

The Idol Factory

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[0 : 00] Open up your copy of the scriptures to the Gospel of Mark, chapter 10. We have been walking through the Gospel of Mark for quite a while now, and we're over halfway through.

And this morning we're going to be in chapter 10, verses 17 through 31. And so as you turn there, I want to ask you all to stand in honor of God's Word as we read together.

Mark chapter 10, verse 17. And as he was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him, Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?

And Jesus said to him, Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. You know the commandments. Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not bear false witness, do not defraud.

Honor your father and mother. And he said to him, Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth.

And Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said to him, You lack one thing.

[1 : 03] Go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. And come, follow me. Disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

And Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, How difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God. And the disciples were amazed at his words.

But Jesus said to them again, Children, how difficult it is to enter the kingdom of God. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.

And they were exceedingly astonished and said to him, Then who can be saved? Jesus looked at them and said, With man it is impossible, but not with God.

For all things are possible with God. Peter began to say to him, See, we have left everything and followed you. Jesus said, Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands for my sake and for the gospel, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions and in the age to come, eternal life.

[2 : 29] But many who are first will be last and the last first. Father, send your spirit now to take your word and apply it to our hearts and minds.

In Jesus' name, Amen. There is a common misconception that I think most readers of the Bible share when they come to this particular story in the gospel of Mark or in the gospel of Matthew or in the gospel of Luke.

And that misconception is that this story is about the great dangers of wealth. Or some will tweak that and they will say that this is a story about the dangers of wealth gained dishonestly.

And I want to say to you this morning that I don't think that this passage is primarily about the dangers of wealth or even the dangers of wealth gained through dishonest means.

I think this passage is about something bigger than that, about something far more important than that, and about something that applies to the life of the wealthiest person in the world and the poorest of the world.

[3 : 41] This is not a passage mainly about the dangers of wealth. It appears to be about that because wealth is mentioned a few times in this passage. We find out, for instance, in verse 22 that the man who comes to Jesus at the beginning of the passage had great possessions.

And then Jesus, in commenting on this man's sorrow and his rejection of Jesus' words, Jesus comments in verse 23 and says, How difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God.

And then he says again in verse 24 that it's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God. And so it's very easy to come to the conclusion

that Jesus is focusing on the dangers of wealth.

But I don't think that that's what he's focusing upon. I think that this man's wealth and this man's attachment to his wealth are the occasion in which Jesus introduces us to something wider ranging. Something that affects every single one of us. But I have to prove that to you from the text. So let me show you why I say that. Let me first of all tell you what I think this passage is ultimately about. [4 : 56] I think this passage ultimately about is the sinfulness or we might say the depravity of man and the inability of man to overthrow the idols of his own heart.

That's what I think this passage is ultimately about. So let me see if I can show you that here. We're introduced to this man. We're not told anything about him. He comes to Jesus as Jesus is continuing on his journey.

So Jesus has now left the house in which he was in last week as we studied the previous verses. Last week he entered into a house with his disciples to instruct them privately. And so now Jesus has left that home.

He's continuing on his journey toward the city of Jerusalem where he will be killed and then eventually raised back to life. But he's continuing that journey. And as he continues that journey, a man, that's all we know, a man comes to Jesus and kneels before him and addresses him as good teacher.

That's unusual. It's unusual for a man to come, for a Jewish man to come and kneel before a teacher. To kneel before a king would not be all that unusual.

[6 : 05] Certainly to kneel when offering sacrifices in the temple would be not only not unusual but expected. But to kneel before someone that you recognize as a teacher is unusual. And then his address, to call Jesus good teacher, is an unusual way to address the Jewish rabbi of the time.

So he's coming and he's giving Jesus some extraordinary displays of his trust in Christ, of his affection for Jesus, and of his estimate of who Jesus is.

He thinks Jesus is more than just another rabbi. He understands that Jesus is more than just another itinerant preacher. And so he comes and he says to him, good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?

He asks the most important question that anyone can ever ask. What do I need to do to enter eternal life? What do I need to do to enter the kingdom of God and live there under God's blessing forever?

What do I have to do? And Jesus does not directly answer his question. Instead, Jesus goes to what Jesus wants to talk about. Remember, I'm telling you that Jesus wants to address the sinfulness and depravity of man.

[7 : 16] And so Jesus goes straight to that issue. He says, why do you call me good? And in the original language, there's an emphasis on the word me in that sentence. Why do you call me good?

Why would you do that? No one is good except God alone. Now, we know from reading the rest of the Gospel of Mark, and we have seen Mark demonstrate this several times in his Gospel, that Jesus is himself divine.

That he is God. And so we can say, from a broader perspective, it makes sense for this man to address Jesus as good, even if God alone is good. Because Jesus is the divine Son of God.

He is God. We know that. The man does not know that. The man recognizes Jesus as a great teacher, as a great rabbi, and that's why he addresses him as teacher.

So Jesus wants to know, why are you calling me, at least in your eyes, a mere man? Why are you calling me good when only God is good?

[8 : 16] Jesus is assuming a common teaching found in the Old Testament. That man is not good. That man is, in fact, not only sinful, but man is utterly sinful.

Totally sinful. Everything that we do is permeated by sin. So four times in the Psalms, we read this phrase, No one is good.

Two times in Psalm 14, and two times in Psalm 53. Four times in the Psalms, there is no one who is good. And the Apostle Paul quotes that in Romans chapter 3, when he describes the state of humanity apart from Christ.

And Paul says, there is none who is good. No one. Not one single person. The Old Testament is the same book, who when God decides to bring His judgment upon humanity, in Genesis chapter 6, that God looks and He sees that every intention, every intention of man's heart is only evil all the time.

The Old Testament is replete with examples of the sinfulness of man. It is a catalog of man's sinfulness. Because if the people of God, if the covenant people of God, that God has selected out of the world, and to whom He has given His word, and given His prophets, if they fail at every opportunity that failure presents itself, if they fall into sin over and over and over, how much so those who do not have God's word, those who are not a part of the covenant that God made with His people.

[9 : 50] Jesus looks at this man and says, why would you call me good? Only God. Only God is good. And then He begins to drive His point home to this man.

He lists five commandments. You can see them there. He says, you know the commandments. Do not murder. Do not commit adultery. Do not steal. Do not bear false witness. Do not defraud. And then, I'm sorry, six.

And then, honor your father and mother. All but one of these come from the Ten Commandments. All but one of them. In fact, the only one that doesn't come from the Ten Commandments is this command, Do not defraud.

And I sat and I thought to myself, why did Jesus add that particular commandment in there? And I think that Jesus added that into this list of commands so that we would not assume that rather than attacking wealth, Jesus is attacking the fact that this man gained his wealth through dishonest means.

So this man is not another Zacchaeus. You know the story of Zacchaeus, the tax collector who had defrauded people and taken more money than he should have. And when he comes to faith in Christ, he decides to give away half of all that he has and repay people back several times, fourfold what he had stolen from them.

[11 : 08] Zacchaeus is a wealthy man who gained his wealth through defrauding others, through cheating others. But not this man. Not this man. Jesus adds that command so that we will know when this man says, I have kept all of these from my youth.

We will know, as the readers and his disciples will know, as those who were there originally, that this was not a man who can be condemned because of his questionable business practices. There's no hint that this guy gained his wealth through dishonest means. Do not defraud. The other commandments, though, are all taken from the Ten Commandments. Look at the ones that he lists. Do not murder. Do not commit adultery. Do not steal. Do not bear false witness. And then honor your father and mother. If you take the commandments, if you take the last six of the Ten Commandments, there's a shift within the Ten Commandments.

The first four commandments directly address our relationship with God. They're all about our relationship with God. I have no other gods before me.

[12 : 09] Don't make for yourselves idols. Honor the Sabbath day. Keep it holy. Do not take the name of the Lord your God in vain. The first four commandments are all directly about our relationship with God.

But beginning with the fifth commandment, to honor your father and mother, there is a shift. Now, honor your father and mother is connected to those first four commandments because God is a father to us.

And to the degree that we honor father and mother, we are mirroring the kind of obedience we should have to God. But these last six commandments are primarily about our relationship with our neighbor, with one another.

And Jesus lists all of these last commandments except for the final one, you shall not covet. He doesn't list that one, which is important to understanding what's happening here.

But Jesus lists these commandments and the man responds by saying, in verse 20, Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth. So from the time that he was responsible, that term youth means from the time that he was a boy, from the time that he could be held responsible for his behavior, he says, I've kept all these commandments.

[13 : 19] I've not killed anyone. I've not stolen anything that I have. I've not committed adultery. I've honored my parents. I have done all of these things. And yet the man does not even notice that Jesus left off the command, you shall not covet.

He never notices it. And so Jesus just says, okay, fine. But you lack something. What do you lack? Obedience to the commandments that he didn't mention.

Obedience to the first four commandments that deal with this man's relationship to God. And obedience to the commandment not to covet. You lack those things. And so he says, sell all that you have and give to the poor and then you will have treasure in heaven and come follow me. In other words, Jesus is saying to the man, I understand that you have fulfilled these external commands with regard to your responsibility toward your family and your neighbor. I understand that.

That's fine. I'm not even going to dispute that. But you have not fully obeyed God's law. You have not worshipped only God.

[14 : 24] You have not refused used to build idols in your own life. In fact, your life is ruled by your wealth.

You are a covetor. You are greedy for the things that you have. You cling to those things. You are, in short, you are an idolater.

We think of idolatry typically with the visual image of someone building a statue of stone or wood and then bowing down before that statue. And that is idolatry but it is one form of idolatry.

We become idolaters anytime we give anything the place that God alone deserves in our lives.

Anytime something supplants God's position in our lives, we become idolaters.

And the great danger is that we put good things in the place of God. It is not that we are tempted to build an idol out of wood or stone or metal and bow before that idol.

[15 : 33] It is that we take the good things that God has given to us and we place them first and foremost in our lives and when we do that we become idolaters. Don't think that this man's wealth was a bad thing.

James says that every good and perfect gift comes down from above, from the Father of lights. This man's wealth is a gift to him from God. Many of the Old Testament saints were wealthy people. In the Old Testament it makes it clear that their wealth came from God. And we've already seen that this is not a man who gained his wealth in a dishonest way. So he has a good thing. He has blessing from God.

He has wealth that he's obtained through honest business practices. That is a blessing of God. And yet that good thing for him has become an idol in his heart. John Calvin writing about 500 years ago said that the human heart is like an idol factory.

Constantly churning out new idols. And we don't see it when the good becomes an idol. We don't see it when our children begin to take first place in our lives and they become our idols.

[16 : 44] We don't see it when our grandchildren take first place and they become our idols. We don't see it when our church becomes an idol in our hearts. We don't see it when all the good things that God has given us begin to supplant the hard things that God calls us to do.

And rather than serve him wholeheartedly, we cling to the things that he has given us and we become guilty of idolatry.

One thing you lack. And we have to all pause and ask ourselves what if Jesus were to look in us and see our hearts today and he said to us one thing you lack, what would be that one thing?

What area is it in our lives in which we are not placing him first, in which we are not putting the priority upon him? What is it in our lives that we have so valued and so loved that we've loved it more than him?

What is it? Is it something that's been in that place for a long time? Is it something temporary that you've only recently begun to value too much?

[17 : 55] I began to study this particular passage on Monday morning. Monday morning is usually when I begin my preparations for next Sunday's sermon. I can just start it at the beginning so that it can just be running through my mind all week.

So I began to study Monday morning and I began to see what this passage was about. And I began to reflect upon in my own heart and in the hearts of a lot of people around me and in what I was seeing and hearing on television and on the radio.

I began to reflect upon those things. And the Lord began to allow me to see some of the idolatries that were creeping up in my heart and the hearts of others who are like me.

And I saw some of the good things that I believe that were becoming idols for us. In this sort of intense, hyped up, political time in which we've been for several months now, things began to take the place of God Himself in many people's thinking and talking.

So the isms began to be the highest good for so many people. Constitutionalism became a God. Capitalism became a God for some people.

[19 : 09] These things became gods in the hearts and you can hear it when people talked passionately about the election and about who they wanted to be elected whether they were more liberal or more conservative or whatever the case may be.

You could hear it in their voices. You could see it in their eyes. They were passionate about things and some of those things that they were passionate about were good things that had become idols in their hearts. So that if you listen to more liberal politicians, then you begin to hear about the supremacy of the group and how together as a society we can solve our problems and together we can, either through government intervention or programs, together we can overcome evil in the world in no return and we can implement good educational programs and turn back poverty and all sorts of other evil things and then you turn the dial and you hear the conservatives arguing that the power of the individual to determine his own destiny will be that which brings America out of the pit and if we will just believe in the power of individuals and believe in their ability or believe in the power of capitalism to help us to rise out of the mess that we're in as a nation then that will set us free it will do the job and all of those things as I studied this passage on Monday all of those things I saw laid out and I began to see nothing but idols good things in many cases had become idols and so on Tuesday night there were some cheering in the streets as if the Messiah had returned because their idols had won the day and there were others angry with clenched fists ranting and raving because their idols had lost the day good things often often are twisted by the enemy within our hearts to become objects of worship and we don't even see it in the moment and Jesus looks at this man and he knows immediately he knows the issue in this man's heart he knows what it is that this man clings to that he cannot let go of in order to follow Christ fully and he says one thing you lack and this is not

Jesus being harsh this is not Jesus trying to condemn this man this is not Jesus trying to make this man feel terrible because we're told by Mark it says that Jesus looked at him in verse 21 Jesus looking at him that word means that he was intensely looking and he was staring right at this man he had his entire attention looking at him he loved him everything Jesus says about this man to call him out on his sin and his depravity is fueled by the love that Jesus has for this man to call someone out on their sin is not to be unloving and to tell people that they need to turn away from their sin and let go of their idols is not an unloving thing in fact if you fail to do that then you have been unloving Jesus loves the man and so he looks directly at him and says you have a problem have an idol and unless you let go of that idol you cannot have eternal life let it go and choose me instead follow me instead and then you will have eternal life it's a hard thing in fact it's such a hard thing that Jesus begins to help us to see and he begins to broaden out the application of what he says to this man in verses 23 through 27 he says in verse 23 that

Jesus looked around and he looks his disciples and he says to them how difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God now pause there because we are tempted to go there it is he's condemning wealth but understand as we'll see as we walk through this passage the disciples did not have a negative view of wealth they automatically assumed as well as most of the Jewish culture of their day assumed that wealth was a sign of God's blessing they assumed that they read that in the Old Testament and so they believed that and so when Jesus says how difficult it is for those who are blessed by God with wealth to enter the kingdom of God it doesn't make sense to them why would those who have been blessed by God find it difficult to enter into his kingdom what sense does that make it says in verse 24 that they were amazed at his words that amazed doesn't mean they were amazed like oh wow that's really profound that's a good one Jesus we like that that's not the kind of amazement here their amazement is that doesn't make sense what do you mean the wealthy the blessed are going to have a hard time getting into the kingdom and then Jesus broadens it for them so they can begin to truly understand he says to them children how difficult it is to enter the kingdom of God no mention of wealth here none at all because now it is a broader application this is not just about people who are wealthy this is about everyone how difficult it is to enter the kingdom of God it's not an easy thing it's a hard thing that's why I never I never assume that on the slightest bit of evidence that someone is a believer we do that often though we see the slightest well they go to church sometimes well I know when they were a kid they made this decision or they filled out this card and I know they were bad and on the slightest bit of evidence we will say I think they're a believer because it makes us feel better because then

we don't have to share the gospel with them and call them out on their own idolatries it makes us feel better but Jesus says the opposite Jesus says it's difficult it's hard to enter the kingdom of God for everybody it's not an easy thing don't assume that your relatives and your neighbors are going to enter the kingdom of God don't assume that you're going to enter the kingdom of God because it's hard it is a narrow narrow gate it is hard and if you don't understand it yet you can go a step further verse 25 it's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God now I can remember maybe you guys have heard this explanation of this passage before this verse

[25 : 42] I can remember being told by another preacher at one time that that in Jerusalem there was a gate called the eye of the needle and that it was a fairly narrow gate and that in order for people to enter into the city through that gate they'd have to unpack their camels thereby taking off all their goods and then the camel could pass through and so what I was told was that what Jesus is really saying here it's not a literal eye of a needle here what he's really saying here is that if you want to enter the kingdom of God you've got to unpack your wealth and set it aside and that's what Jesus is demanding here but that's not what Jesus is saying in fact there is absolutely no evidence that at the time of Jesus there was any gate around Jerusalem called the eye of a needle it didn't exist in that time and if there ever was a gate scholars say that that gate was named later on by Christians centuries later who made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem and named the gate after this passage so they got it backwards see Jesus means it literally eye of a needle tiny can't even show you how small it's easier for a camel to go through that than for rich people than for idolaters to enter into the kingdom of God and they understand it they understand exactly what Jesus is saying because it says that they are now they move from amazement now they are exceedingly astonished not in a good way and they said to him then who can be saved you see they get it what camels can't go through the eye of a needle it's impossible Jesus then who can be saved if that's the criteria if it's that hard then it's impossible who can be saved and Jesus does not say that's okay calm down calm down it's not as hard as you've taken me too literally I didn't really mean it that way just settle down and there's a back door there's another way in no Jesus doesn't say that at all

Jesus says it's impossible you're right it's just it's impossible for man to enter the kingdom of God can't be done why why can't why why can't we enter the kingdom of God is there something about being human that makes it impossible to enter the kingdom no there's not something about being human that makes it impossible in fact Jesus in this passage he wasn't when he quoted the commandments to this guy when he says what can I do to inherit eternal life and Jesus quotes him the commandments from the law it's not misdirection on Jesus' part it's not misdirection at all he means it listen obey the commandments and you'll live obey the commandments and you'll get eternal life in fact if you look in your Old Testament if you look in Leviticus chapter you don't have to turn there but I'll read it to you Leviticus chapter 18 verse 5 God says this in the middle of the giving of his laws he says you shall therefore keep my statutes and my rules if a person does them he shall live by them it's not misdirection when Jesus says you want eternal life obey the commands that's not misdirection at all he's just telling them what the Old Testament says the Old Testament scriptures say you want life obey the commands live by these but

Jesus says it'd be easier to squeeze a camel through the eye of a needle than for you to obey the commands of God that is impossible it cannot be done you cannot fully obey God's law no one but Jesus since the fall of Adam has been able to fulfill the requirements of God's law we are Paul says born we come into this world as children of wrath we are by nature we are by birth deserving of God's wrath because we are from the time we come into this world we are sinners and as soon as we are capable we build idols in our own hearts it is impossible it cannot be done it's not just a narrow gate it's an impossibly narrow gate you cannot fit through and then Jesus says something else verse 27

Jesus looked at them and said with man it is impossible confirming their suspicions but not with God for all things are possible with God you cannot do this you cannot enter the kingdom of God you cannot obey God's law perfectly enough you cannot do it to enter the kingdom it is not possible for sinners to do it it is impossible for man but God can cause you to enter God can squeeze a camel through the eye of a needle God can take a sinner and bring them into his kingdom and he does it through the blood of his son the sinful do not enter into God's presence the guilty cannot stand in God's judgment and so God sends his son to be punished in our place he sends his son to take our place so that we are not counted as sinners we are not counted as idolaters on judgment

day if we are covered by the blood of Jesus we are counted as if we had perfectly performed the law just as

Jesus did all of Jesus perfect obedience counts as ours because with God it's possible all of it counts as ours and all of our sin counts as his on the cross and now because of what God has done because of his initiative now man can enter into the kingdom of God this is not this is not a negative message it may sound like it so far but Jesus keeps talking about that this is not a negative message the doctrine of God's divine election of certain sinners unto eternal life is not an intellectual riddle to be solved it's not a problem to plague our minds it is the only hope for sinful people the only hope for us is that

[32 : 33] God in his sovereignty would do what we cannot do on our behalf that he would take undeserving depraved sinners and he would move them from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light that he himself would do it when we cannot is the only hope of sinful people like you and me and the disciples for all of their denseness and Peter for all of his inability to see I think here grasps at least a bit of what Jesus is saying it's impossible for you Jesus says but God can do it and then Peter responds by saying look Jesus we have left everything and followed you this man couldn't do it and we've done it which means that God must have done in us the work that enables us to do it we've done it Jesus we know that that's how Peter meant his words because of the way that Jesus responds

I don't think that Jesus is turning around and saying well yeah Jesus but we did it what do you mean it's impossible we did I don't think that's what Peter is saying because if that had been the case I think Jesus would have responded by saying Peter you don't know what you're talking about I mean Jesus is not soft on Peter he calls him Satan and he tells him to get behind him when he's wrong he's not soft on Peter and yet here Jesus does not rebuke him because I think Peter is saying for us it's been done for us God has done the impossible and then listen to Jesus words to him these are words of truly I say to you there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands there's nothing negative in that list notice it's all good stuff it's all stuff that the scriptures teaches that God gives us there's no one who's left those things for my sake and for the sake of the gospel who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time in this age houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands with persecutions and in the age to come eternal life

Jesus says Peter you have left all Peter God has done a work in your heart Peter God has done the impossible for you and he has enabled you to do what this man could not do and you have left all those things and let me give you this piece of encouragement Peter you're going to get eternal life but not only are you going to get that in the age to come but in this life you'll get a hundredfold of what you left behind Peter that's encouraging if you rightly understand it right you see the televangelists on TV if you send me a dollar God will bless you with a hundred dollars within the next two weeks that's what they say that's not what Jesus says here Jesus says you leave your family you give up that which is most precious to you and that's a real deal in this world you convert to Christ in the first century pretty good chance you're going to lose your family it would be like living in a Muslim nation today and converting to Jesus at a minimum you've lost your family and you're dead to them Jesus is serious you give up that stuff

I'll give it back to you you'll get brothers and sisters you'll get them you'll get the church you'll get the people of God you will be united to them and they will become such a family to you that they will far outweigh all that you gave up it causes us the question whether or not we've really understood what the church is about right I mean if the church is supposed to be such a such a blessing and such we're supposed to have such strong ties that they outweigh the ties that we have with our physical families it says something about the nature of the church and how I think we've probably missed it a bit it's better than what we experience it can be better and Jesus says you'll get something better if you give up those things you'll get that hundred times better than what you gave up and I know that he doesn't mean you're going to get a hundred dollars for every dollar you tithe I know he doesn't mean that because he says with persecutions it's not a health and wealth passage because you'll give up all those things and you'll get something better and you might get killed for it you might die for it it's not health and wealth here this is real you lay aside the idols of your heart you'll get eternal life and you'll get more good things from

God brothers and sisters in places of things you've given up you will get those you'll get them but you also might have to die for it you might but many he says verse 31 but many who are first will be

last and the last will be first but many like this rich young man who would not set aside the idols of his heart who could not do it many of them they will be last in the judgment but many of those who are last now and give up all of those things for the sake of Jesus and for the sake of the gospel they will be first they will receive eternal life the only real questions that we have to ask ourselves are have we given up the idols that plague our hearts for the sake of Jesus and for the sake of the gospel and then even if we have done that don't think that

[38 : 19] Satan will not come in and try to introduce new idols into your heart don't think that he won't try and so we have to even as believers we have to constantly examine our hearts and our lives and ask what things are creeping up what things are gaining more and more value in my heart and threaten the reign of Jesus over my life where are they and when you find them you tear them down tear them down I wonder I wonder I wonder how many of you are still in the place of this rich young man unable to obey God's law to the fullest extent and yet unaware that you haven't done so needing desperately to lay it all aside to repent and to come to Jesus so that you might have eternal life and I wonder

I wonder how many of us as believers have failed to see the good things that Satan has been using to try to bring new idols into our lives good things but good things good things become the worst things if they come before Christ we are all of us by nature idol worshippers and we come to confess that to you father we come to admit that we are depraved people we are sinners we don't have anything in ourselves to boast of but we come in gladness and we come in joy and we come in assurance that Jesus has made a way for us Jesus has made the impossible possible and father I pray that if there are those who have not yet trusted him have not yet received his gift they would do so this morning and I pray that you would so challenge your people and so help us to look upon ourselves with eyes and see the truth that we would be purified this morning in Jesus name we pray amen through