

2 Corinthians 2:17

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[0 : 00] Remember last week when we were gathered together, we finished off midway through the 16th verse. That is, we stopped at the first half, what is often notated in Bible study is 16a.

We finished as we were making our way. Sure, there were a couple of verses that we skipped, if you remember them, verses 12 and 13. But I assured you we would get back to them as we get into the 7th chapter, picking up in 7th chapter, verse 5.

Where Paul is answering the question. So we say all that with the reality that what Paul is doing is what most Bible scholars refer to as the divine interruption.

That is, he interrupted his train of thought. He had begun speaking to the church at Corinth and giving a defense of his concern for them. And as he was giving a defense of his concern, one of the areas, or really the culmination of that defense, is going to be really the spirit of being upset, which he experienced when he did not know how things were going.

We get the answer to that in the 7th chapter. But midway through that, where he spoke of having no peace in his soul because he could not find Titus, his brother, who would give a report of what was happening in the 7th of Corinth.

[1 : 13] He interrupts his line of thought. And we don't say it's just an interruption of man because we believe that the Word of God is the Word of God being declared through the man of God as he is moved by the Spirit of God.

So the Holy Spirit interrupted his line of thought there and began to move his hand as he wrote the Word of God. And it really begins to focus on the ministry itself. He spends a great section here, the latter half of the 2nd chapter, all of the 3rd chapter, 4th chapter, 5th chapter, 6th chapter, and into the 7th chapter, of what it looks like to be employed in the ministry of the gospel.

There's some great truths that are in this center section of the book of 2 Corinthians. Now, if you remember, he is writing 2 Corinthians not to rebuke or to correct.

He is writing to really support and to encourage. He is encouraging the church. He has already corrected their malpractice in 1 Corinthians, the letter there. He has already rebuked them for their looking more like the world than they did the Word of God.

And now he is encouraging them. We find in the 7th chapter that Titus has come and tells them that they have responded to that first letter. And he is encouraging them to live authentically.

[2 : 26] That is, to live out in authentic behavior and in lifestyle and in word and in deed, what it looks like to be a follower of Jesus Christ. Now, they live in a great time of opportunity.

They live in a very diverse culture. They live in a very prosperous city. They live in a city that is being exposed to many different worldviews. They live much like what we would refer to as America today.

There is a lot of different people there in the city that the church is displayed at. The church is put there. And they have great opportunity to proclaim the gospel not just locally, but nationally and even internationally.

That is, it can expand beyond them. But the way in which they are going to do it is by living authentically out their faith in Jesus Christ. So we will pick up this morning.

You know, someone shared with me last week as they are leaving. They said, brother, I am waiting on the day that you preach a message from one verse. Well, brother, you do not have to wait any longer because it is today.

[3 : 26] I did not mean to do it, but I could not get past the very next verse. So if you will stand with me. We are going to go back and read verse 15 to get it in context. If you are physically able and desire to do so, would you join together with me as we stand and we read.

And our text this morning will be the latter half of verse 16 and verse 17. But let's go back to verse 15. For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved, among those who are perishing.

To the one an aroma from death to death, and to the other an aroma from life to life. And here is our text. And who is adequate for these things? For we are not like many, peddling the word of God.

But as from sincerity, but as from God, we speak in Christ in the sight of God. Let's pray. Lord, we thank you for this day. God, we thank you for the grand opportunity we have of gathering together.

We thank you, Lord, that if we've come together, we've been able to lift our voices up in song. We've been able to fellowship and encourage one another. We've been able to observe a follower and believer's baptism.

[4 : 37] But Lord, what a privilege it is to read the word of God. So God, as we have read your word and we have heard your word, we pray that you would speak to us through your word. And Lord, that our lives would be open to you for your glory and your honor.

And we ask it all in Jesus' name. Amen. You may be seated. I want you to see this morning the call to be an authentic ambassador.

The call to be an authentic ambassador. If you remember last week, we began to look at the grand privilege and position of the follower of Christ. That we are called to be a soothing aroma of Christ to God.

We're not an aroma to man. We're an aroma to God. We're pleasing in his sight. We are to be a reflection of Christ to God, not to man. And we ought to be that which impacts people who come into contact with us.

Some unto life and some unto death. It is not our calling to save them. And it is not our calling to condemn them. But it is our calling to live among them in such a manner that those who come in contact with us cannot help but be in contact with Jesus Christ himself.

[5 : 42] We ought to be an aroma unto God and not unto man. Now to be that, we are called to be ambassadors of Christ. Now I know that we have at least a tendency to discount and say, well this is Paul writing this.

This is Paul declaring this is who he is. And you're right, partially. But you also understand that the word of God refers to what we call the priesthood of the believers. That God has called us to be priests.

That we ought to be the representatives to a watching world of what it looks like to live in holy communion with a holy God. That we ought to be the reflection of that relationship to everybody we come into contact with.

And that calling is not confined to the vocation of pastoral ministry. That is, that's not just the preacher's job. That's the job of the believer. That God has called us through Christ through the leading and drawing of the spirit to live in such a relationship with him that he may impact and influence the world in which we come into contact with.

Some have said, we belong to another kingdom but we have been put in this kingdom to represent that king while we live here. We are ambassadors to Christ. And we are to live in such a manner that those around us have the effect and the influence of the kingdom of God while operating in the kingdom of this world.

[7 : 05] That is, this world looks a little bit different because we're here. It is different because we belong here, because we have been put here. But to live as an authentic ambassador calls us to consider the things even which Paul was considering.

Paul had a special call upon his life. Sure he did. He was prepared for this call. He was empowered for this call as we'll see in just a moment. But Paul's calling was not just to be a pastor.

He was to plant churches and raise up pastors and elders in these churches. He was to be the one who carried the weight of the concern for all of those churches which God gave him to minister in and to minister to and to write the letters.

But it also has application towards us. Because we have opportunities much like Paul to affect and influence those people around us.

And unless we live out that ambassadorship authentically then we would miss the mark. So that which is true of Paul and those with him is also true of us.

[8 : 06] And we see a number of things here. The first thing that I want you to see when it pertains to be an authentic ambassador is the weight of this responsibility. The weight of this responsibility.

Look at what the word of God says. Paul says in the 15th verse, For we are a fragrance of Christ. For we are. That's not our text, Pastor.

I know it's not our text. But in order to understand our text we have to take it in context. It's because any text taken out of context would just be a twisted text, right? So we need to know what he's talking about before we know what he's saying.

Paul declares before he starts talking about the problems he has, he goes ahead and highlights the position he holds. He says, For we are a fragrance of Christ. Now I love that because the competency of Paul does not dictate the calling of God.

Paul is going to make this declaration after saying we are. He also says, And who is? Who is adequate for these things? Or some translations say, Who is sufficient for such matters?

[9 : 09] Paul says, This is what I am. And in reality, I realize that what I am, I am very inadequate to be. I cannot be and I am not sufficient to be what God has made me to be.

For we are. Now his competence does not change his calling, but his calling does not excuse his incompetence. That is, He needs to strive to be competent in the calling which God has exercised to him.

Let me put it this way. The Bible says, When Jesus is given the Sermon on the Mount, He says, You are a city set on a hill. He says, You are the light of the world. He doesn't say, You can be the city set on the hill.

He doesn't say, You should think about being the light. He says, You are. Now some of us don't want to be the light because we don't want people looking at us. Some of us would say, I'm just, My matter of religion is a personal preference and I'll live it out.

Well, Jesus says that your relationship with him is a public event. He says, You're a city set on a hill. He says, You are the light of the world. You say, Well, I'm not competent to be those things.

[10 : 11] Well, Join the train of incompetent saints that Paul is leading. Right? It is not a matter of your competency because that, my friend, is your calling. He says, This is what you are.

And then Paul says, And since this is what I am, I ask this question, And who is adequate for these things? Now if Paul felt inadequate, then where does that leave us?

He says, Who is adequate for these things? I cannot carry the weight of this responsibility because now we know Paul answers this. This is why I did not want to confine it to one verse, but I couldn't move beyond the verse.

I wanted to bring you down into the third chapter where we get to verse five because Paul says that we are made adequate through Christ in God. That's where the adequacy comes from, but we don't need to get there yet.

That's getting ahead of ourselves because I was afraid if we ran straight to it, we would miss the weight of it. Look at what he says. He says, Since this is what I am, I ask the question, And who is adequate?

[11 : 09] Because, see, so many people try to excuse themselves from walking out there calling because of their own weakness. That is, you say, Well, I'm not going to do it because I don't feel equipped.

Or I'm not going to do it because I don't know enough. Or I'm not going to do it because I'm not good enough. Friend, listen to me. That is the enemy of your soul standing on your shoulder, whispering in your ear, trying to render you useless.

Paul says, I don't know enough. I'm not equipped enough. I'm not able enough. And he met the risen Lord on Damascus Road, was struck by a bright light that knocked him off his horse, heard the Lord and Savior talking to him audibly, had his eyesight removed, and a man named Ananias come lay hands over him and pray, and scales fell from his eyes.

He spent three years in the Arabian desert in the school of Christ. He didn't go to any seminary. He didn't go to any higher learning institute. He was in the wilderness being taught of Christ. And at the end of all that, he said, And I'm not adequate.

But he said, But that does not excuse my inactivity. We understand the weight of these things. And it is worth repeating, because Paul says, when writing to the church at Thessalonica, some of the earliest writings of Paul, the first and second Thessalonians, when he is writing to the church at Thessalonica, and I want you to note this.

[12 : 30] You don't have to turn there right now, but I want you to go look at it sometime. In 1 Thessalonians chapter 2, verses 3, 4, and 5, Paul makes this declaration in the fourth chapter.

He says that God counted him worthy and entrusted him with the gospel. That is, God counted him worthy and entrusted him with the gospel. So he had a calling upon his life.

And in light of that calling, he understood that he was inadequate to be entrusted with what he had been given. He had been given the good news of salvation unto all men.

But yet in his flesh, he said, I am inadequate. For who is adequate for these things? See, it is the understanding of the weight of this responsibility. Friend, if there's ever a day where you feel like you are adequate to do what God has called you to do, then you are not fully comprehending the weight of the responsibility he has entrusted to you.

See, the gospel is the hope of all men. The gospel, I like how S.M. Lockridge says it. S.M. Lockridge says, well, I know where a poor man can get help.

[13 : 40] I know where a sick man can be healed and I know where a good man can be better and a bad man can be made good. He said, I know everything that man needs and I know everything that man longs for and I hold it within me.

And when we begin to feel like we are capable of carrying the weight of that, then we are not fully comprehending the responsibility that's been entrusted to us. It is that which humbles us and causes us to walk forward in humility because of the responsibility that we have been given.

Paul says that these are matters in which angels longed to look at. Throughout the Old Testament, the angels are up in heaven. You remember a third of them fell from the sky like stars out of the heavens.

And Jesus said, I saw Satan being cast out with a third of the heavens. The angels are there waiting. They're seeing all evil wreaking havoc upon the world. They're seeing mankind doing what was desperately wicked.

Just like the book of Judges tells us, there was no king in the land and every man did what was right in his own eyes. Man was going every which way but right. The angels had no idea, thought maybe God was out of control.

[14 : 47] God didn't know how to control it. The angels were longing to know the word of God was being declared through the prophets of God to the people of God and God was proclaiming this promise. And it wasn't until mankind experienced the redemption found in Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary that the angel said, aha, there it is.

That's how he's going to do it. There's the man who is fully man, yet he's perfect because he's fully God. And he's paying the price of man to redeem man and to restore man and to renew man. Man has paid the price, but it was not the seed of a man.

It was the seed of a woman. And these are the truths that we have been entrusted with. These are the things the Bible says the angels in heaven longed to know before we did, but they weren't revealed to angels.

They were revealed to mankind. Paul said they've been entrusted to us. They've been called to us. And unless we understand the weight of that responsibility, we will not know the reality of what hangs in the balance.

We will either forsake it and neglect it thinking it's unimportant, or we will not think that we are able to do it. And we will say, oh, somebody else will do it. My friend, if we know the gospel, and I'm about to get excited, if we know the gospel, then we have been given the responsibility to proclaim the gospel, and it doesn't matter our competency at all.

[15 : 56] This is the weight of the responsibility and the light of the holiness of God and the sinfulness of man. And we acknowledge the weight, but we do not let the weight hold us down. The word of God declares, this is a grand weight, but it's our weight.

I remember there was one season in my life that it was a very difficult season. A mentor in the faith had just taken his own life. I had to preach his funeral.

Right after I preached his funeral, some of you knew him. Right after I preached his funeral, this thing called COVID happened, and the church was shut down. I had to go through all of that, which is fine.

The Lord was gracious and kind to me. Then there was funerals after funerals after funerals. I had to preach to my mentor's father-in-law's funeral later on. A number of things that were going on.

There were just matters going on. I remember I was talking to a pastor friend of mine. He'd call me every now and then and go, hey, preacher man. I said, what's up, pastor? He said, man, I'm just calling to check on you. I said, man, brother, I don't understand it.

[16 : 57] I don't know what's going on. And I remember he told me, he said, that's why the Lord gave you big shoulders. You know what he's telling me? He said, God's given you a weight to carry. I'd look at carry every now and then.

I'd just look at carry and I'd say, you know what? Sometimes I wish I had skinny shoulders. I don't want so much. But that did not excuse the responsibility to carry what God was giving me to carry.

Each one of us have been given a responsibility. It's a weight. And Paul says, we can say who is adequate, but it does not mean we stop because this is why God has given us the shoulders to carry the burdens that he placed upon us.

Friend, there's an answer to who is adequate. We'll get to that later. But I want you to notice the weight of the responsibility. Because unless we rightfully interpret the weight, we will not accurately accept the calling.

Second, I want you to know the worldliness to be avoided. Look at what he says. For we are not like many, peddling the word of God. Paul says, this responsibility that I've been given and the responsibility that you have been given, there's a danger that must be avoided.

[18 : 06] He said, we're not like many. Paul knew during his day, he would say when he was imprisoned that some were preaching Christ to mock him, some were preaching Christ to glorify Christ, some were preaching to support Paul, some were preaching to mock Paul.

Paul says, it doesn't matter to me as any way Christ be magnified and glorified. Paul knew the reality that there were proclaimers of the gospel. There were people who were speaking of Jesus that were doing it for profitable gain.

There were people that were hucksters, the word of God calls them. They were peddling the word of God. They were taking the gospel like a cheap ware and standing on the street corner and selling it at a good price. They were hirelings is what the word tells them.

Paul would tell the church at Corinth that they had paid other people to come tell him false doctrine, but they would not receive the true doctrine free from Paul. Paul is declaring that he's not like that, but this is the same calling and the same charge it is giving to us.

We must avoid the worldliness that is attached to the responsibility. He said that there are many who would delude it. There are many who would belittle it.

[19 : 10] There are many who would handle it like they would the matters of the world. They would live it out for their gain, for their comfort, or for their ease. I got news for you, friend. The gospel is not just to make your life better.

The gospel makes your life better, but its sole intended purpose is not to make your life better. The gospel is the good news of salvation to glorify the Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

The word of God declares that the salvation of man is unto his glory, not unto our benefit. We are benefited from that which glorifies him. Okay?

So when we take the message and we treat it like the world treats their message, that this is for my benefit, then we are belending the message. We are saved to be crown jewels in the crown of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

We are saved to promote his glory and to promote his honor and to promote his worthiness among those who deny it. We are not saved just so life can be better.

[20 : 14] Life is better because of salvation, but the aim of salvation is not the benefit of man. I know that's hard because if all God wanted to do was to create man that was good, he could have done it with the breath of his voice.

But the aim of salvation is that God would be glorified and honored through the work of the Savior, that the King of Kings and Lord of Lords will be rightfully seen as he is the only hope and redeemer of mankind.

It brings greater glory. The heavens declare his glory when you stand outside and you go look at what he created. All of nature declares his glory when you hear the birds sing and the sun shine and even the thunderstorms rolling and you see the flowers blooming and the trees greening.

Everything declares his glory, but nothing proclaims the glory of Jesus Christ like the redemption of mankind. Nothing talks of how good and worthy he is of our adoration than the reality that he can take a sinful, rebellious man and he can redeem him and restore him and renew him, that he can give him a heart of flesh in the place of the heart of stone.

We're not surprised when the flowers are beautiful. We're not surprised when the birds sing. We're not surprised when the sun shines. We're not surprised when the stars glimmer, but I'm surprised when a sinner turns to the Savior.

[21 : 37] I'm surprised when he says, I'm desperately wicked. I'm surprised when an individual calls me up and he says, you know, Billy Joe, I call you my pastor for life. I've walked away from you. I've spent some time in prison.

I'm in the rehabilitation center right now, but I want to get back. I need somebody to help me. That surprises me. You know why it surprises me? It's because the heart of all men are desperately wicked. Man does not want to do what is right.

Man naturally wants to do what is wrong. See, nothing brings greater glory to Jesus Christ than the salvation and the redemption of mankind. And my friend, this is the thing that we must keep in mind.

We must avoid the worldliness that says the gospel is all about me because it's not. I get to benefit from it. I get to glory in it. I get to celebrate in it. I can get excited about it and I'm carrying it.

You remember what Paul says. We're on parade. We have been caught captive of Christ. It's not our parade. We're not the one at the end waving. We're the ones in the beginning with the heads down, right?

[22 : 35] We're not the king and queen of our own parade. We're the captives of the king of the parade. We are the display of his glory and we ought to avoid the worldliness that others take.

It's not a cheap trick. It's not something we can sell to say, oh, let me make your life better. There's a great book. Ray Comfort wrote it. He says, God has a wonderful plan for your life and a number of other lies that believers believe.

That's the whole title. You say, oh, I thought God did have a wonderful plan for my life. Well, maybe God's plan would be to be sawn in two. You know, that's in the book of Hebrews, right?

Those of whom the world is not worthy. That doesn't sound very wonderful, does it? God has a great plan. We get to benefit from it. End of story.

God has a wonderful plan. That's where the period goes. Not after for your life because that's making God's plan about you and about me. Oh, this isn't popular.

[23 : 33] I know it. But it's biblical. God's plan is not about us. We benefit from it. It's for us. Sure. It's not about us. Here's the worldliness that must be avoided.

Number three. Here's the way in which we minister. If we are called to be ambassadors of Christ, we ought to do it in a specific way. He says, for we are not like many peddling the word of God, but as from sincerity.

But as from sincerity. Paul says that what he does, he does it with a sincere heart and a sincere mind. Paul is proclaiming that he is not writing to the church at Corinth and he's not doing it for any other reason than the sincerity of his heart.

He's not trying to persuade them and encourage them and challenge them because Paul gets a benefit from it. Paul is not in the business of promoting Paul. Paul is not trying to win any acclaim. Paul is not trying to get any recognition.

He's doing it from sincerity. What does that sincerity mean? It means he is sincerely concerned about the glory of Christ and the welfare of man. He says, I really want you to walk in faithfulness.

[24 : 42] I'm concerned about the eternal state of your souls. This is why Paul would say he handed such a one over to Satan. What did he say? I hand such a one over to Satan for the destruction of his flesh and the preservation of his soul.

Paul says, I'm more concerned about his eternal security than I am about his temporal prosperity. That's sincerity. See, we minister in the way of sincerity.

He said, I'm doing it in truthfulness and faithfulness. I'm not peddling it. I'm not a huckster at it. I'm not deluding it. I'm not going to belittle it. I'm going to do it with all sincerity. I'm doing it with a sincere and a true heart.

My heart and my mind are clear. Friend, I want to ask you, the way in which you live and the way in which I live, are we living it in sincerity among those around us? Are we living in such a manner that we sincerely believe that the gospel is flowing through us for the glory of Christ and the benefit of others?

That Christ is genuinely glorified through the way in which we live? He says, that we ought to do it in sincerity. That which is not done in sincerity is all too often done in hypocrisy.

[25 : 51] That is, we do it with ulterior motives. Too often, we're not as sincere about what we're doing.

Rather, we're more hypocritical about why we're doing it. It makes us look good. It makes us appear better. And it gives us a better position. Paul says, in all sincerity, I labor among you.

Friend, listen to me. Being an ambassador, remember, it's not our kingdom. We're just the representatives of the king in another kingdom. Too often, we want to build ourselves a little throne and set upon it and make our own little kingdom.

It's not that way. Anytime someone talks to me, oh, a pastor, or a non-church member, and they say, well, I should come to church with you. I had someone this week say, oh, I want to come visit you.

I said, I'd love to have you come to church with us. I'd love to do that. But my response is always the same way. I want you to find a Bible-believing, Bible-preaching, faithful church and be a part of that church. If this is it, that's awesome. If it's not it, that's awesome.

[26 : 54] It's not my kingdom. It's not your kingdom. It's his kingdom. Find a church that you can get connected to that will grow you and mature you and challenge you. Now, if you're in a church that's watering down the gospel leaf, if you're in a church that's not preaching the fullness of Christ and the fullness of the word of God, then sure, you can stay and you can remain, but I encourage people to find a Bible-believing, Bible-preaching, Bible-teaching church and be committed to that church because it's not about us.

We need to have this sincerity in our operations of the gospel. Number four, I'll go ahead and set your minds at ease.

There are five. Okay? There are five. Number four, I'm making my way quickly. Look at the witness to our labors. Look at the witness.

The New American Standard and every other translation besides the Legacy Standard, it's at the very end. It says in verse 17, For we're not like many peddling the word of God, but as from sincerity, but as from God, we speak in Christ, here it is, in the sight of God.

There's the witness to our labors. We are an aroma of Christ to God and we labor, the Bible says, in the sight of God. Do others observe how we labor and how we minister?

[28 : 11] Sure. But he that we are most ministering before is the Lord God Almighty. It says, In the sight of God, that passage in 1 Thessalonians 2, verse 4, Paul says, That they were counted worthy to be entrusted with the gospel.

Therefore, they proclaim the gospel as those who would give an account unto God who will examine their hearts. We'll think about that just for a moment. Jesus said it this way, Those who have been entrusted with much, much will be expected.

You know the gospel of Jesus Christ. You know the good news to which all mankind is longing to hear. He said, Oh, they don't want to hear it. Oh, they need to hear it. You know the answer to every one of man's problems.

You know the cure for every one of man's ailments. You have this awesome, weighted responsibility of the glory of the good news. On the day of judgment, you will not stand before the people that you failed to share it with, and I will not stand before the people that I failed to share it with, but I will stand before the Lord God Almighty and give an accounting and a reckoning for my failing to share it.

Look at the witness of our labors. I think it would be easier on that day to look at others and say, Well, I didn't share it because you were busy, and they may accept that, and I didn't share it because you were doing this and that, and they may accept that, but it's going to be hard to look at the nail-scarred Savior and say, I didn't share it because, because anything that follows because doesn't matter.

[29 : 56] We fail to realize, we know there's a, the Bema seat of judgment, the great white throne of judgment that all non-believers will stand before, but do you know that before the great white throne of judgment, the Bible tells us in the book of Revelations that the believers will stand before the judgment seat of Christ as well in given accounts, not unto salvation, but unto reckoning, because he to whom has been entrusted much, much will be expected.

Now, this isn't a fear technique. This is just a reality. Paul says, in the sight of God. We labor and we minister as God is our witness.

This, we labor among people that he's created, that he has created, and they observe it, and they see it, and they watch it, but greater and higher than that is we labor in the sight of the creator himself.

He who is divinely ordained when and where we would live and to what such extent we would live and the knowledge that we would have. He who has entrusted us with our abilities, our opportunities, and all of the matters that come in our way.

He who has redeemed us, it is he who will give an account to, because here is the witness to our laborers. Last. Fifth and last.

[31 : 15] Look at the word we are to proclaim. It says, but as from God, we speak in Christ. Here is the word we are to proclaim.

I love the book of Acts, and the book of Acts tells us the operations of the early church. And in the book of Acts, we find people coming to the salvific knowledge of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

We find people repenting, sometimes in the ones and twos, and sometimes in the thousands. We find people coming to know Jesus Christ like no other time in history. And it says that they come to know Christ from what they see and hear of the apostles.

That is, they saw how they lived, and they heard what they said. And we need to have that balance in our churches. We can say one thing and live a different way, and we call that hypocrisy. We can live one way and not say anything, and we call that failing to be a proclaimer of the gospel message.

But we ought to live as those who have something to show and something to tell. It is from what people see and hear. Jesus himself set that model. He would meet a physical need so that people could see it, and then he would declare a spiritual truth so that people could hear it.

[32 : 24] We understand this reality, but look at what Paul says, that they speak from God in Christ. And that is, everything that they declare and everything that they proclaim has to be fitting and worthy of the name of Jesus Christ.

That doesn't mean that he didn't say anything at all, but that just means that the message that he proclaimed, the word that he shared with them, the encouragement that he's given them is in Christ. It is the gospel message.

This is why we ought to know who Christ is. This is why we ought to know the truths of the promises of scripture. This is why we ought to know the word of God because we are to speak in Christ into the circumstances of mankind.

We ought to be able to give an answer, not only just for the hope that is in us, but to the hurt that they feel. We ought to be able to speak in Christ. We ought to know what we can declare in each and every circumstance that is both befitting and becoming of the name of Jesus Christ rather than that which just meets the need of the moment.

I remember some of the most, and I'm wrapping up, some of the most frustrating advice I was ever given when I came to Christ. Some of the most frustrating advice I was ever given is when I would go to a brother in Christ, he was my mentor, and I would ask him a question and he would never answer it.

[33 : 49] He would always look at me and say, well, what does the word of God say? And he'd always point me back to scripture. He wouldn't point me to a list of rules and do's and don'ts and he didn't give me all this legalism.

He would point me back to the word of God and say, well, what does the word of God say? Or what does Christ say? In that circumstance to your heart. And he was speaking in Christ and it was through that that he was building that relationship with me as an authentic ambassador of the kingdom.

Friend, we're all called. We're all to live and strive to be competent in our calling, but our incompetency does not neglect our calling.

We are calling to be ambassadors of Christ. And we ought to live so in an authentic manner. Let's pray. Lord, thank you for this day. I thank you for your faithfulness and goodness towards us.

Lord, I pray that you walk with us each and every step of our days. May it be for your glory and honor. And we ask it in Christ's name. Amen. Amen.

[35 : 08] Thank you.