

The Gospel 1
The Gospel
By Dr. Joshua Mack

sermonaudio.com

Preached on: Sunday, January 3, 2010

Grace Manor Farm
Susterstroom
Bronkhorstspuit
South Africa

Website: www.graceunlimited.co.za

Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/graceunlimited

This sermon is available for free download from www.graceunlimited.co.za There you will also find many other sermons, speaker's blogs, event, pictures, links, web store, edocuments and contact details. Simply follow the links to Grace Unlimited on Sermon Audio.

Over the past several weeks, we've been doing something of an overview of the Bible. We're trying to get an idea of what the Bible is all about and we saw that the Bible is a story. It's a story of what God is up to in this universe and that the Bible begins with the story of creation, where all things got started, how God made the world and then we looked at where things went wrong, the fall and we began to get a look at the story the Old Testament tells about how God is going about rescuing his people. Then, over the past several weeks, we've been talking about the hero of the story who is Jesus Christ.

This week, I want us to think a little bit about the gospel which is the central message of the Bible. We're going to talk about the question: what is the gospel? What is the gospel? This is an important question for a whole lot of different reasons. For one thing, this is a message that changed the entire world. If you look at the world, the world in which we exist right now, it is a completely different place because of this single message of the gospel. The gospel has radically transformed the world but more than that, this message, the gospel, what we're going to talk about in Colossians 1:19-23, this message, the gospel, not only changed the world, it changed your life if you're a Christians. In fact, it's changed my life. I'm excited about talking with you about the gospel because this is a message that has power to save. It has completely transformed me and there are many other individuals here who can stand up and they can tell their own personal story and the way in which this message, the gospel, has changed them.

It's a message, the gospel, this question, what is the gospel is an important question because it's a message on which your entire eternal future depends. Where you're going to spend the rest of forever depends on the way that you respond to this message, the gospel. If someone would come to you and they would say that your response to a certain message determines the next ten years of your life, you would probably say, "Well, that's a pretty important message." If someone came to you and they said your response to a

certain message determines the next 40 years of your life, you would probably say, “Well, that’s a pretty important message.” But if someone could come to you and say that your response to a certain message determines the next billion years of your life and the next billion after that, you would say, “Well, that is the single most important message that I’ve ever heard.” This is the gospel, the single most important message in the history of the world. It is the single most important message in the Bible. You can get a lot of things wrong in the Bible but if you get the gospel right, you get the central message. You can get a lot of things right about the Bible but if you get the gospel wrong, you’ve missed the entire point. This is the single most important message in the entire world.

It’s an important question: what is the gospel? Because not only is it a message that saves us from the penalty of sin, it’s also the message that God uses to transform us. This is the message, as you understand the gospel, what God is doing in the gospel, this is the message that gives you the power to say no to sin, to turn from lust, to turn from greed and to pursue the kinds of things that God wants you to pursue in life. This is a powerful, powerful message and yet, it’s a message that a lot of people misunderstand. If I ask the question: what is the gospel and I’ve done this many, many places, I’ll sit down with people and I’ll say to them, “Can you tell me what is the gospel?” I can’t tell you how many times people who grew up in the church who sing all kinds of songs are unable to answer that question the way God does. It seems, sometimes, like there are very few people who are able to answer the question: what is the gospel? What is the single most important message in the Bible?

You know, even among those of us who might be able to answer the question, what is the gospel, sometimes we get distracted in life and we think of the gospel almost as something, a message, that was for the beginning of our Christian life but now that we’ve moved on, there are all sorts of other messages that are maybe more important for us when in reality, the gospel is not the ABCs of the Christian life, the gospel, this message that we’re going to talk about today, it is the A-Z of the Christian life. This is the school of the Christian life. This message, this question, what is the gospel, is vital, fundamental for us to be able to answer as individuals and as a church.

So, I thought given the power of the gospel, the importance of the gospel, how easy it is for us to lose sight of the gospel, we need to take the time in our overview of the Scripture to answer the question: what is the gospel? And to do that, I want us to work our way through one of Paul’s summaries of the gospel. It’s found here in Colossians 1:13-23 and we’re going to especially focus in on verses 19-23 as a way to, at least, begin to summarize Paul’s answer to the question: what is the gospel? Specifically, I want to give you and we’ll see how much we can get through today, but specifically I want to give you six words. Six words that will help you wrap your minds around what Paul tells us about the gospel.

The first word is “news.” If you’re going to understand the answer to this question, what is the gospel, think about this word “news.” Before we talk about the content of the gospel, what is in the gospel, what does the gospel tell us, I want us to do something simple and ask the question: what kind of message is the gospel? We’re going to look at

what Paul says the content of the message is in Colossians 1:19-23 but I just want to do something simple before we get there and ask: what kind of message is the gospel? In other words, this message, when we talk about the gospel, is it advice? Are we talking about advice? Or is this message, the gospel, is it philosophy? Is it a kind of thinking or ideas about the way in which the world works? Or is this gospel that we're talking about, this message, is it self-help? Is it kind of a self-help book? Seven steps to your best life now? No, to get the gospel, what I want you to hear, to get the gospel you have to hear it as news. News.

That's what the word "gospel" means: news, good news. It wasn't a term that Paul made up, instead it was a word all kinds of people used and they normally used it to describe a message of victory after a country's soldiers had defeated the enemy. A man would go back to his country and he would herald or he would speak the gospel, the good news of their country's victory. The word "gospel," it was good news about a victory that had been won. It was a report about something that happened in history, a specific event. Every day we're bombarded by news: we've got CNN, we've got BBC, we've got the internet, we've got all these signs on the streets with the headlines telling us the latest thing that Zuma did. You need to understand, though, that way before all this stuff we see around us, the apostles, the men that God chose to lead the Christian movement, they decided, they chose to describe the basic content of the message they proclaimed as news, good news.

I think you see that if you just look down to verses 19-23. You can just observe the way Paul speaks. He writes, verse 19, "For in him," that's Jesus, "all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross. And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death." Before I say all kinds of things about exactly what Paul says there, what I just want you to observe or notice is that when you read that, you see Paul's not speaking like another religious philosopher or teacher sharing suggestions. No, instead, he's talking like a news reporter. He's talking about a real person who really lived 2,000 years ago and for him it was a lot closer, who was really crucified and rose again. And Paul's job is to go around spreading the news of what happened and proclaiming the significance of that event for us and for the universe.

I know this may seem obvious but what I want you to hear is this is part of what makes Christianity so unique. You go to most religious places and they're going to offer up to you suggestions or ideas about how you ought to live. That's not unique. You go to most religious places and they're going to focus on you and what you need to do but the heart of Christianity is something different and you will never understand the gospel until you realize this: the heart of Christianity is not a plan to follow, it's not a task to do, the heart of Christianity, what makes Christianity's heart beat is the report, it's a news report that someone else has already accomplished, followed, achieved, everything for us. The victory has been won. That's what we're doing every Sunday when we talk about the gospel: I'm here as a news reporter to tell you the most significant news in the universe

and to help you understand how that should change the way you look at everything else in your life.

If you think about the gospel, about first how to live a good life. If you think about the gospel, first about a way of thinking. If you think about the gospel, first about going to church, being a good person, things you have to do to get close to God, you will not understand the gospel. That stuff is not the gospel. The gospel is first and foremost news. When you hear the question, what is the gospel, if you're going to understand it, this word "news" has to ring in your minds. What is the gospel? It is news. It's a report telling you about the way God has achieved a great victory.

A second word to understand the gospel, the first word is news and that's just observing a little of what's here in 19-23, the kind of message it is but a second word you have to understand if you're going to understand the gospel is the word "God." To get the gospel, you have to appreciate that it begins and ends with God. If the gospel is news, you might say, "God and who he is, is the headline story." You are not the headline story. If the gospel is a news report and you were driving down the street and you saw the sign there, your name would not be on it. The headline news of the gospel, the great announcement of the gospel focuses first and foremost on God and what he's done.

If you look back down at Colossians 1, you see that very clearly in this text. I want you to notice as we read this passage who is the subject of the verb. In other words, when we read these verses, the one thing I want you to notice right now is: who is the one who is doing all the acting; who is the one accomplishing things in these verses as Paul talks about the gospel. We'll begin way back in verse 12. Paul says that he's praying that these people would "give thanks to the Father who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light." Somebody's been qualified to be able to participate in this great inheritance. The question I'm asking you as you look at verse 12, look down: who did the qualifying? Who's the one who did the qualifying? Was it me? Did I qualify myself to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light? Is that what the passage says? No. No way. The passage says the Father qualified us.

How about verse 13, "He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son." So, something dramatic has taken place in my life as a Christian: I've gone from this place, the domain of darkness and I've been taken up and I've been transferred to another place, the kingdom of God's beloved Son and my question for you is: how did that happen? Who did the delivering? Who did the transferring as you look at that passage? Is it me? Did I get the idea that the kingdom of God's Son would be so much better and I worked hard, I broke free, I released myself from captivity and I dove and ran over there to the kingdom of God's Son? No. That's not what the passage says. Look down at verse 13, "He," God the Father, it's the same person, He has delivered us. He has transferred us.

Down in verse 19, the passage that we're focusing on, "For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell." This verse is talking about Jesus, in him, it's explaining why he has first place in the universe. "For," for in Jesus, "all the fullness of God was pleased to

dwell.” I think a better translation of this verse is this one: for it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in him. You look at God the Son becoming man, why? It was the Father's delight. Why did all the fullness of Deity dwell in Jesus? Paul says it was God the Father's sovereign plan. The Incarnation, God the Son becoming man, the fullness of Deity dwelling in the person of Christ, him having first place in everything was the direct result of a decision of God the Father. It wasn't a group of people petitioning God, “Please, send the Son.” In fact, we were running the opposite way. The gospel tells us, it begins and ends with a decision that God the Father made.

Verse 20, you can see it, “And through him to reconcile to himself all things.” Through Jesus, somebody here is doing something through Jesus. Who does the reconciling? That means making peace? Through Jesus. Was it us? Were we the ones who found a way to manipulate God into having peace? No, it was God the Father providing peace through Jesus Christ. God the Father is the source of the gospel. He is the cause for the gospel. He is the reason of the gospel. He is the fountain from which the gospel flows and this is something you see running throughout all of Scripture. Go back in your minds to the Garden of Eden. We sinned, man sinned, after man sinned did man go running to find God on his knees and say, “Please God! Please God! I did wrong! I can't believe I broke your command! Will you have mercy on me!” Is that what man did? No, man sinned, man hid, God pursued and provided not only judgment but a way of deliverance. That is the great message of the gospel. It centers on God. I love it.

If you just go back to Ephesians 1, that's just a couple of pages in front of Colossians. You see this even on a bigger scale. Ephesians 1. Again, as you look at Ephesians 1:3, I want you just to see the one who does the acting. Sometimes people wonder: why are these people so excited about the gospel? Why are they so excited about the good news? Well, I'm trying to help you see this message is really unique. You go to every other religious place and they tell you, “Do this, this this, that, that.” Maybe you can somehow manipulate God into giving you peace and we've got a much better news report than that. We get to come here and focus on God and what he has done, to provide the peace that we cannot earn.

Ephesians 1:3, “Blessed,” Paul says, he's excited, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,” this is a man on his knees worshiping God. Why? Look at it, verse 3, “who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.” We can keep going here but look back and you see he blessed us, he chose us, he predestined us, he freely bestowed his grace upon us. This is God and what I'm trying to say is that the gospel, the good news, when you read this news report, you and what you do are not the headline. It's not man that saves himself. This is a news report about what God did. We are not the news, God is. The gospel is one-sided news actually of what God has done and what he will do.

Back in the day, you would have news boys or boys who sold newspapers on the side of the road and they would yell out, "Hear ye! Hear ye!" announcing the news. That's basically what I'm doing when I proclaim the gospel. Hear ye! Hear ye! I'm standing on the road or in a flat or talking in a conversation with someone else and I'm saying, "Hear ye! Hear ye!" I'm not telling people when I tell them the gospel how to be a good person. I'm not telling them how to get their finances in order. I'm not sharing with them a great self-help program. I am announcing a headline ultimately about what God and God alone has done.

Don't get me wrong, there's a response you need to have to the news but that response is not the news. There is a response you need to have to the news but that response is not the news. For example, in Chile, we just heard recently, there was an earthquake yesterday so someone goes through the streets of a town in Chile and the earthquake was out in the ocean so there is going to be a tsunami. I haven't heard any further reports about what happened but you can imagine this news, the tsunami is coming. Someone runs through the town proclaiming the news. Now, people need to have a response to the news, right? It would be crazy to go around saying, "Hey, the tsunami is coming," and somebody says, "Hm, that's interesting, fascinating philosophy." No, that's not philosophy, that's a news event. You need to respond to it. Get out of there. Go to the hills. But you going to the hills is not the news event. That is your response to the news event.

So, with the gospel, I'm proclaiming bigger news than a tsunami. I'm saying and we'll talk about this later but I'm saying that the Creator of the universe has become man. This is the most significant news in the world. I'm saying the Creator of the universe chose to humble himself and take on a body like this to walk around in human form, to obey his own law perfectly and to die on a cross and then rise again. That is the news and you say, "Why? What is going on here? This is significant." The central message of the Old and New Testament is about God who became man and did for us what we could not do for ourselves.

A third word if you're going to get the gospel, if you're going to understand the gospel. If somebody says, "What is the gospel?" the word "news" should go in your mind. A second word should be "God." This is a news report about what God has done. A third word that should ring in your mind is the word "Jesus." If you're going to get the gospel, you have to see that it's ultimately about Jesus. It's not just about God, sort of out there, it is radically, whole-heartedly, unreservedly focused on Christ. If the gospel were a compass, Christ would be its north. That, again, is clear just observing what's here in the first chapter of Colossians. We get a hint of the importance of Jesus in the gospel because of how often he is referred to in the first chapter. Paul says he's "an apostle of Christ Jesus," verse 1. He says, "we thank God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," in verse 3. He talks about people putting their faith in Christ Jesus in verse 4. He talks about Epaphrus being a minister of Christ in verse 7.

It becomes more evident how important Jesus is in what Paul says happened to those of us who believe the gospel. Verse 13, "He delivered us and transferred us to the kingdom

of his beloved Son.” Christ is the King, our King and we live in his kingdom. But we especially see the significance of Jesus in the way Paul describes the person of Jesus in verses 15-19. For one, we talked about this last week and I’m not going to go through it but there is his relationship with God the Father. He's the one who reveals God to us. For another, there's his relationship with the universe. He is more important than everything in the universe Paul tells us in verses 15-19. Then there's his relationship with the church. Paul says he's the head of the church. He's the authority over the church which makes sense because he's the one who brought the church into being and as a result, he's the one, the church, if you're a believer, you will worship him forever.

I want you to see something as you look down at verses 15-19. Hopefully you were here last week and you will remember all that we said about the person of Christ but I want you to see something, this is important: before in verses 19-23, Paul dives into what Jesus did. In verses 19-23, we're going to talk about what Jesus did but what I want you to see is that before Paul talks about what Jesus did in verses 19-23, in verses 15-18 he talks about who Jesus is. Before Paul talks about what Jesus did, he talks about who Jesus is and that's important because you cannot understand what Jesus came to do without understanding who Jesus is. In fact, if you try to understand the work of Jesus apart from understanding the person of Jesus, you will get yourself in trouble because you'll begin talking about the gospel as if it were all about you and fail to appreciate that first and foremost, the gospel is about the glory of God and the lifting up of Jesus Christ. To get the gospel, you have to be gripped by the glory of Jesus Christ.

Look at the way Paul ends verse 18, stick with me here. Look at the way Paul ends verse 18. He's talking about Jesus and he says, “He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.” Another way of saying that would be: that in everything he might have first place. That little “so that” is really important because it gets the essence of the gospel message, this good news. Please, this is so vital. Your whole life depends on this message: the gospel, this message, is not just that we are saved by Jesus. I just said something huge: the gospel is not just that we're saved by Jesus, the gospel is that we're saved for Jesus. It's not just that Jesus saved us, it's that we have been saved. If you're a Christian, the gospel tells you that you have been saved for the glory of Jesus Christ.

Look back at 2 Corinthians 4. That's a few books in front of Colossians. This, if you can get this, this can change your life and, in fact, will really help you see when a person says he's proclaiming the gospel but he's not, it will help you see the difference. 2 Corinthians 4 if you look back there just a few books before Colossians. Paul says, 4:3, he's talking again about our gospel and he says, “If our gospel is veiled,” veiled means hard to see. You can imagine something being in front of something that's hidden. “If our gospel is veiled,” he says, “it is veiled only to those who are perishing.” Who are those who are perishing? Unbelievers. So, he says, if people can't really get the significance of the gospel, it's only unbelievers who can't get it.

Verse 4. Why? “In their case the god of this world,” that's an interesting way of describing Satan here, “in their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of

unbelievers.” So, the gospel comes, people can't see the significance of it, it almost sort of bores them as they hear it, they don't think of it as all that amazing. He says there are things at work blinding their minds so they can't really get the significance of the gospel but look at it: how does he describe the gospel? This light at the end of verse 4? “To keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ.” How does he describe the gospel? It is the good news of the glory of Jesus Christ who is the image of God. The gospel is the good news about how amazing and beautiful and remarkable this person, Jesus Christ, is.

I don't know if you've ever seen a spotlight. I guess that's sort of a spotlight, isn't it? But sometimes spotlights are bigger than that and you use a spotlight to shine on something else. If you take that light, a spotlight, and you shine it on yourself, are you able to see things clearly? No, that spotlight, when you shine a big old spotlight in your own eyes, you can't see anything and that's what you do when you take the good news and you try to make it good news about how great you are. When you take the good news and you try to make it good news about how you can live your greatest life on this earth. No, it's good news about how great Jesus is and when you've got that spotlight focused on him, then you can see everything else right. You can even see yourself right. But if you take this powerful message, the gospel, and you try to twist it to shine in on yourself so that you can be the hero, you're not going to be able to see anything in the universe right. You've just blinded yourself.

So, I'm telling you: this is part of what makes a difference between someone who gets the gospel and someone who doesn't. The person who doesn't get the gospel, he wants everything to be about him, even church, even these messages. The person who doesn't get the gospel, he wants Jesus to be about himself and you can see that he kind of squirms when someone is talking about someone other than himself. It bores him to death, the person who doesn't get the gospel, to hear someone describing the glory of Jesus Christ, that's something that's just tiring. But if you can somehow twist Jesus into primarily being about me, then the person who doesn't get the gospel gets all excited. The gospel-getter, the person who gets the gospel, he loves thinking about what God has done for him through Jesus for sure, but God has opened his eyes to be about something more than himself. He loves Jesus and he loves thinking about him and even as he talks about the gifts that Jesus has given him, those encourage his heart to see how great Christ is.

You were made to love someone bigger than yourself and the gospel enables you to do that. Sin in your life, what sin wants to do is take your heart and focus you primarily on something really small, that's you. Sin wants to shrink your life to being all about you and the gospel is this freeing message where the Holy Spirit comes in and he enables you to be about what the entire universe is about, what the entire history of the world is about: the glory of Jesus Christ. And find freedom there and serving and glorifying and exalting him with everything you've got.

A person who makes that point is John Piper. You can see the quote in your bulletin if you received a bulletin. God is the gospel. You can read that quote later but John Piper's challenge to us is that as we talk about the gospel, we need to talk about it in such a way

that the lifting up of Jesus Christ is the best part of the good news. Let me just share with you something he says that has been so challenging to me and I've shared it before but he says: if you could have heaven with no sickness, if you could have heaven – listen to me, I'm asking you a question here – if you could have heaven with all the friends you ever had on earth and all the food you ever liked and all the leisure activities, that means fun things to do, and pleasures and beauties you ever saw, if you could have heaven and no human conflict, if you could have heaven and no natural disasters. Here's my question, this is what I'm asking you personally: if you could have heaven with all of that stuff, could you be satisfied with heaven if Jesus was not there? The answer to that questions if you get the gospel is exactly what Dan W. just said: it's a loud, defiant no. There is no heaven apart from Jesus Christ the gospel-getter says. Don't give me all that stuff apart from Jesus. Jesus is my heaven.

The gospel is not just a nice little message designed to help us live a better life, the goal of the gospel is to enable us to have Jesus at the center of our lives. The problem with many of us is that we're settling for less when we were designed for more. The good news we get excited about is the good news of Josh. You probably don't get that excited about the good news of Josh. The good news of Immanuel. Actually, that is the good news, but a different Immanuel. The good news, we get excited about the news of H. and that's fine if you get a little bit excited about good news that happens in our life but there's a message that is much better news and it centers on what Jesus Christ has done and who Jesus Christ is. This is the good news that changes everything.

Next week I want to look at three more words and to really get the gospel you have to come next week. I really shouldn't stop here but I'm showing compassion. Next week I want to look at three more words that will help you get the gospel. So far we've talked about, we've said if you're going to get the gospel, you have to understand it as news, you have to see it begins and ends with God and you have to see that the focus, the best part of the good news is the glory of Jesus Christ. Listen, there are lots of headlines that come and go. Every day we drive down the road or walk down the road or sit in a taxi and we see different headlines up on that board. I can't tell you the different headlines of this past week. Maybe one or two. You probably can't remember the different headlines that were put up on that board this past week but there are some news events that are so important you will always remember them: September 11, 2001. I say that most every single one of us remembers it. I guarantee in Chile, they'll always remember the day of the earthquake, the day they heard the news of the earthquake. In Haiti, they're not going to forget that particular news event. Some news events are so big they change everything in your life.

Back in 1945 in America, it was a great day. There was victory in Europe. Life Magazine, it's a famous American magazine, it had on its cover the words "Victory in Europe." America was involved in a war and they made the announcement that the war was basically over and on Life Magazine in 1945, that cover "Victory in Europe," there's a picture that has gone down in American history. It's a very famous picture actually of a soldier who heard the news that there was victory in Europe, that the war had been won and he's picking up a lady that he doesn't know and hugging her and kissing her. There is

certain news that is so significant it makes you do something. It makes you do strange things.

There is a kind of news that changes you and what I hope you hear today, at least at the beginning, we'll talk more about this next week. Please come back because there is something really significant that I left out, that you won't get the gospel. But what I hope you hear today is that the gospel is news that should change you. It should change the way you think tomorrow. It should change the way you think about the bad stuff that's happening in your life. It should change the way you talk. And I wonder as you look at your life and maybe this is where we can just get a little practical, some of you, you may be unbelievers here and you're not getting the gospel. If you hear this and you say, "Well, I thought the gospel was be a good person. I thought the gospel was a way of somehow me making peace with God. I hear the gospel and I don't get that excited about Jesus Christ." Please don't leave it at that. Something has happened in this universe that you need to get. You will be damned forever if you don't respond to this message properly so if you hear all this and it's kind of like, "Ah, this is in one ear and out the other," I'm pleading with you, I'm begging you, find someone and say, "Please tell me more. Help me understand it." This is not something that you want to say, "I don't get." Somebody comes to your town and says that a tsunami is coming, you don't want to be the person who says, "Well, I don't know what a tsunami is so I'll go back to my house."

No, you don't know what a tsunami is, figure it out and if you don't understand all this stuff that I'm talking about, these are words and you don't get it, this is too important a message for you to leave. Your eternal future depends on this. Your response to this message and if you're a believer here today, I want you to ask this question, this is great news of God becoming man and dying in your place, look at your life now: is every day of your life, every moment of your life, being shaped and changed and transformed by what happened 2,000 years ago? Because that's the Christian life and if you don't understand how the gospel should change the way you think about not getting a flat or losing work, if you don't understand how the gospel should change the way you think about sexual lust, if you don't understand the gospel the way it should change the way you go to work, please find someone here and say, "Okay, I know this is a significant message but I don't see the difference it makes in the way I raise my children. I don't see the difference it makes in the way I think about other people. Please help me." That's called discipleship and that's why the church is here. The church is here to proclaim the great news that's happened and to help you understand how you should live differently as a result.

Let's pray. We're coming back next week. We didn't finish. We're coming back next week but I love you so I'm stopping.

Lord, we love you so much. We thank you that we're not coming to church and hearing first and foremost about us, we're coming to church and hearing first and foremost about you. And Lord, please help us. You know we're selfish, you know we love ourselves so much. We pray that through the gospel you would show us the glory of Jesus Christ and that in the days ahead you would help us to be a church that is more and more in love

with Jesus Christ. Please help us to be a church that knows him. Help us to be a church that knows you, Jesus. Help us to be a church that loves you, our hearts beat for you and help us to be a church that lives for your glory, lives dominated by the gospel. We pray this in your great name. Amen.