

# Gospel Centered History and Gospel Centered Living

by John Piper

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*This sermon emphasizes the centrality of Jesus in history and the gospel, highlighting how the gospel is the apex of God's grace, leading to the glory of God and the eternal joy of His people. It explores how everything in history, including challenges like ISIS, Ebola, and moral collapse, is designed to serve God's people through the work of Christ. Practical applications include living in reliance on blood-bought grace, displaying God's grace in daily life, and treasuring Jesus above all things.*

**Scripture:** Ephesians 1:4, 2 Timothy 1:9, Romans 8:32

**Topics:** "Centrality of Jesus", "Living in Grace"

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## Description

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## Transcript

Father, we pause just one more time quietly. We've been praying in song and now I want to pray in this moment and acknowledge that we are fragile and we do want to say to all of our fears and anxieties, goodbye. And I pray that whether it's ISIS and the beheadings of 12 Assyrians and killing of another American aid worker, or whether it's Ebola, or whether it's the collapse of any kind of moral consensus in our land so that we glory in our shame, or whether it's a marriage being stretched to the breaking point this morning, or whether children who are acting in ways that are inexplicable to us, or whether it's cancer, or whether it's a job conflict, Lord, I pray that right now our anxieties would be bidden goodbye in the presence of the massive truth of the centrality of Jesus in history and in the gospel and in our lives.

And I pray that that would be exalted, would be seen and loved this morning. So come and help me to that end, I pray through Christ. Amen.

So what I would like to happen by God's grace, through His Spirit and His Word, is for you to see perhaps more clearly than you have before and feel with greater intensity than you may have before the truth that the gospel is the apex or the supreme expression of the grace of God. And by gospel I mean the events of

the death and the resurrection of Jesus for sinners, that that is the supreme expression of the grace of God, and the grace of God is the supreme expression of the glory of God, and the display and communication of the glory of God in the world is the supreme purpose of God in all of history and all that He does for the everlasting enjoyment of His people. So that's the sequence I want you to grasp, gospel, grace, glory, joy.

And at the center of the gospel is Christ crucified for sinners. And one of the ways I believe that the gospel assumes its centrality in our own ministry and life is for it to assume a centrality in history for us so that our efforts to, in our little teeny life, a little teeny individual life or family life or work life or city life, our little life trying to make Christ, see Christ as central, we would open our eyes and see from eternity to eternity He is central. In the middle of everything from the Middle East to Ebola to family crises to political collapse, everything Christ is absolutely supreme and central.

Because sometimes just to work at making Him central in my family, it doesn't work that way. We need to find ourselves caught up, caught up out of ourselves into something majestic, something way, way bigger than me or this church or this city or this state or this nation or this little world. So much bigger.

So that's where we're going. I want to talk about the centrality of Christ and the gospel in history for the sake of its centrality in my ministry, your ministry. And by ministry, if you hear me use the word ministry, don't think pastorate.

Think parenting, job, coaching the little league team. Think, this is what I do. My life is a service.

My life is just laid down for His glory, all of life, ministry. So don't limit that word when you hear me talk about gospel-centered or Christ-centered ministry. So let me create a picture for you by distinguishing what I mean by center.

If I say center, a lot of you probably would think circle with a center. That's not in my mind. I could preach that sermon.

I have preached that sermon, that life is like the solar system, the gospel is like the sun, its massive brightness makes everything beautiful, and its gravity holds everything in place in life. Great, great sermon. I love that sermon.

That's not this sermon. I'm thinking about a line, not a circle, all right? So get a line in your head, a line, and the line stretches to eternity past, and the line stretches to eternity future. It's the line of reality.

It's the line of history, and it goes back forever and forward forever, and I'm saying that the center of that line, and I know that all of you mathematicians are going to have a problem with this because the center of an eternal line is probably a none, doesn't make any sense, but it really does for us ordinary people. It really does. So just deal with it.

I know that two halves of eternity are both eternal and therefore the middle. At the middle of this line of history is Christ, crucified and risen. Now I want to just put Bible on that for you so you feel the force of what I mean.

This is no small thing. We Christians are not into a tribal religion. Like we have our little view of things, and the Muslims have their little view of things, and the Hindus have their little view of things, and the Buddhists, and the Secularists, the New Agers, and everybody has their little view of things, and we enjoy

ours, and they enjoy theirs.

This is totally not the way Christians think. This is a line of reality that everybody is on. All reality is on this line, and Jesus is at the center of it.

Exalted at the center, and the gospel is at the center of it because the greatest expression of the grace of God, of the glory of God, for the enjoyment of all these people of all time is the cross of Christ in the gospel, Jesus crucified and risen. So that's the picture I want you to have in your mind. Everything on this line passed before the gospel, before Christ came, was designed to lead toward it and prepare for it, including everything that was going on in God's mind in eternity.

And everything after the cross and the resurrection, this gospel events at the center, everything after it, absolutely everything that happens in the universe on this line is made possible by the cross if you view it as something happening for the sake of the glory of God in the people of God for their everlasting joy, which is why it exists. That's a pretty radical statement. Everything happening in the world today can only happen as it is happening for the designs and purposes for which God has prepared it, can only happen because Jesus died and rose again.

And I'll try to show you what I mean by that and why that's so, but those are the two halves we need to deal with. So we got two exegetical Bible interpretation tasks in front of us. Where do you see in the Bible that everything before Christ is going there? And where do you see in the Bible that everything coming after Christ was made possible by that? Where do you see that? Because if you could feel that with me, then Christ would become bigger for you.

He would be more majestic, more great, more glorious, more central in every way for your little life. And your little life just might be caught up into something very, very significant. So let's take task number one, the before the cross.

So I told them I was going to preach on Ephesians 1. So here we are at Ephesians 1. It's actually just one of many texts. So if you have your Bibles and you want to look at this with me, and I suggest if you have a Bible you do, because I'm going to pick out some pretty important details here that it would be helpful for you to see. So Ephesians 1, I'm going to read verses 4 and 4-6.

God chose us in Him, in Christ, 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 the glory of His grace with which He has blessed us in the Beloved. So the beginning of verse 6, it says that election, predestination, adoption is to something.

It's going somewhere. There's a reason. There's a purpose.

Why did God do election? Why did God do predestination? Why does God do adoption? Answer, to the praise of the glory of His grace. To the praise of the glory of His grace. So grace, I know your version may have to the praise of His glorious grace, make an adjective out of it.

That's okay. Literally, it's to the praise of the glory of His grace. So grace is what's being praised.

And what's amazing about grace is that it's the most glorious aspect of God's spillover. So grace is the apex, the supreme expression of glory, and we're praising it so it is for our joy because you don't praise what you don't enjoy. If you try to praise what you don't enjoy, there's a name for that.

Hypocrisy. Praise is the overflow of joy in the greatness of God's grace. So to the praise of the glory of His grace is why all that was happening, why there was election, why there was predestination, why He has adopted sinners into His divine family so that His glorious grace would be enjoyed forever.

And the joy would spill over in praise. So that's pretty clear, I think, from verse 4 through 6. And the question is this, what does that have to do with the gospel? What does that have to do with Jesus? Because in the minute I didn't mention Him. Grace, glory, praise, joy, purpose of election, purpose of predestination, purpose of adoption, Jesus! Gospel! Okay, so let's see the answer to that with three specific phrases in verses 4 through 6. Verse 4, even as God chose us in Him before the foundation of the world.

So election before the foundation of the world, the choosing of a people for Himself is in relation to Jesus. God elects sinners before the foundation of the world, which is why they must be elect in Jesus, because they're going to praise the glory of grace. And grace means they're getting lots of good things, and they don't deserve any of them.

That's what grace means. So God is electing sinners for everlasting joy. You can't do that.

You can't do that. A holy God cannot do that. That's evil unless there's gospel, unless there's Christ, unless there's the death, unless there's the substitute, unless there's the propitiation, unless there's the redemption, and all that's in Him, in Him.

So there's my first clue that this is all related to the gospel, this is all related to Christ, crucified, even as God chose us in Him before the foundation of the world. Here's number two, verse five. In love, He predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ.

So predestination of the chosen unto grace and glory is through Jesus Christ. It had to be through Jesus Christ. Predestination of sinners unto glory would be wicked if there were no Christ through whom they could be justified.

So they are chosen, now they're predestined through Jesus Christ. Here's number three. The end of verse six, to the praise of the glory of His grace with which He blessed us in the beloved.

We're getting grace, right? To the praise of the glory of His grace with which He blessed us, grace upon grace is coming to us. How so? With which He blessed us in the beloved. So we've seen it three times now.

We've seen in the beloved in verse six, we've seen in Him in verse four, and we've seen through Jesus Christ in verse five. And so my summary conclusion from those verses is that God's eternal purpose, and I say eternal because it says He chose us before the foundation of the world. So there's no universe yet, just God.

And God's thinking of you in your sin, your fallenness, and He chooses you through Jesus Christ in Him in the beloved, which says this, that God's purpose for creation and for history is that it flow to the gospel. It's all planned. We've already been chosen for grace as sinners in Christ.

So Christ must come, and everything must prepare for that because that's the way the whole thing has been designed, it's been designed for that. So that's my first text to show that things leading up to it from eternity are pointing there, preparing for that at the center. Now let's go to two other passages to confirm

what we've seen.

It's always helpful once you see something in a text and starts to excite you to check your own fallibility, not the text's fallibility, but your fallibility by seeing is it taught elsewhere like that? So the first one I'll look at with you is 2 Timothy 1.9. So why don't you turn to 2 Timothy 1.9 with me. God saved us, 2 Timothy 1.9. God saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began. We are saved.

How so? By works, by things we do to show ourselves worthy? No, but because of his purpose and grace. It's not works, it's grace. If it were not by grace, it'd be by works.

If it's by works, it's not by grace. Romans 11.5. But here it's God's own purpose and grace. And then he says this off the charts thing that hardly anybody ever says.

This grace that comes to us in our need for justification, our need for righteousness, our need for forgiveness was given to us in Christ before the universe existed. That's amazing. It makes something significant out of you, by the way.

He gave me grace billions of years ago. There weren't anything called years. And he did it specifically in relation to Jesus Christ.

So, confirmation that at the center of reality, created reality here, flowing on this line of history is Jesus Christ, planned from eternity to die and rise again to display grace to a people who've been chosen, who are sinners and need grace. It's all the plan. That's the plan.

It's the reason for it all. ISIS is not the reason. Ebola is not the reason.

Politics is not the reason. That's just child's play. It's got to be dealt with.

That's not the point of the story. You're the point of the story. Christ exalted in his people who are praising the glory of grace is the point of the story.

Here's a second confirmation. In the book of Revelation, chapter 13, verse 8, we get this strange verse. The beast is on the horizon, antichrist.

And it says this, Revelation 13, 8, all who dwell on the earth will worship it, the beast. Everyone? Well, no, not everyone. And then he gives an exception.

Who won't be worshiping the beast? Everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of the life of the lamb who was slain. That's absolutely staggering in many ways. I love the Bible.

I was pondering this morning in the bathroom. My mind goes everywhere. Think about legalists.

Think about Twitter. Twitter. And people that talk about legalism on Twitter and Bible reading and devotions and pietism.

And I thought, you know, the issue with regard to whether you read your Bible or not is not mainly a legal question of do I have to, but the really way, way more profound question of why wouldn't you want to? That's the real question. That's the hard question. And just a lot of guys go around making their living

dumping on legalism when I'm thinking, you want to? Like, why are you developing this anti-legalistic rationale for you don't have to read your Bible once a day or half an hour or whatever? Why would you even put it in those categories? Why would you even think like that? Why wouldn't you just raise the question, something wrong if you don't want to read your Bible.

Something wrong with your soul if you like movies more than God's Word. That's pretty damning for the evangelical church. But we protect ourselves immediately from that question.

Isn't that legalism? That's just changing the categories. That's just totally irrelevant. So all that to say, I love the Bible.

This is awesome. This is incredible. I mean, look at verse eight.

This is just off the charts better than any movie thriller. You just have to believe it. You just have to see it, not play with, not just skim over it off to breakfast.

This is just off the charts. There's coming a beast. There's coming an antichrist.

Everybody's going to bow down except one group of people, people whose names are in a book written before the universe existed. Why won't they be bowing down? Because that's what it means to be in the book. To be in the book is to be protected from the beast.

You don't get your name in the book by not worshiping the beast. You don't worship the beast because your name is in the book. That's just awesome.

Is your name in the book. You don't put your name in the book. This is scary stuff.

You either discover it's there by loving God and believing in Jesus, or you discover it's not there by being a worldly person and rejecting Jesus. My point here is the book has a name. It's called The Book of the Life of the Lamb Who Was Slain.

That's the name of the book before the universe existed, which means there's going to be a slain lamb, which means there's going to be sin, a fall, a plan of redemption centering on the lamb. Jesus is awesome. Summary of this first half of the line.

When I talk about gospel-centered history or Christ-centered history, gospel-centered life, I mean at the center of history is Christ incarnate, God-man, sinless, didn't die for his own sins, died for the sins of others, finished the great work that was planned from eternity, purchased infinite grace for God's people, rose triumphant over sin and hell and death and Satan, ascended, reigns today, and from that point on now. That's where we're going in a minute. At that point, everything beforehand came to its consummation.

Oh, how many more texts could be brought to bear? The goal of the law is Christ for righteousness and many, many more. Let's talk about this half now. You said that not only was everything before Christ prepared for and leading to him, planning for him, and him specifically dying and him rising so that grace could pour to sinners who were chosen in him before the foundation of the world.

You said that. Now, you also said that everything flowing in history after Christ is made possible because of that. And then you qualified, I'm talking to me, you qualified by saying everything understood as purposed or designed to bless God's people.

So I'm thinking beheadings by ISIS in Syria or Iraq are on the line. So they're part of the divine design. Ebola is on the line.

Moral collapse of American culture is on the line. Everything's on the line. And you're saying all of that is possible in its divine design to bless God's people only because of Christ.

That's what I'm saying. That's where we're going. That's huge.

So let's see if it's in the Bible. I'm going to start with Hebrews chapter 13 verses 20 and 21. It goes like this.

Now, may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep by the blood of the eternal covenant. We'll come back to that. By the blood of the eternal covenant equip you with everything good that you may do his will working in us that which is pleasing in his sight through Jesus Christ to be glory forever and ever.

So everything you do in life that has any spiritual value at all that pleases God, see that near the end of verse 21? Everything you do that pleases God is only possible because God is at work in you. May he equip you with everything good that you may do his will working in you that which is pleasing in his sight. That's how you are able to do things that please God.

God working in you that which is pleasing in his sight. So everything we do in ministry, everything we do in life, everything anybody does in life that spiritually pleases God is possible because God almighty and infinitely holy is at work in us to bring those God-pleasing things about. But now here's the catch, I'm a sinner and even though I'm born of God and the Holy Spirit inhabits my life, there is remaining corruption in me and I do things every day in attitude especially and sometimes in word and sometimes in deed that are displeasing to the Lord and off-putting to a holy God.

So how in the world can he show up and do anything that would make anything pleasing to him? And of course the answer is grace. He treats me better than I deserve. He comes to me with grace.

So I'm looking at the phrase through Jesus Christ. You see that near the end of verse 21? Equip you with everything good that you may do his will working in us that which is pleasing in his sight. How does he do that for sinners? Through Jesus Christ.

He couldn't do that for me apart from Jesus Christ. He couldn't do that with me apart from the gospel. Now how do I know that when he says through Jesus Christ he has in mind the atoning work of Jesus Christ? And my answer to that is the connection between verses 20 and 21.

In verse 20 it says that Jesus shed the blood of the eternal covenant and thus equips us with everything good to do his will working in us that which is pleasing in his sight through Jesus Christ. So the through Jesus Christ at least includes the work of Christ to shed the blood of the eternal covenant. Now what's that? What's the blood of the eternal covenant? That would be the new covenant.

Jesus lifted up the cup at the last supper and he said this cup is the new covenant in my blood. This is what Hebrews is talking about. So I am now securing and validating an eternal covenant for my people and I do it by my blood shedding.

And what is the new covenant? I will take out the heart of stone I will put in the heart of flesh and I will cause you to walk in my statutes. That is I will work in you what is pleasing in my sight. Which means every single thing that you do and that everyone does that is pleasing to God is only possible because of the center of history.

Jesus died shed the blood of the eternal covenant through which God the holy one can move into sinners lives and make them do good things. Pleasing to him without faith it is impossible to please God therefore move them to believe. So that's my first text Hebrews 13 20 and 21 showing first that everything we do that's pleasing to God is owing to the gospel owing to the death of Jesus.

Second text second Corinthians chapter 1 verse 20 one of the most precious assurances concerning the promises of God in all the Bible. Very simple straightforward it says for all the promises of God find their yes in him. That is why it is through him that we utter our amen to God for his glory.

All the promises of God find their yes in him. Which means the entire life of faith is secured by Christ when he purchased by the blood of the eternal covenant the new covenant in which all the promises flow to all those who are in him. I'm just trying to illustrate how unbelievably practical this is for your daily life I hope.

The way I live the Christian life is by moving from one moment to the next. Okay so sitting there I know I can preach in a few minutes before that I'm going to sing. How will I sing? How will I sing so that's pleasing to God and how will I preach so that it's pleasing to God and then and then we'll go to lunch and then I'll go to the airport and I'll get on a plane that'll sit beside somebody and then I'll meet my wife at home and then I just walk from thing to thing in my life and at every moment the question that's being posed to me is what promise are you trusting God to fulfill now? What promise are you trusting God to fulfill now? I don't know if you live like that.

I think that's what living by faith means. That is I trust promise that between now and the end of the sermon in 10 minutes or whatever between now and the end of this sermon grace will show up in fulfillment of a promise to sustain me so that I don't say anything stupid or at least wrong or maybe both or drop dead or blaspheme God or how do I know that won't happen? I'm trusting God for a promise. So the way we raised our kids, tried anyway, was that we had a main verse that we sent them off with wherever they went.

If they went to camp in the summer, if they went on a mission trip, if they went off to college, if it was the first day of school in the sixth grade and they're getting on the bus and they're nervous, whatever. If they're graduating and going into ninth grade from eighth grade and there's always these. We had verses.

We had a verse in particular, our family verse. If you ask any of my children what was the dominant send away verse it would be Isaiah 41 10. Fear not for I'm with you.

That's a promise. Don't go over too fast. I am with you.

Be not dismayed. I am your God. I will strengthen you.

I will help you. I will hold you up with my righteous right hand. Believe that Carsten.

Believe that Benjamin. Believe that Abraham. Believe that Talitha.

Believe that Barnabas. As you go to first grade, he will help you. He'll be with you.

I tried to teach my kids that every step of their life was the trusting of God to do something good for them. He's going to show up. He's going to give sustaining grace.

He made promises to that effect. And so you hold on to a promise at every moment. And now I'm saying on the basis of 2 Corinthians 1:20, every one of those promises was bought by the blood of Jesus.

Which means, of course, that when you're trusting a promise, you're trusting Jesus. And when you're trusting Jesus, you're trusting the crucified Jesus who loved you and gave himself for you and rose triumphant over anything that could cause that promise not to come true. This is really big.

That Christ crucified and pouring out the blood of the covenant to secure the promises of God for us becomes then the center of our life. So to be gospel-centered, cross-centered, Christ-centered means at every moment I'm trusting a promise that he bought a few thousand years ago. That's the second text I look at.

So Hebrews 13, 2 Corinthians 1:20. And here's the last one. Romans 8:32.

Maybe my favorite verse in the Bible. He who did not spare his own son. Just pause there and let these words have their proper effect.

Not spare. When you say he didn't spare, what does that imply? It implies this was hard for God. This cost God.

He didn't spare. And then you hear the word his own son. Not just son, but his own son.

He who did not spare his own son, but gave him up. And what does that mean? To the cross. That means torture.

That means to watch your son be lacerated, driven through with nails and spikes, thrust through with a sword, beard plucked out, spit on his face. God did not spare his own son, but gave him up for us all. If he did that, the text says, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? You hear a little logic there? That's called an a fortiori reasoning from the greater to the lesser.

The greater is, will God put forward his son to be treated like that and die? And if the answer is yes, then the question, will he give us all things, is a piece of cake. That's the argument. That's the nature of the argument.

If he didn't spare his own son, how much more, how easy it will be for the omnipotent God to give us everything. Now, that's where I get the idea that everything from the cross on, everything flows from the cross. Ebola, ISIS, moral collapse, because it says all things.

Or, which is another verse that says the same thing, verse 28, all things work together for good for those who love God. Ebola, ISIS, moral collapse, all things work together for good for those who love God. How can that be? These are sinners, they don't deserve that.

How can that be? Answer, the gospel. Christ died to do that kind of sovereign manipulation of the universe for the good of his people. Pause on this for a minute.

This is heavy. So, you're saying the all things there really includes evils and death and disease and cultural collapse. That doesn't look like what it means.

I mean, that's just not good news. I don't want that, thank you very much. Why would you even go there? Why wouldn't you think it means something else? Well, I'm stuck with the word all, first of all, but I understand that things have their limits.

It's similar to seek first the kingdom of God and all these things will be added to you. In the context, that's what you eat and what you drink and what you wear. And, of course, it raises the question, wait a minute, do Christians always get what they need to eat and Christians always get what they need to wear? In what sense does God commit himself in the death of Christ to giving you all things? If I were a prosperity preacher, I'd probably make much of that in a worldly way.

Give you all things. Get the cars you want and the clothes you want and the health you want and the job you want. Is that what it means? I think, since both the verses that are making the difference for me, 828 and 832 Romans, since they're both there in eight, be good to get our answer from eight.

And I do. Three verses later, after 32, it goes like this. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or peril? Nope, look at that.

Famine, that means not enough food. Nakedness, that means not enough clothes. Sword, that means they cut your head off.

They did. Paul's head came off. Peril, sword.

What shall separate us from the love of Christ? Any of those? What's Paul's answer? No, no, don't give the answer yet. There's another verse coming. As it is written, we are being killed all day long.

So you might stop at verse 35 and say, well, of course those things don't separate us from the love of God, because God doesn't let it happen to us. God doesn't let us have tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, and sword. That's why they don't separate us from the love of God, because he's sovereign and he bought good things for us, and therefore they will happen to Christians.

And then the next verse says, we are being killed all day long. Like, oh, this is not potential. This is happening, and my guess is that verse has been true every day of history for 2,000 years.

Somewhere, some Christian is dying for the faith. That'd be my guess. Can't prove that.

We're being killed all day long, and then he answers, in, not around, not instead of, in all these things, we are more than conquered. That's what I think he means back in 832 when he says, you did not spare his own son, but gave him up for us all. Will he not with him give us all things, meaning I turn all things into super triumph for you.

What would that be? Let me give you one other verse before I answer that. 1 Corinthians 3, 21 to 23 go like this. So, let no one boast in men, for all things are yours.

There it is again. We've got three times now, 828, 832. 1 Corinthians 3, 21, all things are yours.

Paul, Apollos, Cephas, the world, life, death. Thank you, no. What does that mean? Death is yours.

That's in the list of gifts. Death, things present, things to come, all are yours, and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's. So, now we got enough verses to really make the problem big.

We've got 828, everything works together for your good. We got 832, he bought for you everything. And we've got 1 Corinthians 3, 23, which says, all things are yours.

And of course, we could draw in lots of others like we're heirs with Christ of the world. Now, the world includes death, and ISIS, and Ebola, and more collapse. Has God blown it? No.

In all these things, we are more than conquerors. What does that mean? In death, you're more than a conqueror. In beheading, you're more than a conqueror.

In disease, in your wife's disease, you're more than a conqueror. What does that mean? It means, this is a picture that helps. I don't know if this picture was in Paul's mind, but I think the truth of the picture was in his mind.

So, if you defeat these enemies, you defeat them, and they lie dead at your feet, you're a conqueror. What would it be to be more than a conqueror at that moment? There's a sword is lying there, and famine is lying there, and nakedness is lying there, and peril, and danger, and tribulation, they're all dead at your feet. Conqueror.

What would more than a conqueror mean? More than a conqueror would mean they get up and serve you. You don't just leave them dead on the battlefield. You follow me, and you serve me the rest of my life.

And they do. That's the point of all things. That's what he died for.

That's why I say everything that flows from the cross includes everything, and everything is made the servant of God's people. We will see someday, when history is written, and the whole canvas is put before us, from eternity to eternity, with all the colors, and all the billions, and billions, and billions of details of lives, and movements, and history all on the canvas that God is painting, and this line of God's people, and God's elect, and God's predestination for the joy of the glory of God's grace, all that flowing there, we will see how all the pieces serve that line, serve to make our eternity supremely. So let me draw things to a close by giving just maybe two or three very practical ways I live this out, try to, and commend to you.

What does it mean then to be Christ or gospel cross-centered? You know, it's not, it's just, you could go to hell believing the facts of everything I've just said for the last 45 minutes. There are people who could hear this sermon, and be fascinated by its structure, and just write down, send a letter, and not believe, not be changed by any of it. It's theoretically interesting, and I hope that doesn't happen.

So very practically, this is the effect I think is to have among many. To be gospel-centered is first to do everything you do in reliance upon blood-bought grace, and blood-bought promises. So you go out of here, you got an afternoon to face, got some issues, gonna make some phone calls, gonna cook a meal, you're gonna do some homework, you're gonna read a book, you know, whatever you're gonna do it, and you should be thinking, how may I do it in reliance upon? I want to walk by faith.

The Bible says, I live by faith in him who loved me, and gave himself for me. How do I live by faith in the next two hours, the next three hours? And the answer is, you think, he died and secured for me the absolute certainty of the fulfillment of a promise. I will hold to a promise, and I will move into the day believing that promise is gonna come true for me.

Whatever you need, and there are hundreds of promises in the Bible that you could hold on to. Take Isaiah 41, 10 for just a starter, and use it this afternoon. That's implication number one.

Number two, and this flows from that, is that you do everything you do with a view to displaying, displaying, showing the all-satisfying grace of God that he purchased for you. He died so that you, a sinner, would get better than you deserve. So you shouldn't think, oh, I'm just not deserving any of this.

Well, of course you're not. That's the whole point of grace. And so you want to display in your reliance and your obedience out of that reliance.

I love grace. Grace is precious to me. I want grace to look great in my life.

I want people to see and taste grace on my life. So when I meet Noel at 608, actually the plane probably won't get in on time, but that's when it's supposed to land. When I meet my wife, one of my prayers and thoughts will be that I'm full of grace toward her.

I won't have an, oh, poor me, self-pitying. I was so sick on this trip. I kept blowing my nose.

It was so embarrassing, and I was coughing in the first hour. Me, me, me, me, me, pity, pity, pity. I hope I don't go there at all.

I hope I say, I was church this morning and get a good rest last night, and just come on, give me, I want to know you. I want to bless you. Show me you.

I want to be here for you. That would be a sweet fulfillment of a promise of grace to radiate grace, display grace. And the last thing would be to say, and it's almost the same, is that you want to now exist, live, so that you show, draw attention to the glory of God, the glory and value of Christ.

So I went from reliance upon promises and grace to display the beauty of grace to a treasuring of the one who purchased all the grace, Jesus Christ. So all that to say he's the center of history, and when we grasp that in the biblical proportions, we will be enabled in fresh ways to live very practically in our little lives so that he is relied upon and his grace is shown to be great, and he's treasured above all things. So Father, I pray for these friends that they would love your word, that they wouldn't be among the number who's always trying to defend themselves or saying, well, you don't have to read your Bible because it's not a duty, and instead they would become, they would become a kind of person who delights in your holy, precious, mind-blowing, all-satisfying word as it reveals Christ to us.

So Jesus, be exalted in this church, be exalted in the churches that are represented here, be exalted in our lives as we trust your promises and rely upon your grace and treasure you above all things. I ask this in your great and holy name, and because you bought the promises for us. Amen.

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