

The Strength that Comes from Our Victorious Savior

Building Core Strength

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Well if you work at Purdue University or attend there, you may have received or been exposed to this advertisement promoting coming out week, taken from the phrase, of course, coming out of the closet about your so-called sexual orientation.

Now depending on where you are sitting in the auditorium you may or may not be able to see some of what is on this poster. There are events all through the week like come out and bowl last Sunday, coming out in politics, coming out in college, coming out in high school. But still yet today come out transgender from three to for. Come out as bisexual from five to six, et cetera. All of that sponsored by Purdue and a number of other campus and community organizations.

Now to be perfectly honest with you, I would be more than happy to never have to discuss this issue again. And I probably wouldn't have, were it not for the keynote speaker that they chose as the highlight of their week. It was Dr. Bernadette Barden who was invited to come and discuss her book *Pray the Gay Way*. And, as you can see, the cover of her book has a picture of a local church as part of this discussion.

The description that was sent out as part of this advertisement said, "What is it like to grow up gay and live in the Bible belt? So now we are already for the Bible. And while discussions of gay rights are increasingly prevalent in American media, the thoughts and experiences of gay people, especially those from Bible belt states remain background noise in the conversation. Living in the Bible belt, a region highly saturated with conservative beliefs—note, no Bible—and values socializes LGBTQ..." and if you have been living on a different planet that stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer people. And you say, "I thought we weren't supposed to use those words." Well, now they are back in apparently and don't fuss at me about it.

But LGBTQ people to suppress their same sex attractions. Note that to hide them, note that and try to pray the gay away. In this powerful multi media presentation including original interview data from LGBTQ people living in the Bible belt the video clips and photographs Dr. Bernadette Barton illustrates the effects of—hear this—religious based homophobia on individual lives.

She concludes the lecture noting that although the institutional voices condemning homosexuality are loud, there is much evidence that acceptance of homosexuality is rapidly increasing among a range of social groups even in the Bible belt. LGBTQ people and their allies have reasons to feel hopeful about the future of gay rights in the region.

I find it absolutely fascinating that of all of the topics that these particular folks over at Purdue could have chosen to address in this particular year they decided to deal with the issue of living in the Bible belt, not just religion in general, but those who believe the Bible. And note, by time we are done with the paragraph we found our way to the effects of religious based homophobia on individual lives.

Now as a pastor I can just ignore all of this, I suppose, and I imagine there is probably a few folks here who wish I had. Notice I didn't put it up for a vote. And the reason for that is my job is to equip the saints to do the work of the ministry. That is why I am here and many people from our church family are surrounded by ideas like this day in and day out. So how do we respond to emphases like this at our state sponsored schools or wherever you might find yourself from throughout the course of your week?

Well, here is a possible framework to consider. I really think you have to start right here to celebrate the free speech we enjoy in our country. I for one am glad, aren't you, that we live in a country that champions the right of free speech. So I don't believe we ought to try to stop members of our community from talking about what they believe and trying to persuade others to agree with their positions. I think healthy, robust public square is a very good thing. And part of loving your neighbor is listening respectfully to what they say as opposed to foolish smirks or interrupting who else is talking. But that is a different discussion.

But part of your loving your neighbor is listening respectfully to what they say even when you strongly disagree and supporting their right to speak out even if their position differs significantly from your own.

So we use this illustration, in part, just to celebrate free speech. And then to acknowledge that it is not the church's primary task to instruct people who are uninterested in biblical truth about how to live their life. There is a big difference in trying to clean up the church of Corinth and trying to clean up the city of Corinth. Our job is to do the former, not the latter. We all understand that.

Now over time, as more and more people become followers of Christ and we certainly hope that they will, that will affect and impact culture positively. But that is a byproduct. That is not a primary goal, because judgment begins at the household of God. So our concern is for how the Lord wants people like us to say that we follow him, who say we believe is Word, how does he want us to live?

Now push the pause button there for a moment, though, because there is this caveat especially at this particular time of this particular year. Well, then, where does our

political involvement as individuals fit into this? That is an important question. In this country we have been blessed with a participatory democracy where everybody brings their particular source of truth, their particular frame of reference to the table in an attempt to determine what is best for our country. And it is every bit as valid for you to vote for people who you believe are going to support biblical values as it is for other citizens to support candidates who make decisions from a different source of truth. And, if you happen to be running for political office, or hold political office, it is every bit as valid for elected officials to function the same way. If they want Scripture to be their source of ethical and moral truth, so be it. But don't ever confuse the appropriate separation of church and state from the inappropriate separation of religious ideas from public life. And while you are never going to hear one of your pastors officially a political candidate from this perspective, when we are fulfilling our role here in our church, we certainly encourage you to pray for the upcoming elections and to vote for candidates that you believe are going to promote biblical values when it is appropriate to do so. And we actually support an organization as one of our mission groups called Advance America. And if you are interested in voting guides that just explain how the various candidates line up on various positions, you can get that. It is online. We will have some available next week here if you want them. We are not going to force them down anybody's throat. But I believe you ought to pray for the elections and I believe you ought to vote in a way that is consistent with the biblical truth that you say you believe in.

But the big point here is acknowledge that it is not the church's primary task to instruct people who are uninterested in biblical truth about how to live their lives.

But, thirdly, remember this. This is crucial, that part of being a follower of Christ is choosing to process your desires through the lens of scripture. That is the crux of this debate. So if you are listening to anything right now, listen up to that, because we don't believe in suppressing same sex attraction or hiding it or trying to pray the gay away. We encourage people to be honest about their desires, open about what all of us desire, what all of us want and then to evaluate what we want in light of biblical truth and act only on the desires that honor the Lord.

So it is not a matter of being true to yourself. Here is today's advice. Don't be true to yourself. I wanted to eat like three pounds of bacon this morning. That is what would have been being true to myself. I would like to have for every meal topped with banana cream pie, for crying out loud. And if I was true to myself, we would have to get a... well, I am not going to get into that.

There are all sorts of things you may want very deeply that would be catastrophic if you actually chose to pursue them and some of those desires they might be with you life long. You are not praying it away in the sense that it is going to disappear from your life. You are choosing only to act on desires that are consistent with Scripture. That is what it means for Jesus to be your Lord. If he is, then believing that doesn't make us homophobic. We all got that? I have all sorts of relationships with all sorts of people in this community who disagree with me strongly on these matters and I don't hate them.

And I am not in any way afraid of them. Anybody who knows me, anybody who knows how we function in this community could not make those charges. That is just sloganeering. It does not match the facts.

I also believe, by the way, that even the people who promoted and participated in these events this week at some level, at some point would agree logically with what we are saying. Nobody believes in acting on all of their desires. We all have a filter, all of us. We have a lens through which we decide which desires we will actually pursue. Because, you understand, our desires at points actually conflict with one another. And I am not just talking about Christians. I am talking about any human being at times has conflicting desire. So you cannot possibly act on every one of your desires. You have to have some sort of a lens. You have to have some sort of a filter. And for followers of Christ, our lens is the revealed Word of God. Give me the faith to believe what you say, we just sang.

Now, fourthly, rejoicing in Christ you have the power to prioritize your desires and then only act on those that honor the Lord. That is a core aspect of what the Bible teaches about how we change, learning to evaluate in a given situation, what am I wanting right now? And is this a desire that honors the Lord and I am only going to act on those that do.

For example, you will have lunch today. Is that a fact? Is that the most true thing I said so far this morning? You will have lunch today for sure. And you will want to eat everything in sight. And what do you want? Everything. I want to eat everything in sight. But you will also want, I hope, to be a good steward of your body, right? You have conflicting desires. And that desire to overeat may be with some of us, if not for many of us, forever. Try praying that one away. Supper is coming. But in Christ we have the ability to assign proper value and importance to each of the conflicting desires that rage in our hearts. And ultimately you choose what you want the most. That is it. And then you act accordingly.

And lastly this. Remember that when you fail you have a redeemer who stands ready to forgive and reinforce your life with additional truth. That is why we are not focusing our attention on trying to clean up the city of Corinth. Because we all know we have a big enough battle going on in our own hearts and lives, huh? That is enough to keep me busy, how about you? Judge not, lest you be judged. And we just don't have the time and the energy to focus on the perceived shortcomings of other people, because we are too busy battling what is going on inside of us.

I heard Mark Driscoll make an interesting this week in a video I saw. He said—and I really agree with this one. We read the Bible and we don't see two groups of people, good people and bad people. What we see is bad people and Jesus. Those are the only two groups and you and I fall into the category of bad people for sure.

Now you might say, “Well, how do we know that all of this is true, this matter of my desires?”

That is a great question. Those themes actually came up on resurrection Sunday, did you know that?

With that in mind, open your Bible if you would now to Luke chapter 24. That is on page 69 of the back section of the Bible under the chair in front of you if you need that this morning.

We are coming down to the end of our study of the gospel of Luke. Luke 24 is the last chapter in this book we have been going through it verse by verse and that means if we are there this morning, last week we had the privilege and the responsibility of reviewing just the sobering details surrounding Jesus' trials and crucifixion.

It is amazing, isn't it, to consider the great love that our Savior had for us and the significant price that had to be paid to secure our redemption. On some level it is as profound yet simple as John 3:16, "For God so loved the world." We saw that last week for sure, huh?

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."¹

And I hope there has been a definite time in your heart and life where you have acknowledged your need and you have placed your faith and trust in him. But last Sunday looking at the crucifixion that was sobering, but as one African American pastor so eloquently put it, it is Friday, but Sunday is coming. And the good news is when we turn the page to Luke chapter 24 now it is Sunday. Now it is Sunday.

Luke chapter 24 beginning in verse one.

But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men suddenly stood near them in dazzling clothing; and as the women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, "Why do you seek the living One among the dead? "He is not here, but He has risen. Remember how He spoke to you while He was still in Galilee, saying that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again." And they remembered His words, and returned from the tomb and reported all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. Now they were Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James; also the other women with them were telling these things to the apostles. But these words appeared to them as nonsense, and they would not believe them. But Peter got up and

¹ John 3:16.

ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he *saw the linen wrappings only; and he went away to his home, marveling at what had happened.

And behold, two of them were going that very day to a village named Emmaus, which was about seven miles from Jerusalem. And they were talking with each other about all these things which had taken place. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus Himself approached and began traveling with them. But their eyes were prevented from recognizing Him. And He said to them, "What are these words that you are exchanging with one another as you are walking?" And they stood still, looking sad. One of them, named Cleopas, answered and said to Him, "Are You the only one visiting Jerusalem and unaware of the things which have happened here in these days?" And He said to them, "What things?" And they said to Him, "The things about Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word in the sight of God and all the people, and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to the sentence of death, and crucified Him. But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, it is the third day since these things happened. But also some women among us amazed us. When they were at the tomb early in the morning, and did not find His body, they came, saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said that He was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just exactly as the women also had said; but Him they did not see." And He said to them, "O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?" Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures. And they approached the village where they were going, and He acted as though He were going farther. But they urged Him, saying, "Stay with us, for it is getting toward evening, and the day is now nearly over." So He went in to stay with them. When He had reclined at the table with them, He took the bread and blessed it, and breaking it, He began giving it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized Him; and He vanished from their sight. They said to one another, "Were not our hearts burning within us while He was speaking to us on the road, while He was explaining the Scriptures to us?" And they got up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found gathered together the eleven and those who were with them, saying, "The Lord has really risen and has appeared to Simon." They began to relate their experiences on the road and how He was recognized by them in the breaking of the bread.²

Don't you love the Word of God? Is it burning in your heart right now? I hope it is. Let's talk this morning about the strength that comes from our victorious risen Savior.

² Luke 24:1-35.

With the time we have remaining let's think about three principles to help you evaluate all of your plans and your desires. People over by Purdue have been talking about that all week long. Get a perspective on that from the resurrected Christ, huh? And here is where it starts. Don't judge the truthfulness of an idea by the response of the masses.

The way the Lord orchestrates these events is just fascinating. It begins with the perplexity of the women. They come to anoint Jesus' body and finish the preparations for burial which, when, you think about it, was an incredibly courageous act. They knew how battered and bruised and decimated Jesus' body would have been at that time as a result of the beatings, the torture and they came anyway as an adoration of him. But the Scripture says they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. And when they entered they didn't find the body of the Lord Jesus. The next verse says they were perplexed about that. I guess, huh? But then two angels appeared. It wasn't a vision. Two angels appeared to them and noting what those angels said establishes the theme for the chapter. They give them direction as the women were terrified and bow their heads to the ground, the men said to them, "Why do you see the living..." That is a fascinating question, "... among the dead? He is not here. He is risen. Remember how he spoke to you while he was still in Galilee saying that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, must be crucified and on the third day..." He said this, too, "...rise again."

And then and only then did they remember his words. And they returned from the tomb and reported all these things to the 11 and to all the rest.

You see what just happened? The most important thing for them at that particular moment was not to experience the sight of the risen Christ. It was to remember the words of Jesus Christ. That was to be the source of their truth and the source of their strength. And they did finally remember. And they reported that to all his disciples and to all the rest and what happens? Verse 11 is crucial in this discussion. These words, what words? The words that the men stated and the words of Jesus that haven't been recorded, these words appeared to them as nonsense and they would not believe.

Do you use the lesson? Just because somebody thinks what you believe is nonsense, doesn't mean it is. and just because you choose to order your desires by the Word of God and other people mocked that as some kind of backward Victorianism doesn't mean they are right. And even if they think they are more educated than you and more powerful than you, if you are sure that what you believe is based on the truth of the Word of God, don't their ridicule pressure you into caving in, because that will rob you of the strength that you need and when you need it the very most. That is why the apostle John would later say:

"I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you."³

³ 1 John 2:24.

Then next we have this fascinating interchange that unfolds in the road to Emmaus teaching us that often our weakness is because God's plans and desires don't match our own. See, that is where the tension starts. And this happens every day for you. It happens every day for me when what we want and what God wants is out of sync.

Now let's break it down some. This journey on the road to Emmaus, we don't know for sure where Emmaus was or where it is. We just know from the text that it was seven miles from Jerusalem, not even sure in what direction. We don't know for sure who these two men were other than one of them was named Cleopas, but that was a very common name in Bible times. What we do know from the text is this. They were looking hopeless.

Verse 17 said they stood still looking sad. It is the Greek word σκυθρωπος (skoo-thro-pos') which means dreary, downcast look of settled grief, pain or displeasure.

You say, "Why were they in that condition? Why could I possibly find myself in that condition?"

Well, here is why, explained in verse 21. They were hoping that Jesus would provide immediate political relief to them. They were hoping that it was he who was going to redeem Israel, indeed, besides all of this it is the third day since these things happened.

I think it is hard for many of us to understand how distasteful it was of the nation of Israel to live under the domination of the Roman Empire. For a variety of reasons they chafed under that system and when Christ came on the scene, they believed that he could deliver them from Rome. That is what they wanted. That is what they desired. So much they can taste it, because he had the power to do incredible teachings. He had the courage to stand up to the powers that be. And so their desire, their plan was that Jesus would be their political Messiah to free them from what they considered to be the very difficult and distasteful circumstances that they were facing.

Now what can we observe from that? Focusing on your desires alone will cause you to fail to make important connections. I mean, that is one of the details that just jumps out as we read these verses. Indeed, besides all of this, they said, it is the third day since these things happened. And it is amazing that in their unbelief, because they were so fixated on a wrong desire that they weren't able to connect the obvious dots in this situation. Because please tell me. Had Jesus spoken repeatedly about the significance of what would happen the third day after he was crucified? Absolutely he had, in places like Matthew 16:21.

"From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day."⁴

Jesus repeatedly told them about the significance of the third day.

⁴ Matthew 16:21.

Mathew 17:23, same thing.

“... they will kill Him, and He will be raised on the third day. And they were deeply grieved.”⁵

Now why didn't they make the connection? And why don't people like you and me frequently make the biblical connections in our lives? Because that part of God's plan never fit logically with their desires. So they ignored it. They missed it.

What is especially galling about this particular detail is that the enemies of Christ actually took Jesus' words more seriously than his own followers. Remember this in Matthew 27?

Now on the next day, the day after the preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered together with Pilate, and said, "Sir, we remember that when He was still alive that deceiver said, 'After three days I am to rise again.' Therefore, give orders for the grave to be made secure until the third day, otherwise His disciples may come and steal Him away and say to the people, 'He has risen from the dead,' and the last deception will be worse than the first."⁶

And you have to put yourself in Pilate's shoes. Let me get this straight. You want me to send soldiers to guard a tomb which contains a dead person, because he predicted, his words were that three days later he would rise from the dead. This has to be the strangest week of my life. But how terrible that the enemies of Christ took his words more seriously than his followers. And here me. And that the reason they didn't is because they were so focused on what they wanted that anything Christ said or anything Christ did that didn't fit their paradigm, did not fit their set of chosen desires was immediately ignored or rejected.

Well, I think we have to ask some questions, don't we, about the nature of our own desires. One, do I exist to fulfill God's desires or does he exist to fulfill mine? Some people who call themselves Christians are often hopeless because God didn't give them everything they wanted on that particular day. I thought becoming a Christian was like sitting on Santa's lap. I just read him my list and then his job is to deliver it on time and every day is Christmas day for me. That this not even close to defining what it means to be a follower of Christ. Do you understand that?

And we all need to ask this morning: Am I willing to try to conform my desires as closely to his as possible as they are revealed in his Word? It is not a matter of what comes natural. It is a matter of the determining: Am I going to conform my desires to his? It is like back in the days when we had overhead projectors. Is there anybody in this room old enough to even remember what that was like? We actually had one. We had one right here. It was a beautiful piece of furniture. A delightful piece of advanced technology and

⁵ Matthew 17:23.

⁶ Matthew 27:62-24.

we used it all the time. Imagine if we still had one. Let's go back to the good old days when men were men. You didn't need all this PowerPoint stuff. Back in those days the Bible and an overhead projector.

And so anyway you would have this pieces of transparency film. Let's suppose that we could write out all of God's desires as revealed in his Word for you this past week and then let's suppose we could drill into your heart and see all the kind of things you really wanted this past week, the things you really pursued, the things that really fired you up. And let's say that we took God's desires down on the first piece of transparency film and then we put yours right on top. We turned on the overhead projection and we shined it all on the wall? What should we see if things were heading the right direction? The answer is they ought to be in synch, right? The ones I am choosing the follow, the ones that I am choosing to be passionate about ought to be the same as the ones that he has revealed for me in his Word.

But you and I both know, don't we, that many times what gets us in trouble, the reason we are so down hearted, the reason we are so σκυθρωπος (skoo-thro-pos')... you say, "I didn't even realize I was even like that." Yeah, that is a great word, isn't it? Downcast, downhearted, disappointed, {?}. The reason is because we have chosen desires that are dramatically out of sync with the ones that God has for us. And that is where Galatians 6:7 fits in to this part of the discussion.

"Do not be deceived, God is not mocked."⁷

Our former pastor, pastor Good used to like to say, "God will not bless his competition." And don't think that you and I can choose whatever old desires we want even if they do come natural if they violate the Word of God and we act on them anyway, he is not going to bless that. And that was the problem with these men. Their agenda didn't match God's... so they failed to connect the dots. And they could actually say, "It is the third day since these things happened," and keep right on going and never even make the connection with the fact that that is exactly what Jesus said was the day he would rise.

It gets worse. We have to bring these ladies into the discussion which teaches us, it focuses on your desires alone may cause you to discount important voices. It is really interesting, by the way, the way they told the story, also some women among us. They amazed these women. They are crazy. They were at the tomb early in the morning. They didn't find his body. They came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels and said he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb, blah, blah, blah. That is not exactly what happened. See, Luke told us exactly what happened. Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, the other women were telling these things to the apostles. These words appeared to them as nonsense. That was the issue. They heard the word of Christ and because it did not fit their grid of what they wanted in a Messiah, they would not believe them.

⁷ Galatians 6:7.

And I wonder how many people will be in our services today who have adopted desires that are substantially different than God's? And maybe he has brought some events into your life or probably he has brought some people into your life like these women who are trying to help you come to your senses, who are trying to help you remember the Word of God, to try to help you get back on track and because God's desires don't match yours, you didn't connect the dots and you haven't listened to the voice?

Friend, I would just want to be straight with you this morning. It may be time for you to adopt a new set of desires and begin listening to the people in your life who are trying to help you think about life through the lens of Scripture.

And that is really where this entire discussion leads us. Sometimes your desires seem hopeless, because they need to be clarified by the Word of God. And that is what happened. That is how Jesus served these men.

"...beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures."⁸

Don't you love that? He took the time to explain it to them.

Now there is one question you may have had during this entire message. Well, why did Jesus restrain their eyes from recognizing him in the very beginning? Their eyes were prevented from recognizing him. Was he just messing with their heads? Why not just immediately reveal himself to them and let them rejoice in the experience of seeing his resurrection?

Here is the answer. Because right then they needed a faith that was based on more than just an experience. It is based in words. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. It is grounded in Scripture. Whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction. And I realize I might be preaching to some people this morning who would say, "Well, that is the very problem. I can't believe all these fairy tales in the Bible. That might be a handy crutch for you religious types, but I am not going to believe all those fairy tales. So if that is supposed to be the grid through which I evaluate my desires, I can't. I won't."

Well, before you start blowing all this off as fairy tales, there is something you have to do business with. And that is the matter of fulfilled prophecy, because God's Word clearly prophesied these details hundreds of years before they occurred. And we don't know. I wish I had this DVD of what exactly Jesus said to these disciples on the road to Emmaus as he took them through the entire Scripture. We don't know for sure, but it may have been places like Psalm 22:

"My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?"⁹

⁸ Luke 24:27.

⁹ Psalm 22:1.

That is exactly what was said hundreds of years later on the cross.

Or Psalm 22:6.

“I am a worm and not a man, A reproach of men and despised by the people.”¹⁰

They are sneering at me.

Who would have predicted back in the days of the Psalms that the Messiah would be sneered at in this way? Or later in that psalm.

For dogs have surrounded me; A band of evildoers has encompassed me;
They pierced my hands and my feet. I can count all my bones. They look,
they stare at me; They divide my garments among them.¹¹

Is that not taking your breath away? And if you are say, “I am not going to believe in the God of the Bible,” I would really like to know the name of your God and I would like to see the content of his fulfilled prophecy. And here is some news. I love you so I have got to tell you. You don’t have any. No other God can make this claim, but the God of the Bible.

Hey, we are not talking about believing these cleverly devised fables as the apostle Peter would later say. How about this? How about Isaiah 53? Explain why anybody 700 years before the birth of the Messiah would have predicted that this is what he would be like, oppressed and afflicted, yet not opening his mouth? We saw that last week. Cut out of the land of the living for the transgression of my people to whom the stroke was due. His grave was assigned with wickedness. Fascinating. Yet he was with the rich men in his... that is exactly what happened because he had done no violence nor there was any deceit in his mouth. The Lord was pleased to crush him. If he would render himself as a guilt offering he would see his offspring. He would prolong his days. How could that be? He was going to die. And the good pleasure of the Lord will prosper in his hands. As a result of the anguish of his soul he will see it and be satisfied and by his knowledge the righteous one might serve and will justify the many as he will bare their iniquities.

If that does not take your breath away, I would encourage you to reach down and check your pulse. That is the God of Scripture.

Psalm 16:10 undoubtedly was in this discussion on the road to Emmaus.

“For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol; Nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay.”¹²

¹⁰ Psalm 22:6.

¹¹ Psalm 22:16-18.

¹² Psalm 16:10.

How in the world could that possibly happen unless the Messiah was going to be raised from the dead?

See, the point is Christ had something better for their faith than even the experience of seeing him alive. He was understanding that everything that had occurred had been part of God's revealed plan from the very beginning recorded in his Word.

Fulfilled prophecy is, as one writer put it, evidence that demands a verdict. Even if that demands an adjustment to the way you are choosing your desires.

I already pointed out as we went through this text Jesus himself clearly and repeatedly taught that he would die, be buried and raised on the third day. Who do you know that can call out the events of his death and his resurrection exactly like they are going to occur? Name one other person in history that ever did that? And then remember the Bible is filled with testimonies of eye witnesses, not just the people that we are talking about now, but Paul wrote about hundreds of people. And what is fascinating about this is, look at the middle of that text. After that, written about 50 AD, by the way, 20 years after the death of Christ occurred.

“After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now.”¹³

Do you know what Paul is saying to the Corinthian church? Listen, if you don't believe me, just go ask the people who are still alive in the church who saw Jesus alive.

Now you might say, “Well, pastor Viars, I am not sure I am going to acknowledge what the Scripture says about these matters. I am not sure I am going to repent and trust Christ as Savior and Lord and I am not sure I am going to use the Word as the grid through which I evaluate my desire.”

Do you know what? We live in a free country. You can believe anything you want. You can believe your tomato plant. You can plant your feet in potted soil and plant your cheeks rosy red. But remember this. Just because you believe it doesn't mean it is so. And just because you refuse to believe it doesn't mean it is false. And Jesus had some words. Now I love you, so I am not going to rob you of what Jesus said. Jesus has some words for people who refuse to believe in his Word. And here is what it is. Foolish men.

And it doesn't matter how many people over at Purdue University say what they want to say, Jesus has already spoken on that issue.

“O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!”¹⁴

Not understanding the necessity of the cross. Not only as an instrument that secured our salvation, but as a model for what we are to do with the desires that do not please him.

¹³ 1 Corinthians 15:6.

¹⁴ Luke 24:25.

Friend, if you have never trusted Christ as Savior and Lord, the Christ whose gospel is proclaimed in the Word, I would invite you to do that while you the opportunity to do so. And my guess is every last one of us, we are going to want some things that God doesn't want for us. Got a choice, huh? Three pounds of bacon, baby. Choose the things that are consistent with God's Word.