

Fall Retreat 2022: Saturday Morning Session

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Preacher: Bauer Evans

[0 : 0 0] Please open in the scriptures to Matthew's gospel again. We're going to look again at the passage we began last night, Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, beginning in verse 1 of Matthew 5.

I called an audible last night. I didn't run this by Sean, but thinking about our time limitations, I actually did this morning's message last night. That's why when you got into your small groups, you're looking at your devotional questions, your application questions, they seemed a little bit out of sync.

They complement each other. When we did this at Crossway, we did both passages two weeks in a row. So I'm actually doing the message that originally was planned for last night because we have more time this morning, although I won't be that much longer, and we can linger.

But they're complementary. So those of you who are leading those small group discussions, I'll give you some questions to jot down, and that will just make that transition a little simpler for you.

But let's read the scripture, and then I will pray for our time together. This is God's word to us.

Matthew 5, beginning in verse 1.

[1 : 1 6] Verse 1.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

Blessed are the poor in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.

Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven. For so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored?

[2 : 4 2] It's no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden, nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house.

In the same way, let your light shine before others so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

Thanks be to God for his word. Let's pray. Father, as we've already sung this morning, we are dependent on you, and so, Lord, we bring now this time before your word, and we invite the work of your Spirit in our hearts that we might grow in our mission mindfulness and in growing, join Christ more faithfully, more fruitfully in the mission that he has called us to.

Help us to do that together, and Lord, minister to us out of your great love this morning. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

If you were asked the question, what was the most read article in the New York Times in 2021, what would you say?

[4 : 1 7] Was it an article about the economy? Certainly would be worthwhile in light of the economic difficulties we face. Was it an article about politics because of the current rancor and discord and political conversations?

Was it an article drawn from the culture wars, which the church often finds itself in the crosshairs of? Maybe it was an article about Harry Styles and his residency in Las Vegas.

It was none of those articles. And you think about the New York Times. It's read by millions of people every day throughout the world. It was an article about mental health.

The most read article in 2021 was not written by journalists, nor by a political reporter, nor by someone embedded on the war front.

It was by Adam Grant, industrial psychologist, Wharton Business School. And he wrote this. There's a name for the blah you're feeling.

[5 : 23] It's called languishing. How many of you have heard of that article? Good. I hadn't heard of it when someone introduced it to me. And I read a lot of articles on the New York Times.

It's what Dr. Grant wrote. At first, I didn't recognize the symptoms that we all had in common. Friends mentioned that they were having trouble concentrating.

Colleagues reported that even with vaccines on the horizon, this is 2021, they weren't excited about 2021. A family member was staying up late to watch National Treasure.

You know what that movie is. Even though she knows the movie by heart. And instead of bouncing out of bed at 6 a.m., Adam writes, I was lying there until 7, playing Wordle with friends.

It wasn't burnout. We all had energy. It wasn't depression. We didn't feel hopeless. We just felt joyless.

[6 : 29] And aimless. And it turns out there's a name for that. Languishing. Languishing is a sense of stagnation and emptiness.

It feels as if you're muddling through your days. I love this. He's such a good writer. Looking at life through a foggy windshield. I've had a few foggy windshields this fall.

It's really cold in the morning or it's really warm outside. It's cold in your car. Imagine going through life with a foggy windshield and you're defrosted or snot. And it might be the dominant motion of 2021.

In psychology, I'll conclude with this. We think a lot about mental health on a spectrum from depression to flourishing. Flourishing is the peak of well-being. You have a strong sense of meaning, mastery, mattering to others.

Depression can be a valley of ill-being. You feel despondent, drained, and worthless. Languishing is the neglected middle child of mental health.

[7 : 37] It's the void between depression and flourishing. The absence of well-being. You don't fit the grid of symptoms of mental illness, but you know you're not the picture of mental health.

You're not functioning at full capacity. Languishing dulls your motivation, disrupts your ability to focus, triples the odds that you'll cut back on work. It's beginning to appear more common than major depression and in some ways may be a bigger risk factor for mental illness.

Part of the danger when you're languishing is you fail to notice it. You don't catch yourself slowly slipping into solitude.

You're indifferent to your indifference. Understanding it better can help you and help others like you. I was talking to a millennial, an urbanite.

I'm a suburbanite, so I depend on these urbanites to tell me what they're feeling. And she said, describing herself and her peers, she didn't use the word languishing. She said, right now, I feel trapped.

[8 : 45] Trapped? Trapped by what? And she began to describe a series of boundaries in her lives, financial boundaries, living arrangement, limitations, social, network, relational, difficulties, job ceilings where advancements didn't come in a timely way, emotional.

And I asked her, how does it feel to feel trapped? This is a Christian woman. And the word we agreed on, you're languishing.

What is the good news to a church on mission, to a culture that is struggling with something they can't even put a word to?

What is the good news to us when we, in honesty, or a friend points out to us that spiritually, we're languishing? Don't hear what I'm not saying. You can be very busy. You can be full of energy.

You can be an extrovert in your personality, or you can be an introvert. You can be very radical. What is the news of the gospel, and how does it intersect with our mission, mindfulness, when it comes to pointing people to Jesus?

[10 : 15] I think it's found in the Beatitudes, among others. It's found in those opening verses that we just read. It's not the only thing the New Testament says, but it says enough in these verses to remind us two things, that being blessed in Christ, my first point, motivates us to obey Christ in mission, and that being blessed in Christ equips us, equips us to bless others in mission.

So at the end of this message, I want you to ask yourself the question, not only what is a practical application from today's message for my life, but how does the blessed person in Christ experience sufficient grace to be blessed?

You should be able to answer that without pause when called upon by your small group leader. How does the blessed person in Christ, which describes every genuine Christian, you are blessed in Christ, according to Matthew 5 and 2 Corinthians 5, where Paul says, therefore you are a new creation.

How does the blessed person in Christ experience grace sufficient to bless others?

Let's look at the text together, put it in context briefly. You are well taught by Dr. Wu, although he's not a doctor right now.

[11:52] And so I don't feel the need to belabor some of these exegetical points. But Jesus is seated on a mountain, which denotes authority, and he is teaching his disciples, his soon-to-be Christians.

And he opens his mouth, and he begins to announce to them a series of blessings. Verse 3, blessed are the poor in spirit. Verse 4, blessed are those who mourn. Verse 5, blessed are the meek. Verse 6, blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. Verse 7, blessed are the merciful. Verse 8, blessed are the pure in heart. Verse 9, blessed are the peacemakers. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake. Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely.

And following each of the blessings that he describes is attached a promise to the person who fits that bill.

[13:07] So for the poor in spirit, theirs is the kingdom. For those who mourn, they shall be comforted. For the meek, they shall inherit the earth. For those who hunger and thirst, they shall be satisfied.

For the merciful, they shall receive mercy. For the pure in heart, they shall see God. For the peacemaker, they shall be called sons of God. For the persecuted, for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

And for those, when others revile you and persecute you on account of Christ, your reward is great. It's quite a set of declarations and promises which begs the question, how do we receive these blessings?

How do we receive these blessings through putting our trust in Jesus Christ? And then how do these blessings inform the ethics of a Christian who is missionally mindful and not culturally captivated?

Well, this is the simple explanation. To receive the blessing of the Beatitudes, you have to put your trust in the blesser, Jesus Christ.

[14:36] to receive the blessings, you have to put your trust in through faith in as you turn from your sins to him in Jesus Christ.

When I first became a Christian, I was introduced to the ministry of R.C. Sproul. I love R.C. Sproul. When I read his book, Holiness of God, on an airplane in California, I was with my family on vacation. I was like 21, 22 years old.

It was a game changer. I read several other books, went to Ligonier conferences, subscribed to Table Talk. I was a Ligonier junkie in the early years of my Christendom. But Holiness of God, I've read it since then two or three times, stands alone.

And he introduced me to a teaching in Reformed theology, which you are, you are Reformed, where it talked about the order of salvation. And if you don't know what that is, Sean can break it down more articulately, can I again?

But basically, that when someone comes to Christ, there is sovereignty in God's election, right? And then, through the calling of the gospel, there is regeneration and then conversion.

[15:46] And then from conversion, there is justification. We receive Christ's righteousness by faith. Amen? Isn't that glorious?

And then we're adopted into his family. And then there's growth into Christlikeness. And then there's glorification. We see Jesus face to face through perseverance.

And because I'm a slow student, George, and I don't listen carefully a lot of times, I began, and I imagine you have never done this, I began to separate the blessings, like links on a golden chain,

from the blesser.

In other words, I began to think more about the blessing, which are enormously significant, and not the person who bestows the blessing.

And so, I was learning these links in the chain, and my mind was being blown open, and my heart was being renewed and revived, and I was a new Christian, and things just seemed to be coming together.

[16:53] But over time, I became more focused on the links in the chain, and I lost sight of the person of Christ.

And although the links in the chain analogy is helpful, it's woefully inadequate. If we think of salvation more of the blessings than we've received, than the person that each of those blessings points to.

And that's why I think the deficit of teaching on union with Christ is hurt the church. Because we think more about what we've received from Christ than we think about when we receive Christ, we get it all.

We get it all. So I'm worshiping this morning with you, and I'm feeling, even with two gallons of Costco cold coffee in me, not quite spiritually like I should be, and I have to speak, and there's this little voice of condemnation that's beginning to ping in my soul.

Where do I go in that moment? Well, if I go to the blessings that I'm justified in Christ, that's good, but instead, I went to 2 Corinthians 5 and said, no, I'm a new creation in Christ.

[18:12] I'm fully accepted in Christ. I am justified because He has joined Himself to me. I am being sanctified because Christ is in me.

I will one day be glorified, not because I'm being faithful, but because He is committed faithfully to me. And as I grow into that reality, I begin to realize I, you, are blessed in Christ.

Somebody say amen. That's what I always gig up. Thank you. I know you're there. You folks have a lot of energy. I was thinking, they're going to be tired. They drove two and a half hours last night.

Are you kidding? You guys were up partying at two in the morning. I'm trying to sleep last night.

There's a lot of energy in this room. Wonderful. So, Jesus often says hard things, but the blessings of the beatitude is an invitation.

And for the Christian, it's a reminder that spirituality in Him is not a superficial thing. When God's grace invades your heart through the person of Christ, when God's grace invades your heart through the person of Christ, it initiates blessings.

[19:50] One gentleman who I studied, David Turner and his commentary on Matthew, wrote this. This isn't projected, so just listen and be encouraged by this.

He's talking about receiving Christ's blessings. God initiates His salvific blessings by graciously sending His Son to save sinful and broken people.

They respond to Christ's invitation to receive God's promised salvation by repenting of their sins and turning to Christ. Christ's followers, in turn, respond to Him by blessing God with praise and obedient living.

Their present experience of God's kingdom through faith in Christ motivates them to live in light of its future fulfillment. The sermon's pattern is to highlight the character of the blessed person and then explain the promise of God realized through a relationship with Jesus.

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[20:55] So when we receive Jesus, we receive all of these blessings, but that doesn't mean we experience all of these blessings in the same way, in the fullest way, all of the time.

We progressively grow into them, right? We progressively grow into our experience of what it means. Let's look at the first one, to be poor in spirit.

It's a great blessing. to be poor in spirit, as I flip through my notes here, is to be completely dependent on Christ.

Not on the gifts Christ has given you, not on the gifts that Christ the creator endowed you with, but to be poor in spirit is to completely depend on, there's few things that more challenge me than to be completely dependent on Christ, particularly in the areas where I'm gifted.

where I'm already good, where I have experience and I have skills and I've shown effectiveness in it, like public speaking or teaching or my superior athletic abilities that Will can tell you about.

[22 : 11] My first instinct is not to be completely dependent on Christ. My first instinct is to be dependent on me. And so I'm progressively over time growing into this new reality of saying, Lord, thank you for the gift.

Thank you for the ability. Thank you for how you have helped me to serve others. But Lord, this morning I just commit my words, my mouth, my arms that seem to move a lot when I speak, I commit it all to you.

Make me more dependent on you. Why? Because it's a blessing to be blessed by Jesus through a relationship with him. How about blessed are those who mourn?

Verse 4, for they shall be comforted. The mourning in that is to take sin seriously. The same word is found in 1 Corinthians 5, 2, and James 4, and both use the word mourning to describe a deep sense of grief and conviction enabled by the Holy Spirit.

It's specific. It's pinpointed. It's not condemning, but it is, it is penetrating when we mourn over the sin of ourselves or over the sin of others.

[23 : 39] Psalm 119, 136 says, my eyes shed streams of tears because people do not keep your law. People do not walk in covenant with God according to the psalmist and it causes him to mourn.

The sense of this blessing is that Jesus calls his people to a view of life that shuns the light-hearted attitude regarding serious issues of sin in our own hearts and in our context.

And yet, it promises his comfort comfort to those who genuinely take sin seriously. There is comfort in genuine repentance. Do you remember the comfort that came to you when you first believed the joy of the revelation that your sins have been forgiven through the atoning work of Christ on the cross?

I remember that as if it happened last night. I was blessed by the blesser with the beatitude of being mournful.

and it fueled my repentance and it has fueled my worship since then. We are to receive and to grow more into Christ through this blessing as we perhaps get out of ourselves in looking to him.

[25 : 08] I'll do one more and then we'll move to mission. I like this one. Power under control. Meekness. Hmm. Meekness.

Two things less described in the eyes of the culture today than meekness. Gentleness. Lowliness. Meekness. That's a mark of a true disciple. That's a distinguishing evidence of grace. Sinners were drawn to Jesus.

Broken people. Outliers. Outcasts. And some. Elites. Yes, he spoke with authority.

Yes, he worked miracles. But his meekness made him approachable. My wife, who I love to boast and she'll be here later.

[26 : 08] Hopefully she's on her way. As soon as you meet her, you'll say, hmm, he traded up in marrying her. He got a break. That was kind of gone. She works in a, on a college campus in the arts department and it is, has a large population, staff and students of LGBTQ people.

Students, faculty, staff. We're using more personal pronouns in a workday than, you know, my, my passwords to my phone has digits.

She does it to be respectful and because she's been told to do it and required to do it. Meanwhile, a local church, a church that preaches the gospel, but a, nonetheless, a local church in the town where we have, do our services, is holding up signs.

talks about the fags. God hates the gays. God hates and they're out there protesting the LGBTQ group that's there on campus.

Everyone in the shop knows you're a Christian. In fact, even worse, you're married to a pastor. How do you respond to that?

[27 : 43] Well, first, she's grieved. She's grieved for those students first that their identity has become now anchored in these realities that our culture, that breaks her heart.

Then she's angry because she's being grouped in with this group of protesters that isn't there every week but is there enough that the whole campus is on edge when they're there and the staff look at her and say, you're one of them.

They may not say it to her, but they're thinking that. And so, no, this might surprise you. You don't get invited to drinks on Friday night when you're one of them. You don't get invited to the pre-year cookout when you're one of them because you hate LGBTQ.

LGBTQ. And so, one by one by one beginning with her supervisor because she, she has grown in meekness.

She has ministered Christ to them through her words and through her actions. she has been salt. [29 : 05] She has been light. And where she has not compromised and said, I simply affirm, affirm, affirm, agree, agree, she has been very clear in her character and in her speech that Christ does not hate sinners.

sinners. And now, we're getting invited to cocktail parties. Praise the Lord. Seriously, I'm going golfing with one of these people soon.

You never golf with someone if you think they hate, you know. she has grown in the blessing of the blesser, the character of meekness in the face of hostility instead of reacting to it and becoming defensive in response to it or even starting to get into this whole conversation about my rights are being violated and you won't speak to me that way.

And the kingdom of Christ advances through the meekness of my wife. I tell her, except for what I believe about complementarien, she should be the pastor of Crossway Church because I'm ready to slug some of those people with the signs and so I need more of the blesser.

My lack of meekness, it's under prioritizing in my conduct and behavior. God says to me, Lord, help me to grow through standing and receiving more of being transformed by the grace of God that I celebrate in my singing may it invade my heart that it would overflow against people who say I'm their enemy.

[30 : 59] That's what it means to begin to become mission mindful. We begin to walk and talk on mission with Jesus in the blessings that he has shared with us knowing that it's not a golden chain of benefits but rather it's a relationship with him where he shapes us providentially in relationship with others into the ethics of grace.

last point the labor and so how do we then bring this blessing into our work into our school into our neighborhoods how can we practice these realities in our relationships with one another in the church be discipled mutually with one another be encouraging one another be growing and catalyst for growth if Christ's blessing of us with himself motivates us to obey him in mission our being blessed my last point in Christ equips us in mission first be it's real simple I teach high school students go I keep it real simple be the word blessed be be prayerful be prayerful every turning point in Jesus's ministry in the gospels recorded for us is preceded by prayer followed by prayer so much so that the disciples say to

Jesus and all the gospel accounts teach us how to pray we don't know how to pray we're religious people we don't know how to play we're religious Jews we don't know how to pray teach us how to pray sure our father it's relationship you're in me I am in him Colossians 3 and the spirit is in you as well be prayerful L listen to God the spirit and listen to the heart of others when Linda's here you can ask her about my listening and she'll tell you he's growing but I stink at listening my mind's so busy and I know so much if you knew as much as I knew Linda you'd listen more to me I've said things like that can you imagine 31 years of marriage it convicts me begs the question if I struggle listening to my wife who's meek am I really listening to God the spirit who is meek too he's the gentle spirit he's a humble holy spirit he doesn't come in and kick tables over and turn up the CGI and you know whatever calls the room and shake and says I got a message for you I wish he did sometimes and maybe he does occasionally it's remarkable isn't how many times in the gospels Jesus is asked a question how does he respond he responds with a question that means he was listening he was listening he wasn't leading with just announcements and pronouncements he was listening and as he listened to their question he could hear their heart he could hear their pain he could hear their confusion and he answered the person that was really there not many of you have heard of this man

Will knows him we've talked about him Jonathan Charks T-J-A-R-K-S he was a senior editor for the ringer how many of you have heard of the ringer so I know my audience here good and he was he did a very award winning NBA podcast so you know where I'm going to go with this if you know who Jonathan Charks is T-J-A-R-K-S Jonathan didn't grow up in the church he's not on the grid like many of your neighbors he doesn't have a copy of the scriptures multi-generational biblically illiterate he doesn't know who Peter and Paul are not because he's dumb but he's just not he didn't grow up with any kind of exposure that never been to church doesn't have a bible doesn't have any biblical storyline resident in him his best friend when he was writing for the ringer turned out to be a Christian who's writing for the ringer and covering another NBA team Jonathan loves basketball Will loves basketball did you know that I don't love basketball I like baseball but that's right

[36 : 16] I follow along so love basketball and his best friend writes for the ringer about a team Jonathan writes for the ringer about another team and he does this award wedding podcast and his best friend didn't know this but Jonathan is searching he is spiritually searching he's 24 25 no purpose in life he's tried everything spiritually tried it all finding nothing and he meets his friend ready for a meal and his friend says I want to invite you to Trinity Cambridge's life group is that what you call your small groups community groups he says what I want to invite you to our community group Jonathan's like why am I good at that you can imagine what he's thinking people do in a community group animal sacrifices or Costco cults you know right because in my community group there are people who genuinely care for me and there are people

I genuinely care for and I'm investing in and ready for this we meet every week John says okay now what he's not acknowledging is he's starving for this he's he's languishing and so he goes and he just doesn't have a category for it like he thinks Christianity is a Sunday service where you sing songs he's never heard and you listen to a message that he can't understand and you go home maybe you get a cup of coffee on the way out and that's it and he goes again it was good the first time he goes again and yeah he didn't understand everything that was being said and they were reading the Bible but he was just struck by the investment in one another and the care in one another and then someone came up to him and said to Jonathan can I pray for you wow pray for me I don't even believe in the supernatural yes pray for me but this is just hocus pocus you know what are we talking about

Jonathan would go to that life group and become friends with people in that life group and come to faith in Christ through gospel realities being displayed in that life group and then the message before he ever went to church and then two or three years after he became a Christian he was diagnosed with one of the rarest forms of cancer I can't pronounce it it's a sarcoma where it just metastasizes and goes everywhere there's no cure and he's a two-year-old son and he has a young bride and he writes the article for the ringer do you know my son do you know my son you know he's talking about in that article on the ringer this is Bill Simmons right he's like the CEO of the ringer my life group knows my son and will be caring for him and my wife after I die is that what's going on in your life group is that what's going on in mine or are we like intellectualizing and analyzing and overthinking some aspect of a text or a theological debate and missing missing the blessing that when we're with others we've now an opportunity to listen to God but we can listen to their hearts and begin to move towards them as those who have been invaded by the grace of God yes truth is important doctrinal discussions are vital but if that takes the place of caring for one another then there's whole pages of our

Bible we have to rip out because there's so many commands to care for one another encourage one another pray for one another fulfill the law of Christ and carry one other's burdens that to spend most of our time doing anything else we're not receiving the blessings from the blesser of the beatitudes and we're missing mission because what Jonathan wants E is to have a meal with you and to cultivate friendship with you like Jesus did with Zacchaeus and countless others he not only was he not anxious he teaches disciples not to be anxious about what they're going to eat and drink chapter six but he taught them to be generous with their food generous with their table generous with what God has provided with non-believers we're trying to grow as a church I'm trying to grow as a pastor I'm trying to grow as a follower of Christ if to have people into my home but if they won't come into my home then

I'll come in theirs and if they're too scared to let me in their home I'll join them at the bar and if they won't join me at the bar I'll go to the football game I'll be with the people that I'm supposed to be on mission with to cultivate friendship so I was so honored I was so humbled I was it brought me to tears I was so blessed when a colleague who objected to a local high school having me in the classroom I mean this was this was like wow Lord this I don't know are you coming back soon he invited me to play tennis with him he's a really good tennis player not as good as you but he's a really good tennis player and this was someone that was outspokenly hostile to bringing a pastor who's on YouTube into the classroom to take the space of a another teacher who's sick with cancer and is failing and here we are that's how I hit my backhand and I won which made it even better but Christ won because

[43 : 01] Bauer the pastor who's in Christ spent two and a half hours of his Saturday with with someone he's my Jonathan I don't know if he has cancer but spiritually it's just as if he does who's your Jonathan Charks right now providentially don't overthink it who right now is the Lord causing

you to intersect with they're not too sick they might be writing for the ringer they might not play good tennis it's George but someone is and if they're not Christ invites you to have your eyes opened first the blessing of the Beatitudes but secondly to be an overflow of that grace to that person pray today pray in your small groups pray to listen to him for the heart of others eat together and cultivate friendships through food and drink and tennis and activities share the gospel right in John in Matthew 6 Jesus is our greatest treasure he is our greatest treasure we get him we get it all and then suffer patiently when you're Jonathan projects you first time I saw myself on a meme by high school students ready to kill them and what made it worse it was on the big screen in my classroom and what made it equally grating is it was based on a sermon I had just preached from

Acts about Jesus being the king and I walked in and there it was and I wish I could say I was more holy but I was ready to take that screen throw it out the window and then find that and then I thought and said hmm it was spirit of God I guess they're watching you see that's my trash can it's not my trash it's my reputation they're moving your trash can ridicule they're having fun at your expense I'm an American Christian you don't have fun at my expense I have rights I'm a person of authority I deserve respect I'm an old person too this is ageism it was the same goofy you know and then Jesus is king I never did find out who memed it but I realized I didn't need to because ultimately it was the Lord he was discipling me and in kingdom ethics rejoice that means they're listening to you they may not understand it they may not respond to it but rejoice when your reputation is diminished the faculty heard about it my department heard about they ridiculed me about it at lunch I was defenseless at lunch I just they were like did you see the meme is that a book in the Bible Acts you go to a church yes it's one of the best books of the whole

Bible you said Jesus is a king we're in a democracy what are you talking about seriously I was to talk about that lunch I I felt like this small when we got out there trying to explain but then I've just oh no Lord you're discipling me you're teaching me you're helping me grow into this blessing rejoice when people ridicule you for great is your reward what's the reward I don't know Jesus he's the blesser I get more of him the story has a happy ending I don't know if she was responsible for the meeting when I closed this but one of the students I had when she was a freshman then again as a sophomore and then senior year so I met her when her teacher was sick I continued on walk teacher being sick and then after her teacher passed I took the class I had her senior year I remember when we were teaching about the great awakening and my Bible in my classroom although I wasn't reading from it I was showing them you know the great awakening and she said mr. Evans can you explain again what is a you evangelical a you angelical and she's a sweetheart I'm like a you angelical and she's pointing down to the word evangelical she'd never seen that word before and so you know because I'm because I'm somewhat of a I don't know what's that called mischievous I walked right up and said I'm a you angelical and I explained well Whitfield was a you angelical and he would go out amongst the people in the fields and he talked to them about Christ of the Bible in ways they could understand he didn't say come to the city and attend the big cathedral he said I'll meet you in the cornfields I'll make you in the tree stump and he had this oratory this voice he'd be heard you know for miles and he had humor let's say he was a perfect man but he could preach God was anointing him and he he explained the gospel in terms so I said to her I'm a Christian I'm a follower of

Jesus he died for my sins I got that much out before I thought this is when they fire me she's now in college coming home for homecoming two weeks and although she's not a you angelical God in his providence she just met a guy who's with campus crusade and he seems to have her attention hmm and she's getting more than you angelicalism she's getting the character of Christ in her context and realizing something like Jonathan sharks I long for this let's pray Lord we are here because you have brought us here ultimately to not just make us mindful of our mission but to open our eyes to the people in our world the relationships in our in our different settings and spheres where we have the privilege imperfect but nonetheless clear privilege to demonstrate the realities of the blesser Jesus Christ in our character in our conduct and in our conversation and so Lord where it's appropriate may there be specific conviction specific not broad specific conviction where we we have in our relationships followed an artificial or superficial spirituality reducing Christian living to being nice putting out our recyclables and not being mean to animals

Lord open our eyes to to see first your great love for us in giving us everything everything we need and want in you and then move us out of ourselves and more into Christ that we can first display in our character and then Lord through our consistency in our relationships and then through our

conversation the reality of the gospel the hope of glory Christ in us for your glory for our joy we pray these things Jesus said amen for our discussion times if I can just do this Sean is that right just to give him a question here's the question discussing letters first how has Christ blessed you right which was the question we began with last night but let's go back to it how has Christ blessed you in your relationship with him in order to be a blessing to others and then secondly whom has Christ put in your life who's your Jonathan right now and take a few moments and pray for that person they may not have cancer they have something far worse and we want to pray being united and okay hope that serves you this morning thanks you