." Well, then, over time you realize, "Well, how about I just put the cause first? The cause is now important, and I'll sort of hide my Christ." And then pretty soon it's, "I'll get rid of my Christ and I'll keep my cause. I'm a good person who helps people. You need to like me." You need to know that these two things, lust and like, are strong currents that want to pull you away from the flow of God's grace and God's will, and if you're not aware that they exist, you can be slingshotted off course into danger very, very, very, very quickly. Some of you know people like this, some of you are people like this, and I love you, and what he's gonna do here is he's gonna come back to Jesus. He's gonna focus us on Jesus. He wants us to remember Jesus, and he wants us to stay in the flow of God's truth, and so he starts by receiving Jesus, Colossians 2:6-7. My question to you would be: Have you received Jesus? Do you belong to Jesus? Do you know Jesus? Do you love Jesus? It starts with Jesus. Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus, the Lord, that means he's in charge. He's in authority. He's above all people, times, places, cultures, ideologies. So walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. Now let me say this. People are the product of their teaching. People are the product of their teaching, which means if someone is poorly taught, it affects their life negatively, and rather than just getting frustrated with them, we need to love them and help them learn. What he says here is that they have received good teaching. He says, "just as you were taught." What he's saying is your founding pastor, Epaphras, this man mentioned in the book, he was a good Bible teacher. He did a good job. He taught you guys the truth. You guys don't need to unlearn a bunch of garbage. Some of you were well-taught as new Christians, and you've learned, and you had a good framework. Some of you got good and bad, and you need a little course correction, and you didn't receive good instruction. People are the product of their instruction. So he says, number one, you need to receive Jesus. So my question is: have you received Jesus? Number two, good teaching about Jesus. Have you received good teaching about Jesus? And if not, we love you, and I hope this is a place you could find the teaching about Jesus, and he says, if you've received Jesus and good teaching about Jesus, then what you want to do? You want to grow. You want to mature. You want to build. So what he's gonna do, he's gonna layer a bunch of imagery to help us grow stronger in our faith. So he uses this language of walk in Him. This is the language of relationship. To walk with someone is the language of a friendship. So one of my favorite things to do with the family since the kids were little is go for walks around sunset. I love that.

On Monday, it's date day for Grace and I, the kids are in school, and so one of our favorite things is we hold hands. We go for a nice long walk, and we visit, and we talk, and we spend time together. A walk with God is like that. It's seeing Jesus as a friend who journeys and ventures with you through life, and you talk to Him in prayer, you hear from Him in scripture, and you're doing practical daily life with Him. How's your relationship with Jesus, your time with Jesus? And what we like to say at the Trinity Church is your walk with God is all about the next step. Okay? I don't know what your next step is. The Holy Spirit will tell you. Do you need to buy a Bible? Do you need to read it? You already have one. Do you need to build some relationships? Get in a life group. Do you need to serve? Do you need to start guarding your day off to get time with the Lord? I don't know what the next step is for you. Is there something you need to change in your life? I don't know what that is. God knows, and He'll tell you what's the next step. He also uses this language, rooted. How many of you are gardeners? How many of you like to grow things? Right? That's this language of rooted. If you don't have roots, eventually you die. I noticed that when we first moved here, the roots are very shallow in Arizona. It's 'cause that clay is so hard. A stiff breeze came and it was kind of monsoon season. Next thing I know, trees are toppled all over the place and you could see their root system. Their root system is very shallow. Without a strong, deep root system, when storms come, things blow over. What's true physically is true spiritually for God's people. Are your roots deep? Are your roots deep in the scriptures, in Jesus, in prayer? Psalm 1 talks about being a tree that finds a good stream and plants roots there to be nourished and grow. We hope that this church would be a good stream for you. If you're visiting or God calls you elsewhere, we just pray you'd find a good stream where there's life-giving nourishment from God's Word, and you could root down and grow up. That's His language. How many of you are into construction? You're architects, developers, builders, handymen, tradesmen, carpenters. He uses the language of built up. He's using this analogy. It's like building your life with God, which is every day, hammer a board, lay a brick, bit by bit by bit, it's Bible reading every day, per every day, walking with Jesus every day, learning every day, and it's getting up every day and saying, what can I add? What can I add? What can I add to build my relationship with God, and also my understanding of God? What can I do to build that today? It's a construction analogy, and established in the faith. How many of you are in the legal realm? You're attorneys, you negotiate a lot of contracts. Maybe you're a real estate developer. You're dealing with a lot of paperwork. This is from the arena of law established, and what it means is a case is presented and then it's settled and it's stamped. This is where there's a final decision. You've purchased the building. You've sold the piece of property. This legal verdict has been rendered. This decision has been made. It's final, and it's settled. What he's saying is for each of us, when it comes to God and His Word, there are certain things that we need to simply settle. We need to get established on. What do I think about the Bible? Is it all true or not? You need to establish that. Do I believe in Jesus or not believe in Jesus? I need to establish that. Do I receive full forgiveness of sin, or am I gonna live with a lot of condemnation and shame and guilt, or am I gonna let that go? 'Cause Jesus takes it away. You need to establish that. He's talking about certain things that just need to literally get a final verdict rendered, and what these things will do, he's talking about staying in the flow of God's grace, starting with Jesus, continuing with Jesus, ending with Jesus, and that helps safeguard you from the strong currents that come along sometimes in culture, sometimes in

philosophy, sometimes in politics, these sort of trends and fads that come and want to pull you away from Jesus and toward danger, and one of the great gifts that he gives is this ability to be abounding in thanksgiving. One of the ways that you'll stick close to Jesus and not stray from Jesus is if you practice an attitude of gratitude, remembering all that God has already done for you. I've told you this before about me. I'm the guy with the critical eye. I can always see what's wrong, not what's right, what needs to be done, not what's already been done. I'm a guy who tends to live out the windshield and not pay much attention to the rear view mirror. What's next, what's next, what's next, what's next? And what he's saying is look back. What prayers has God already answered? What provision has God already made? What good things has God already done? This weekend was a weird weekend at my house. Grace and Alexi were at a choral competition, a choir competition in California. They won a gold, and yay, and my older boys were in Kingman, Arizona at a baseball tournament, and my daughter's at college, so I'm home alone with my 11-year-old son, whom I love with all my heart, and I appreciate him, I enjoy him, but we both kept looking at each other like it's weird to be bachelors. Right? My wife came home. She's like, "Oh, the dishes are all done." No, they're not done. We didn't cook anything, so we didn't make any dishes. It looks like we did the dishes. We just didn't make any dishes. We ate a lot of takeout. That's what we did. And I remember sitting there thinking my wife is gone for a few days. I'm so thankful that I have a wife and she's coming home. We have dinner together as a family every night, and if there's a night like this weekend where we don't have dinner together, I'm so thankful that I get to be the father of children, and we get to sit down and have dinner together. At night, I climbed into bed and there was no Grace to snuggle up with and pray for. It's like, "Man, I miss her." I'm so thankful that I have Grace. And I just really stopped, and I was like, "Lord, I am so thankful for my health, my wife, my kids, we're all walking with the Lord for the wonderful people at the Trinity Church. We love you, to be able to give the financial update today, and we're gonna buy the building, and, God, I'm so thankful." He came to me and said, "So, Mark, what's your to-do list? It's like the scroll of Isaiah. Here we go, we'll roll it out. I got plenty of things to do. I got lots of plans, but what am I thankful for? Lots of things to be thankful for. Do you know how you sustain a relationship with another person? Look for things to be thankful for. Do you know how to sustain your relationship with God? Look for things to be thankful for, and as you do that, you'll be abounding in thanksgiving. Thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you. And what that does, that keeps us in the flow of God's grace and God's will, and that keeps us from the strong currents to cause us to be ungrateful and not thankful, and as a result, tempted to stray from the simplicity of Jesus, and I love you, and I want that for us. So maybe even one of your assignments this week is just every day, just spend some time in prayer, thanking God for whatever comes to mind, thanking God for whatever comes to mind, and if you will practice that, that will keep you in the flow of God's Spirit. So the second thing he says is to remain with Jesus. Colossians 2: 8-10, "See to it that no one takes you captive." That's language of a captive in war, that somebody is literally held captive by philosophy and empty deceit according to the human tradition, "according to the elemental spirits of the world and not according to Christ for in Him," that's Jesus, "the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily." That's a really strong statement that Jesus is God, that God became a man, that the eternal God entered into history, that the immaterial spiritual God took upon himself a human body, and you have been filled in Him, who

is the head of all rule, and authorities over all philosophies and ideologies and all spiritualities, and what he's warning against here is a philosophy. This is the strong current. So what he's saying is here's the flow of God's grace, right? Grow in your relationship with Jesus and His people, but be aware that there is this strong current that seeks to pull you away from Jesus, and he describes it here as a philosophy. Now I don't believe this is a denigration or renunciation of all philosophy. Philosophy literally means the pursuit of wisdom. Philosophy is not in and of itself bad. Some of the greatest philosophers in the history of the world, I studied philosophy a lot in college, were Christians, Augustine, Aquinas, Blaise Pascal. One of my favorites would be in that realm of philosophers. In more recent days, this would include like a C.S. Lewis or Ravi Zacharias. They work in the realm of philosophy, but they love God with all their mind, and they think biblically, and they're trying to take the Bible's teaching and interact with the philosophical systems of the world, and in that regard, it's very helpful and good. Some would say that philosophy started with the Greeks. If you studied this in college, they'll say it started with Heraclides, and Socrates, and Plato, and Aristotle, and Epimenides, and they would say that the Greeks were the foundation and fountainhead of philosophy. I don't necessarily believe that. I believe that philosophy started with the Hebrews in the Old Testament before the Greeks even came into existence, as we know them, and that the Old Testament has the wisdom literature, and that is the biblical category for philosophy. So Job is the philosophy of suffering. Song of Solomon is the philosophy of love and romance and relationship. Ecclesiastes is the philosophy of the meaning of life, and Proverbs is all about the pursuit of practical wisdom, and all of that would fit into the rubric of first philosophy that predates Greek philosophy. So all that to say, I'm not against philosophy. What he's not speaking about here is all philosophy, but a philosophy. There is an ideology. There is a worldview. There's a mindset. There's a thinking that had become very popular in culture. It was being taught in universities. It was reinforced in social circles, and the cultural trend and pressure was to push you in its direction and push you away from Jesus, and that's what he calls the philosophy, and what he says is it'll take you captive. It'll come and enslave you. It doesn't lead to freedom. It leads to bondage. This is true of whatever philosophy dominates the day, and it's empty. What that means is it's not particularly helpful. When you go to the doctor, if you're sick, your doctor prescribes some kind of medication, and you take that pill, and in that casing is medicine that will help you to be healthy. If they give you one that's empty, they call it a placebo. It looks the same, but there's nothing in it. There's nothing to heal you. He's saying that philosophy that is not rooted in Christ is ultimately empty. It looks similar to Christianity, but it has no medicine to heal the soul. He says it's wild, that it's deceitful, meaning it says something that is not corresponding with reality. It's not true. Those aren't the facts. According to human tradition, what it means is this, that sometimes when someone is making an argument, they want it to appear acceptable, and so they will appeal to ancient sources for its legitimization. And so every once a while it's like, "Oh, we found this ancient manuscript or this ancient papyri or this ancient group of people who had their own view of Jesus, and maybe they were right, and everyone is wrong, and it's all a big conspiracy theory. I never believed those, by the way, 'cause you can never get Christians to get organized. That's just not even possible. But nonetheless, what happens then is it's like, "Oh, it's ancient, it's Eastern, it's obscure, it's something different," because there's something in us that gets tired of the new and the trendy, and the latest and the

greatest, and we want something that is rooted, but ultimately, we don't want something that is rooted in history. We want something that is rooted in eternity, and the Word of God literally is called the eternal Word of God. This doesn't mean that it's old. It means that it's timeless, because God's word is timeless. It's always timely. It doesn't just appeal back to old days and old sources. It appeals back to the ancient of days and the eternal character of God, and what he's saying is if your soul is longing for something that is settled and rooted, don't just go for that which is human created by people in their finite, three-pound, fallen brains. Go for revelation from God that is eternal and will continue throughout all eternity, and he says, ultimately, and this will be controversial, "according to the elemental spirits of the world and not according to Christ." What he's talking about here is the demonic. C.S. Lewis says rightly that there are two opposite extremes in which we can go regarding demons. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to have an unhealthy obsession in them. That's my paraphrase of C.S. Lewis. Nonetheless, some of you say, "I don't believe in Satan and demons. That's all crazy talking." Some of you, you're way too interested in Satan and demons. Everything is Satan and demons. "My car wouldn't start. It's a demon," or the battery. You know what I mean? It could be either one. So what we don't want to do is say everything is Satan and demons, nothing is Satan and demons, but we do want to acknowledge that there is a world behind the world. There is a world that we do not see that impacts and affects the world that we do see, that behind this world of powers, principalities, and spirits, these are powerful fallen, angelic, demonic spirit beings, and what they do, they'll take ideologies, philosophies, religions, cultural trends, and they will empower them. That's why there can be counterfeit signs, wonders and miracles in other religions. This is why certain ideas take on almost a mob mentality, and they rise up against Christ in the Bible, and they become very strong and very popular, and it's not accidental. It's spiritual. It's not accidental. It's spiritual. And see, we live in a world that just values spirituality, and the Bible does not, because if by spirituality, you mean, "I just opened myself to the spirit realm." The Bible would say no. There's God and Satan, there's angels and demons. There's holy and unholy spirits. The Bible would say in 1 John, "Do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether or not they come from God." If you're here, and we love you, and we're glad to have you, but I need to warn you that if you just say, "I'm open to the spirit world," that's as foolish as saying, "I trust all people." I would never tell you, "People are good. Just pick one and trust them." Right? I would not say "All spirits are okay. Just pick one and trust it." As it is in our human world, so it is in the spirit realm. There are those that are loving, and those who are evil and seek to do harm, and what he's saying here is behind certain philosophies, and certain ideologies, and certain cultural trends, and strong cross-cultural occurrence of false teaching, there is a demonic, satanic spiritual force at work, and it empowers people and ideas to become very dominant and for the rest of us to live in fear of them, because they might hurt or punish us if we remain obedient to Christ. He says, and ultimately, it's not according to Christ. So the question is always, what does it say about Jesus? How does it point to Jesus? Who does it reveal Jesus to be? Does this increase the love of Jesus, the obedience to Jesus, the appreciation of Jesus, the followership of Jesus, the gratitude for Jesus? If it does anything to diminish Jesus, then it is, in fact, demonic. That's the test. That's the test. The test is always around who Jesus is, what Jesus says and what Jesus does, for in Him, the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily. What he says is, Jesus is God.

Everything you need to know is found in Jesus. Everything you need to learn is found in Jesus, and you have been filled with Him, through the Holy Spirit. Jesus takes up residence in you and your citizenship is in Him, and all you have is in Christ and all you need is in Christ. And what's interesting, there's a massive debate. Whole tomes have been written about what this philosophy is, and I've read a stack of books debating the issue. I don't believe that the book of Colossians is incredibly clear about what the philosophy was that they were fighting. I think Paul's just raising the flag that philosophies exist, and that every generation sort of has a dominant philosophical paradigm that is a strong cross-cultural current that is trying to pull people away from obedience to Christ, and I believe it's important for us to know what that current is in our culture. So let me tell you what I think it is. I wanted to answer this question. Why are there people who are unchurched, never go to church, and dechurched, used to go to church, but have been swept away? What is it? The philosophy that is the strong current that is pulling them away from Christ, and I wanted to figure out what that was, 'cause I love people and I want them to love Jesus 'cause Jesus loves them. And so some years ago, and it's a book that'll be out eventually. It's written and it was a good study, but we contracted a research group that does polling for businesses and political leaders, what they call RDD, random digital dial surveys. They call people on the phone. They made 900,000 phone calls in the US. They got 70,000 people to answer, and have some measure of a conversation on a list of issues and questions that I had developed with some help from some sociological professors. It boiled down to the top 1000 people who fit the profile that I wanted to determine why they were unchurched or dechurched. They fit the grouping of the kind of people that I wanted to learn from. Those people had a conversation that went upwards of 15 minutes, so 1000 people having a 15-minute survey conversation on the phone. That gives you the black and white data. To turn it into high-def color, we had focus groups in three major cities, male and female, that sat down for hours and had a discussion about the issues that emerged. After all the research was done, all of the surveys were concluded, all of the transcripts were finished, we summarized it all, and here's what I found. Every group, young, old, black, white, rich, poor, married, single, it was unchurched or dechurched that was in a current, not pointing to Christ. All had one primary central opposition to Christianity. There was one issue: intolerance. The philosophy of our day is intolerance. What I then found was it plays itself out in eight arenas. There's a political arena. "We don't believe that the Bible or Christianity should have anything to do with public policy, and people should have their religion be a private thing, not a public thing, not in any way affect the policies that they adhere to or vote for. It worked itself out in the spiritual realm. We think that saying that Jesus is the only way is very offensive. That's intolerant of all of the religions, so we reject Christianity because they say you need Jesus." This works itself out in the area of gender, marriage, abortion, all of these other hot button issues. Even saying these things, some of you it's like water on a cat. You're like, "Please don't go there. It's very controversial." I know. But it's eight arenas, political, social, financial, marital. It's eight arenas in which two ideologies enter in and hammer it out in a conflict, and so some would come along with a strong current and say, "Well, let's rethink Christianity." Rather than looking at all of God's attributes, they will elevate one of God's attributes, and ignore the remainder of God's attributes. So holiness needs to go away. Justice, righteousness needs to go away. God is

- [Congregation] Love.

- Love, that's it, got one attribute, God's love, and what they mean by love is tolerance, and so then they would say, "God doesn't reject anyone. No one's going to hell because God is tolerant, and God doesn't reject other religions 'cause God is tolerant, and God doesn't say no to people that want to do certain things 'cause God is tolerant." And what has happened is the dictionary definition of tolerance in our day has been changed. It used to be, "I forbear with you. I endure with you," to put it another way, "I put up with you." The new dictionary definition of tolerance is literally, "I celebrate you." There's a, amen, big difference, if you're still paying attention, thank you, but there is a big difference. "You and I disagree, but I love you, so I put up with you," versus, "We don't disagree. We're both right. I celebrate you, you celebrate me, and if you don't celebrate me, you're intolerant, and intolerance is the only sin, and if you're intolerant against me, I have to be intolerant against you." And you're like, "Isn't that intolerant?" "No. No. Just for you, not for me. What I'm doing is loving. What you're doing is intolerant. So I'm intolerant of intolerance. That's how tolerant I am." Okay, that's how this works. You don't think this is right, try something called the internet, and just eavesdrop on any conversation. This is what's happening. So let me say this. That's the philosophy of our age. I had a guy come through recently said, "So you think I'm wrong?" "Yes." He's like, "Well, that's not loving." I said, "What if you're wrong? If you're wrong and I tell you you're wrong. I feel like that's loving. You think I'm wrong?" He's like, "Well, I don't think you're wrong." I was like, "You, for sure, think I'm wrong." He's like, "I wouldn't say it like that." I said, "'Cause you're a hypocrite trying to be creative with words. I'm just being honest. We both think that the other is wrong." Let me say how this works. The God of the Bible, in one regard, is tolerant. Here's what He says. "Everybody come to Me. I don't care what your race, your gender, your background, your philosophy, your ideology, your political affiliation, whatever your crazy behavior has been, whatever insane things you've done, come as you are." And because God loves us, He loves us so much that He welcomes us as we are, but He loves us too much to allow us to stay as we are. See, God is so loving that his love doesn't just tolerate you. God's love changes you. That's what it does, so that you become more like Him, and you become more like his Son. I had a conversation almost 20 years ago with a leading theologian who's one of the leaders of the history of evangelicalism, and I was a young pastor at the time, and I sat down with him, and he'd been kicked out of his denomination, and he was a Bible teacher, and I said, "For the next generation of evangelical young leaders, what do you think the primary issue is? What's the philosophy, that current?" He said, he explained in so many words, "It'll be tolerance." I said, "Why is that?" He said, "Tolerance is the opposite of repentance, and Christianity's about repentance." Tolerance says there's nothing in you that needs to change, and the gospel says you're a sinner. You need a Savior. There needs to be a change, and he said when Martin Luther, the great Protestant reformer, nailed what is the 95 Theses to the door at Wittenberg, which was sort of the shot heard around the world for what we would call faithful biblical Christianity, the first line was this. "All of the Christian's life is one of repentance." Here's the God of the Bible. Tolerance, "Come as you are." Repentance, "Acknowledge who you are." Love, "I will change who you are." That's Christianity. For us, it's repentance. Repentance is saying, "God, you're right, I'm wrong. You're holy, I'm unholy. If I have a disagreement with you,

I'm not expecting you to alter. You're expecting me to alter." Repentance is a change of mind, how we think about ourselves and God. It's a change of heart about what we desire and long for and hold nearest and dearest, and it's a change of behavior and conduct and how we live. For us, the philosophy that says, "I celebrate everyone and everything" is now, "I welcome everyone and everything to meet Jesus, experience repentance, and be changed by the love of God." There's some sort of philosophy that they're up against. There's some sort of philosophy that we are up against. It is a strong current, and let me say something to you who are younger or live on social media. If your goal is to be liked, you will have a hard time swimming against the current of culture, because people will want you to be celebrating things that they should be repenting of, and if we truly love people, we want God's best for them, which is oftentimes not what they think is best for them. How many of you are parents and you have a child? You love your child enough to say, "I love you, come as you are. We're gonna talk about this. You need to understand this. I love you so much. This needs to change because I know it leads to death, not life. God's a Father, welcomes His kids, loves His kids, parents His kids, changes His kids, doesn't just celebrate His kids, transforms His kids. That's our God, amen?"

- [Congregation] Amen.

- Okay. There is this strong, current, this strong pull. So what he does, he doesn't spend a whole lot of time on it, so I won't either. The goal is to then get to Jesus and to stick with Jesus and to flow in the spirit of God's grace. So his next section is to remember Jesus. Now I'll start with an illustration. The easiest way for you to understand what a counterfeit is, is to spend so much time with that that is authentic, that the counterfeit becomes something that you naturally just pick up on. I'll give you an example. So my first job I lied about my age. I was not a Christian. I'll just make a big preface. I was 15 years of age and I wanted to get a job, and I found a job at a 7/11. I was a clerk at a 7/11 at age 15, yeah, by this strip club next to an airport. Some of you would look at me and say, "He's a mess." Look how far I've come. Okay, look, how far I've come. Give me a little grace. So I'm behind a strip club next to an airport. I get my birth certificate, and what I did is I made a photocopy of it, and then I got something called White-out, okay? For those of you that are under 30, you can Google it, and what I did, I used the White-out on my birth certificate, and then I put my falsified birth certificate in something called a typewriter. You can Google that as well, and I'm so old I used to ride my dinosaur to 7/11, where I was a clerk, so I put my resume, my birth certificate, rather, in the typewriter, and I typed in a false birthday, and then I made a copy of that, and then I went to the 7/11, and I applied for a job, and I got it, even though I was 15, 'cause I've had a beard since I was about six, and my voice has sounded like this since I was in diapers. It's always just sounded like this. So if you came in, you'd be like, "I want to buy this beer and lotto tickets," and I'd be like, "Show me your ID. Are you of age?" I'm IDing people that are as old as my parents. So this is what's happening, okay, and when I first started, there was an older woman there and she sort of had run the till for a long time and worked for the 7/11, and she was sort of the shift manager and stuff, and she said, "You know, Mark," she said, "There's a lot of poor people here, and they try to pass off fake bills." She said, "Some of them, you could totally see, like they literally photocopied them. Could you imagine someone photo--" I was like, "Oh, that's amazing that people would photocopy

things and pretend that they were real. That's crazy, yeah. I bet I'll pick those up. I'm familiar with those." And she said, "Some of the other counterfeits, they come in. They're really well done," and she said, "and sometimes we get fake money and we deposit it at the bank and the bank says this is non-legal tender," and she said, "so we got to be careful." I said, "Okay." I said, "Well, okay, what's the deal? And she said, "Well, after a while, you get used to handling real money, and when you get fake money, you'll just be able to tell by looking at it or feeling it. The easiest way to know what's a forgery is to spend a lot of time with that that's authentic and real, and then when the forgery comes along, you realize, "Hmm, there's something off here, this isn't right." So what Paul is not going to do, he's not gonna spend time chasing every false doctrine and every false teaching and freaking everybody out, and being scared. I don't want this to be a fear-based church. I want this to be a love-based church. I don't want to spend all our time talking about every single latest, freaky, weird, nonsensical, crazy doctrine. Let's spend a lot of time talking about Jesus, and as you know the real, you'll understand the counterfeit and you won't be interested in that, because you know what's authentic, and that's what the apostle Paul does here. He focuses on Jesus and he goes back to the authentic, real Jesus Christ, Colossians 2:11-12 "In Him," that's Jesus, "you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ," that's the death of Jesus on the cross. We'll unpack this, "having been buried with Him in baptism, that's the burial of Jesus Christ, "in which you were also raised," there's the resurrection of Jesus Christ, "with Him through faith, in the powerful working of God who raised Him from the dead." And so what he says is there's this powerful current that could lead you astray. He was like, "What do we do?" Stick with Jesus. Stick with Jesus, and you'll avoid that strong current pulling you off course. Spend time with Him who is the real God, and you will not be distracted, or dissuade, by that which is a clever counterfeit. So it goes back to the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, The death of Jesus, he uses the language of circumcision, which for us is odd, but if you were raised Jewish, particularly in that day, that was the symbol and seal of the covenant. Your relationship with God, that if you were born into a believing family, as a young man, you would undergo circumcision. If you converted to that faith later in life, you would undergo circumcision, and what it was, it was the removal of a bit of flesh, and shedding of a bit of blood, to show you had a relationship with God, and what he's saying is that does not save. That is all foreshadowing of the forthcoming of the Person of Jesus, and that literally the flesh would be ripped off of his body, not a little flesh, a lot of flesh, and his blood would be shed, not a little bit of blood, but a lot of blood, and he's talking here about the crucifixion of Jesus, that our God became a man, that he assumed a human body, and he lived a human life. He lived the life we've not lived, the life without sin, that he died the death we should have died, the death for sin, and when it comes to the crucifixion of Jesus, sometimes we just say, "Oh, Jesus died on the cross for your sins," but it's important to know what that meant. That was the most painful and brutal mode of public execution in that day. What it says is that Jesus was falsely accused. He was falsely tried, that his beard was plucked from His face, and that ultimately, He was taken and flogged. Now, what this is, is this is a professional executioner, would have a handle. Leather straps would proceed from it. At the end would be either metal or stone that would be like a tenderizer to soften the flesh of the body, as you would tenderize a steak, and that at the end were hooks made out of metal or bone, and as the flesh was tenderized, the man would be

exposed, and they would whip him across his bare back, and the hooks would sink into the man's flesh, and then they would literally rip the flesh off of the man's body, some ancient records to the degree that a rib would go flying off the man's body. His back and his shoulders and his buttocks, they would be like ribbons, just fluttering in the wind. That's his flesh. Many men died from just the flogging, and then blood would flow from the body. Isaiah says that He was marred beyond human likeness. That's the death, the broken body, the shed blood of Jesus, and He died, and it says that he was buried, and we symbolize the burial of Jesus in baptism. If you've not been baptized, and you're a Christian, or become one today, we'd love to baptize you, and it's showing that Jesus died in our place for our sins. We murdered God and He was buried. The Creator was put beneath the dust of His creation. He was buried in the earth, and then three days later, on a Sunday, which is why we meet on a Sunday, Jesus rose from death, and so when we practice baptism, we're showing my old life is buried with Christ and my new life is raised with Christ. Who I was, that's changed. What I used to do, that's not me. Who I used to be, that's not me. What I used to think, that's not me. I'm changed. God's love has changed me, not just tolerated me, but transformed me at the deepest levels of my being, and then we live a new life in Christ, and just as water cleanses us from filth, baptism shows that Jesus cleanses us from the filth of sin. So he's talking about the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, the powerful working of God who raised Him from the dead, that Jesus didn't stay dead, but He conquered sin, and He conquered death, and He paid the penalty for our sin, and He endured the wrath of God, and as a result, He resurrected, and Jesus is alive and well, and He's not just a dead ideology. He's a living, loving, seeking Savior. That's who he is. And so, you can clap for that if you want. So what he's saying is don't get beyond Jesus. Don't get bored with Jesus. Two things happen. Some of you grew up in Christian homes and Christian teaching. You're like, "Oh, here we go again. Jesus, Jesus, Jesus. Do you have anything else?" No.

- [Man] Amen.

- It's Five Guys Burgers and Fries. It's In-N-Out. You can get burger, fries, and a Coke. There is no Szechuan chicken. No, we don't have that. We got what we always got, and it's awesome.

- [Congregation] Amen.

- Okay? It's a little menu, but it's a great menu. That's what we got. Well, can't we put a little boot on there? No. That is not on the menu. What about reincarnation? Will never be on the menu. That's not on the menu. It's not on the menu 'cause you feed that to people, they get sick, and if you love people, you feed them things that will make them healthy, and when he keeps bringing them back to is a steady diet of Jesus living, Jesus dying, Jesus buried, Jesus risen, Jesus seeking, Jesus saving, Jesus coming, Jesus judging. That's the menu. You get that?

- [Congregation] Amen.

- Some of you grew up in homes. You're like, "I've heard this all before." Hear it again, it's still

good news. You know what's good about good news? It's good the third time. It's good the seventh time.

- [Congregation] Amen.

- My wife's been gone all weekend. When she comes home, she's gonna kiss me. Still like it every time. Every time. Okay. Number two, some of you, you're creative. You're arty, you're like, "My hair is different colors. My shoes don't match. I'm creative." Awesome, good for you, join the band, but do not, do not think that you need to reinvent Christianity. You don't. You're like, "Well, we could take this and redo it." No, no, no, no, no. Every cult leader started out with a guitar and a tattoo. Don't do that. Don't do that. You can get creative with your house. You can get creative with your music. You can get creative with your art form. Don't get creative with the Bible. Don't get creative with Jesus. Worry about being faithful, not faddish.

- [Congregation] Amen.

- Amen? Okay, so there you go. Now, all you parents who brought your kids, you're welcome. I'm trying to help. Okay. So then he closes with this. Rejoice in Jesus, Colossians 2:13-15. This is awesome! This is awesome! This is one of my favorite sections of the whole Bible. Whoo! All right, and you, that's you, and you, and you, and me, who are what?

- [Congregation] Dead.

- Dead spiritually. You're like, "I'm not dead." Spiritually dead. We don't think about Jesus. We don't love Jesus. We don't listen to Jesus. We don't follow Jesus. We don't desire Jesus. We're physically alive, spiritually dead. That's where we all start. Everybody says, "I was born a Christian." No, you weren't.

- [Man] Amen.

- You need to be born again to be a Christian. You were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh. You didn't love God. You weren't tender to God. You weren't gonna obey God. You didn't long for the things of God. God did something amazing. God made a life together with Him. God made dead people living people. That's awesome. Spiritually dead people are spiritually alive. Now this is just unbelievable. People will say, "Well, what do you do to be saved?" Jesus saves. Jesus takes dead people and makes them alive by the sheer power of his will. It's a supernatural miracle. We can't explain it. We can't get over it. We can't replicate it, but we can sure celebrate it. That's what Jesus does. How did He do this? Having forgiven all our trespasses. Man, that's a lot. Amen?

- [Congregation] Amen.

- I mean, I don't know about you. Have you ever been honest? If so, you should sleep with one

eye open, a helmet on, and a cup, 'cause you've really done some stuff. Amen?

- [Congregation] Amen.

- Look, I know myself, my thoughts, my words, my deeds, my faults, my flaws, my failures. I got a lot of stuff. Jesus forgives how much of it?

- [Congregation] All.

- All, that's awesome. I'm glad there's not a little bit left, and I got to take a beating for a few years before I get to enter into eternal glory. I'm really glad it's all taken care of by Jesus, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. When somebody was executed, they would put a list of all of the criminal charges and guilty. Here's what he's saying. When our great God and Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, went to the cross, nailed to the cross was your record of sin and debt. Everything you've ever said and done, or failed to say and do, there it is. Guilty, guilty, guilty, guilty, guilty, guilty, guilty, and Jesus substitutes Himself. He puts Himself in your place to pay your debt so that you could have full forgiveness of all sins, even sins you haven't even gotten to yet, but in His total foreknowledge, He knew who you would be. He knew what you would do, and He knew why He would die, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This He set aside, nailing it to the cross. This is amazing. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame by triumphing over them in Him. What he's talking about here is triumphant warrior King Jesus. This is a battlefield scene. That's how the original audience would have received it. There was an ancient battle with Plutarch that sort of gives us a picture of ancient battles and conflict, and for us, we need to understand this cosmic battle, which we were born into, and ultimately, this is why we love Memorial Day. This is why we love Veterans Day. We love those first responders and those soldiers who would put themselves in harm's way to protect us so that we might have liberty and be free. All of that is something in us that longs for King Jesus and His kingdom and His conquest over our enemies. This is why people watch movies like "The Hobbit" or "300" or things like "The Lord of the Rings," big, epic battle scenes. This is why we like old westerns where the good guys beat the bad guys, and the townspeople get to live free. This is why kids are addicted to video games. "Oh, look, we have this idea." Clash Royale, or Clash of Clans, and "Oh, nobody's ever thought of this." There's a kingdom of darkness, and there's a kingdom of light, and they have a great collision, and you could join teams and defeat the kingdom of darkness, and set the princess free to live happily forever. What a new one. You stole that whole thing from this book I was reading called the Bible. You stole that whole thing. And this is why guys like sports. How many of you guys like sports, sports guys?

- [Men] Yeah.

- All sports is, it's just controlled battle. We all got to go "Roar!" And they're over there. "Ooh, we're going out to battle," and there's rules so nobody dies, right? And then what happens is the two kingdoms come together, so their fans and their fans cheering, cheering, cheering, it's

battle, that's all it is, and your team wins. You're like, "We won!" You didn't win, you ate nachos and watched. That's all you did.

- [Person] Whoo!

- You didn't participate. "We won!" No, you didn't. They won. But all of this battle imagery, there's something in us that longs for a conquest, and a king, and a kingdom, and a victory, and that's the storyline of the Bible, so the storyline of the Bible is that God creates, or in everything else is created, and that God made angels to be His ministers and messengers, to serve in His presence and to go out from His presence to serve His people, and the Bible tells us that there was one created being, an angel who became proud in his heart. It says in Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28, and ultimately what it says is that he became proud in his heart, and today we would call that self-esteem. We would say Satan had such high self-esteem in elementary school. He got straight A's in self-esteem. Good job, Lucifer, high self-esteem, because now he's doing marketing, okay? Now he's doing marketing, but it says in Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 that he became proud in his heart. Augustine says that pride is the mother pregnant with all sin, that all sin comes out of pride, and ultimately he decided God shouldn't get glory. I should get glory. God shouldn't tell me what to do. I should tell God what to do. I shouldn't live under God's rule. I should live my own life. God has His interpretation. I have my own interpretation. Me and God disagree, and I think He's wrong, and I think I'm right. If you've ever had that thought, it's satanic. It's satanic. What he decided was, "I will declare war on God, and I'll be God, and I'll be the king and I'll rule over the kingdom." So the Bible says that he recruited a third of the heavenly hosts, the angels, with him. They became fallen spirit beings, demons, and that behind the scenes in the world we don't see, but the one that impinges on the world, we do see. There was this great cosmic battle, and Satan and demons declared war on Jesus and the angels, and the Bible says that they were defeated and they were cast down. So they end up, we read in Genesis three, and then portrayed as a serpent, or a snake. Satan comes to our first parents, Adam and Eve. They're citizens of the kingdom of God. They're under the rulership of God. They're in a perfect place. They're perfect people with a perfect relationship, but they become proud, and Satan tempts them, and he tries them, and he recruits them to fight against God and to join his kingdom. They become double agents. Our parents do. They go from the kingdom of light to the kingdom of darkness, from the kingdom of truth to the kingdom of lies, from the kingdom of dependence to the kingdom of independence, and they turned their back on God and they aligned with Satan and demons, and we declare war on our King, and we commit treason against His kingdom. That's our parents. We're all descendants of theirs by nature and choice. The result is that ultimately God comes down and He looks at this sin-marred creation and these two treasonous rebels, and He speaks to them, the man first, then the woman, and He speaks to Satan, His enemy. What he says to Satan, His enemy, is, "There is no possibility of salvation for you that I will send my Son, the Lord Jesus. He will be born of a woman." This is the proto-evangelium on the preaching of the first gospel, and God says, "Jesus is coming. I'm sending the King, and I'm sending the King, and you will harm Him. You will do bodily harm to Him. You will wound Him, but He will crush your head under his boot," Genesis 3:15. Then he looks at the man and the woman, and he says, "When Jesus comes, there will be an opportunity

for salvation. Here's what you need to know. There is no possibility of salvation for Satan and demons. There's no forgiveness. There's only justice, but for men and women, there is an invitation, an opportunity by our great and glorious King to be forgiven and to be received back into His kingdom." The story then continues. This battle rages. There's two brothers, Cain and Abel. One is the kingdom of light. The other is the kingdom of darkness, declares war on, and kills his own brother. The story continues and there's bloodshed through the Old Testament. There's conflicts between kings and kingdoms and nations and spirits, until ultimately, the Lord Jesus comes, the King comes down, and he brings the kingdom with Him, and this great cosmic battle that existed in the heavenlies, it finds itself among God's creation in the earth, and then Jesus recruits with Him 12 soldiers called disciples. These are men that he is to train for battle spiritually for three years, and they are to march with Him. Ultimately, one is a traitor. His name is Judas Iscariot. He aligns himself with Satan. Satan enters his heart. He agrees to betray Jesus for 30 pieces of silver, which was in fulfillment of the prophecy given 700 years prior to the prophet Zechariah. And at this moment, Satan and demons are given the impression that they are winning this war. They have recruited one of Jesus' nearest and dearest disciples to be a double agent and a traitor to betray Him, to abandon Him. He is then arrested. A demonically infused crowd is shouting, "Crucify Him, crucify Him." They arrest Him. He's beaten, He's betrayed, He's flogged, He's falsely charged, and Jesus, our great King, is dying, and demons are cheering, and Satan is celebrating, because his plan is to kill the King, to take over the kingdom, and with the victor goes the spoils. Jesus is on the cross. He is suffering. He is dying. Satan thinks that he's winning. Isaiah has this haunting line. He says, "Surely you are a God who hides." Jesus hid his victory in defeat. Satan doesn't love anyone. Satan doesn't serve anyone. Satan doesn't save anyone. When Satan was murdering Jesus, Satan was thinking about himself. When Jesus was dying, He was thinking about the glory of the Father and the good of His people. Jesus dying on the cross says, in a loud voice of triumph, this is not a defeat, though it appears that way. It's a victory. Jesus says, "It is finished!" Victory. Jesus died in our place. He canceled the obligation that we had to Satan. He set captives free from the dominion of darkness, and in that day, if you read the ancient Bible scenes like that around Plutarch, the way it would work, there'd be two kingdoms and two kings, and escalating hostility, and animosity, and conflict, and the occasional skirmish, until finally, the kings declared war, and the soldiers would prepare themselves for battle. The men would say goodbye to their wives and their children and give them directives if they never returned home, and the men would March out with their king, and it would be a blood bath, and one would emerge victorious, and the other would be submitted to defeat, and sometimes the ancient battle records would say that the men would bring with them their women and children, and set them off to the side, and this wasn't an airline flight away. This was in your cul-de-sac. This was at the park down the street from your house. This was you fighting for your wife, for your kids, for your life, for your legacy, for your freedom, and they would look over, and they would see on occasion, there's their wife and children, and if I don't defeat this foe, tonight, he will sleep with my wife. Tonight, he will enslave my children. Tonight, he will plunder my home and my life and my lineage and my name will come to an end and men would fight to the death, and what happened with the coming of the Lord Jesus, He brought an angelic army host with Him, and He marched out to Golgotha, the place of the skull, and there was a cosmic battle between Jesus, our great and glorious

King, and his enemy, an adversary, and what he's saying right here is that Jesus defeated him. He triumphed over him. He conquered him through dying in our place for our sins, and what would happen is the conquering King would then go back to the conquered kingdom, and He would take all of the people. He would enslave them. He would plunder all of the loot. He would take everything and then He would bring it to His kingdom, and his people would celebrate, and they'd build stands, and it was a holiday, and people would cheer, and they would celebrate, and they would join in the spoils of victor, and you and I will never appreciate this great and glorious fact until we understand that we were on Satan's side, we were on the side of evil. We were rebels. We were traitors. We were treasonous. We were sinners by nature and choice. And here comes Jesus. He conquers our king. He marches in and He plunders His kingdom. And there we are, expecting to be enslaved, and instead, we're adopted.

- [Congregation] Amen. We're adopted. And Jesus says, "You are captives of war, and I have set you free. You won't be My slaves. You'll be My sons and daughters. I'm not gonna plunder you. I'll share all the plunder with you. Come with Me, be part of the parade. You'll see My kingdom, meet the fellow citizens, enjoy the love and the peace and the mercy and the grace and the life that I provide, and as citizens of that kingdom and as worshipers of that King, I hope, I trust, I pray you would never, ever, ever get to the point where this is anything but awe-inspiring. Jesus, I'm Your enemy, and now You're my King, and You set me free, and blessed me with Your kingdom. That's why we never get tired of Jesus. That's why we never get over Jesus. That's why we never get beyond Jesus. Right now, Satan is like a beheaded snake. He's defeated, but even a snake, after it's been beheaded, the muscles are trained to contract, and there's still venom in the teeth. You know that a beheaded snake can still bite you? Satan is a beheaded snake, and Jesus is coming back, and the Bible says that He is coming back, riding a white horse. Okay, this is awesome. Every western ripped this off. Jesus is coming back, riding a white horse that is called faithful and true, and it says down His leg will be written this name, King of Kings and Lord of Lords, maybe even a tattoo, something to think about, and He comes back riding His white horse, and the Bible says that today we are awaiting the second coming of our King. We're awaiting the full unveiling of His kingdom. We're waiting for Him to finally put His boot, for the last time, on the head of the beheaded snake. We're waiting for the final captives to be set free. We're waiting for the kingdom of God.

- [Congregation] Amen.

- And what we do in the meantime, we sing and we celebrate and we rejoice. So Father God, thank You for an opportunity to study Your Word today, to open Colossians today, to hear a fresh anointed, I pray, Word from Your Word. Lord, Jesus, keep us from the strong currents that come along socially, politically, morally, spiritually, that would quickly pull us off-course from the greatness and the goodness and the glory of our King Jesus. Lord God, for those who don't know the Lord Jesus, I pray right now that they would bend their knee and bow their head, that they would acknowledge their sin and they would receive their King. Lord, for those of us who do belong to the Lord Jesus, and are citizens of His kingdom, may this truth never grow old, may it not be something that we grow tired of hearing, but we always celebrate in hearing again

because it's good news every time, and Holy Spirit, we invite You to be in our presence. We invite You to bring Your peace. We invite You to reveal to us our King and our kingdom as we celebrate the great victory of Jesus, and we long for, and look forward to the second coming of the Lord Jesus when our King sets his throne on this planet and rules over all peoples, times, and places, and brings a kingdom of love, joy, peace, and freedom that never ends, and for us, never grows old. In Jesus' good name, amen.