



Sermon – March 20, 2022
Daniel Patterson

Verses Covered This Week
Ephesians 4:11 - 16

Amen. Well, let me invite you to open your Bibles this morning to Ephesians chapter 4. Ephesians chapter 4 this morning. We're going to be looking at verses 11 through 16. And if you're a guest with us today, whether you're joining with us here in person, whether you're a long time member here for spring break, whether you're joining us online, let me say welcome. Every week we open God's word and work through it verse by verse because we believe the Bible is the instrument that God uses to awaken hearts and change lives. And we've been going for most of the year, verse by verse, through the book of Genesis. We're going to take a break this morning to look at this chapter, this section of verses, here in Ephesians. Because it is a critical, critical passage. Not just in the book of Ephesians but for this local church. Because we're a church that talks a lot about being a church where every generation is reaching the next generation. And I can hardly think of a passage that is of more importance than this passage right here. Because this is a passage where Jesus is showing us what He's doing for His church and through His church. And if we grasp what Jesus is doing right here, there's no limit to what He can do with Central Church in the Brazos Valley and around the world.

So I want to take a brief look at this text and we'll work through it slowly. Ephesians chapter 4, verses 11 through 12.

¹¹And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, ¹²to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,

This is God's word for us this morning.

Now, I'm still relatively new here at Central. But as y'all get to know me, one of the things you may learn about me is that I'm fascinated by learning how things work. I love seeing things that are behind the scenes, whether it's just back stage or whether it's, you know, the cockpit of an airplane, or what does it look like on the pathway from the locker room to the field down the tunnel. I've always been fascinated by those things. And one of the things that was interesting in my previous job, where I worked at the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, I was in

charge of media relations. That meant I got to see all sorts of things behind the scenes. Whether it was the White House or the capital or Fox News or NBC. And it was really interesting to me personally. But one of the things that struck me is how no matter how incredible things look in photos or on television or on the screen, often just behind the view of the camera, just past the public eye, things often looked dingy and dilapidated and less glamorous than it did in front of the camera. And one particular story kind of encapsulates that in my mind. Years ago, I was in Rome because the man who was president of our organization was speaking at an event at the Vatican defending a view of marriage, a biblical view of marriage, between one man and one woman. And afterwards, one of the networks, CNN or one of them, reached out and said, "We'd really like to talk to you about this event that happened and we've got a studio lined up if you'll just show up on time. We've got, you can just do it right there." I said, "Great." Well, 30 minutes before the segment starts, I get a phone call saying, "Hey, the studio that we booked is unavailable. We're just going to try and do this on a cell phone. So just you skype. All you need is good cell service and a background that looks good." OK. I'll figure this out. This doesn't seem too bad. So, I'm trying to figure out, ok, where do I go. So I go to St. Peter's Basilica. There's all of these like incredible columns in the background. It looks awesome. So we start to set up. This is about 25 minutes before the segment starts. I don't have any cell service. OK. We've got to come up with something else. So we rush over to the hotel where several of us were staying. And the only place that we can find with a good enough wall in the background that looks like it will fit on TV is in the bar. So a bunch of Baptists hanging out in the bar, it sounds like the start of a bad joke. But then, 15, 10-15 minutes before the segment starts, a rowdy group of Italian folks come in for what I guess was happy hour and we weren't going to be able to quiet them down. So we've got to figure out yet another place to film the segment. So we rush up to one of our hotel rooms. We think, well, this isn't going to look awesome. But what can you do? You know, we'll figure it out. Well, we get in the hotel room and it's a nice room but there's no overhead light anywhere in the room. So we're scrambling and we're 5 minutes out from millions of people watching us fall flat on our face potentially if we can't figure this out. The only part of the room that has any sufficient lighting is the bathroom. So we go in the bathroom, I pull the chair in front of the sink, I crouch down in front of it, hold a cell phone on top of the sink, and we start a national television interview in front of millions of people. And it's one of those, it's one of those stories where you think, this moment is so ridiculous, nobody is going to believe that it even happened. I would need a picture of it to prove it. Turns out I have one. Now as you look at this, there's three things I want to point out. The first of which is the least obvious, which is for there to be a picture, that means someone had to take this picture. Which means someone had to think, "I'm going to be the kind of person who stands in a shower in a cramped room and capture this moment." And you know, if you're like me, you might wonder, "What kind of person stands in a shower fully clothed in a cramped bathroom with no responsibility in that moment except to witness the awkwardness of this national television interview." Well, the great thing is, I'm still in close contact with this person and I could probably ask him that question. He's a good friend of mine. Some of y'all may know him. His name is Phillip Bethancourt. We'll see how quickly I get to preach again after this. But the second thing you see in this photo is that I'm crouching down which didn't seem like a very monumental decision when I got into that position. But if any of you all have tried to hold a squat for a 10 minute national television interview, it's quite painful. So about midway through the segment, I think, "You know what, I'm going to try and readjust and see if I can get in a get in a, you know, take a knee, get a little bit more comfortable. And then the third thing that I'll call your attention to in this photo is what I saw. Which was a little red dot in the

reflection of the glass door of the shower. And it was at that moment when I realized, I'm not just crouching in front of a toilet, I'm crouching in front of a motion activated toilet. And if I move, it's going to make noise. I hear the drum beat of the doom of the end of my career as millions of people think my boss is sitting on something other than a chair during a national television interview. Now the point here is not, this is a really awkward painful moment where Daniel sweat through his suit and somehow managed to keep the toilet from flushing. The point isn't the discomfort. It's not the awkwardness, it's that you don't often see what's going on behind the scenes. Not only on the news. You not only don't see what's going on behind the scenes in all sorts of areas of life, and you also often don't see what's going on in the spiritual world all around us. But right here in this text, we do see that. And what Paul is giving us is a view into what Jesus, the risen resurrected Jesus in heaven right now this morning is doing. We see what He's doing this very moment. And what He's doing is completing His victory over sin and satan. Because in the cross, in the resurrection, Jesus won a decisive victory. But satan's still roaming around, isn't he? Satan knows his time is short but he's still here trying to do harm. The picture that we get in the New Testament is almost like a football game. You've got a team that's up by two touchdowns with three minutes left in the game. The outcome of the game is secure. This other team is not going to win, but that doesn't mean the defense stops trying. They're still trying to attack. They're still trying to wreak havoc. They're still trying to cause pain. They're still trying to mess things up. The victory is secure in God's plan. But satan is still trying to do harm.

That's where we are right now in the history of God's plan. And what we see in this text is Jesus having ascended to heaven, to the right hand of the Father, and deploying His strategy to complete His victory over sin and satan. And that has everything to do with your life and mine and with our life together here at Central. And so as we see the strategy, we'll notice that the text gives us two primary commands. And the first command, if you're taking notes, is to receive the gifts that God has given you for the church. Receive the gifts that God has given you for the church. And the first gift that we receive that we see in this text, we receive the gift of leaders. If you look at verse 11, it says,

¹¹He gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and the teachers,

So you may be saying, "Daniel, you're talking about gifts but this feels like a bit of a topic change. You know, this section of Scripture where Paul says Jesus ascended to heaven and gave gifts. Notice what he leads with, he leads with people. Now, I don't know about you, but when I think of spiritual gifts, I often think of one of those like spiritual inventory tests. I don't know if you've ever taken one of those where you kind of like tally up your score and at the end you think, "Oh, wow, I have the gift of evangelism, or I have the gift of teaching." It's really easy to think of spiritual gifts as almost like qualities or characteristics of someone. But the text here is presenting these pastors and teachers, these gifts aren't necessarily a characteristic. The gifts are a person. So one of the gifts this Scripture is teaching us that Jesus is giving the church is pastors and overseers and teachers. So it's not so much that they have the gift of teaching but the Scripture says that person himself is a gift. So that means the clear implication of this verse is that God has given pastors and leaders to local churches just like Central, and these leaders are designed to be gifts and to be seen as gifts. Now, that runs the risk as, you know, I'm a pastor. That runs the risk of sounding really self-serving. So I don't want to sound like I'm standing up here saying, "What can I say? You're welcome." Because the purpose of this gift is right in the

next verse. Look what it says. The purpose of these gifts of pastors and teachers and leaders is, verse 12,

¹²to equip the saints for ministry, for building up the body of Christ,

Paul, right here is showing us that the strategy of Jesus, what Jesus has determined as one of the primary gifts that He will give His church is the gifts of leaders and pastors and teachers so that the entire congregation can do the work of ministry together. Jesus is showing us that one of the main purposes of the church is to welcome, train, and deploy everyone to do the work of the church. This means ministry is not just reserved for the elite, for the super-serious. It's for all of us. And that means leadership, as we're defining it biblically, is a lot like coaching. So if you think about college football, for example. Let's say A&M's playing one Saturday and the quarterback has made some bad decisions, a couple bad reads, taken a couple sacks, thrown a few picks, I know that would never happen, but let's just say it did. You'll never see Jimbo Fisher get upset and say, "I'm going to put on the pads and start taking snaps myself." That's never going to happen. Because the point of a coach is to equip and to train and to provide structure. But the execution of the game plan doesn't belong to the coaches, it belongs to the entire team. And it's so easy to apply that towards ministry wrongly. We often think about, you know, "Well I've got a tax problem, I'm going to talk to an accountant. I've got a toothache, I'm going to go find a dentist. I've got a, you know, toilet problem, I'm going to call a plumber. I've got a God problem, I'm going to call a pastor." But the point that this passage is showing us is that the leadership of the church is designed to prepare and invite you, all of us, into ministry. So if we're going to be a church where every generation is reaching the next generation, then we need to ask ourselves two questions. Number one, are those of us who are pastors and leaders training and equipping all of us, the entire church, for ministry? And are those of us who are members of this church actively seeking to grow and actively seeking to go? And going can be to the nursery, it can be to Nepal, it can be anywhere in between. But it takes the entire church. And that's the point that we're seeing here. The first point in Jesus' strategy to annihilate Satan is to provide leaders who will coach and equip. That means we ought to receive those gifts of leaders but we don't stop there. The second thing that we see is that these leaders don't exist in a cloud online. They exist in specific places, in local churches. So that means we need also to recognize the gifts by serving in community. We see this in verse 13. Notice the way that it says in verse 13,

¹³until we all attain the unity of the faith

Look at that language. We all. Unity. Paul is talking about this because Jesus is trying to make it crystal clear that Christianity is not an individual activity. Gifts are given to the church. But one thing that is so clear over and over in Scripture, whenever we see the topic of spiritual gifts, is that they are given to the church. So it's not so much that you have the gift of teaching. Or you have the gift of evangelism. Or you have the gift of hospitality. It's that the church has the gift of teaching through you. It's that the church has the gift of hospitality through you. And not only that, but you recognize these gifts in yourself. The Scripture is telling us you recognize them by serving in the local church. That's one of the many reasons that we have life groups. We like to say that life groups are a place where a big place like Central begins to feel small. They're designed to be a place where you get to know one another. Where you get to help one another. And importantly, where you serve with one another. Because what this passage is

showing us is that God reveals your gifts, not in a vision, not in a dream, not primarily in some personality test, but as you roll up your sleeves and you serve with people side by side in the context of the local church. And that means the unmistakable implication of this verse for us this morning is that if you are in Christ, God is calling you to active service and community within this local church. Jesus is pleading with you in this verse this morning. Don't stay on the margins. Don't stay on the sidelines. Orient and plan your life around the community of the church. Not because it's the good thing to do. Not because it'll help you raise moral children. But because this is God's plan for you and the fullness of time. To bring you more joy than you can imagine and to end sin and suffering and Satan. It starts right here. But it's also crucial to see that as we talk about community, we're not just gathering. We're not just getting together for the sake of friendship. We recognize our gifts by serving in community. But we also refine these gifts by growing in knowledge. And we see that in verse 13. Look with me at the text. In chapter 4, verse 13 it says:

¹³until we all attain the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,

So look at that in verse 13. We're gathering together, not to remind ourselves that we're all on the same team, although we are. Verse 13 says there is a goal of our gathering together. And that goal is the knowledge of the Son of God leading you toward maturity. The text is telling us that we're coming together to grow together, to be unified, but the pathway to unity is through maturity. And the pathway to maturity is through knowledge. Knowing what God is like and who He is. So everything we've seen in this verse is designed to increase your knowledge of God. Leaders are given as gifts to the church to increase your knowledge of God. Serving in community with one another here in the local church is designed to propel you forward in knowing the Son of God. And all of this requires knowing who He is. Why is that? It's not because we're trying to produce biblical scholars. It's not because sin and Satan are going to be vanquished by crushing atheists with impeccable arguments. No. It's because the knowledge of God changes you. When you know something deeper, you love it more fully. When you know it deeper, it changes you.

So if I go home one day and bring my wife flowers, it would be reasonable for Molly to say, "This is so nice. Why are you doing that?" Well, one thing that you could say would be, "Well, you know, you're a woman and women like flowers." Men, don't say that. That's the wrong answer. Instead, we would never say something that boneheaded to our spouse. And yet, it is so easy to apply that same logic to God and to our life together in the church. Oh, well, you know, you're God. You like it when I show up. I guess I'll go on Sunday. What this text is showing us is that is not what God is interested in. God doesn't want your mindless presence on a Sunday morning. He wants your mind transformed by His presence. And that's what we're doing together. What God is saying to us right here is that when you start to really wrap your mind around who I am and what I have done in and for you, it will stop you in your tracks. God is calling us to grow. But what does growth require? Think about any other part of life. There are people in here who do cross-fit. There are people in here who've done Whole 30. There are people in here who have learned multiple languages, who have mastered skills in their jobs or in hobbies that took enormous amounts of time and skill. What does all that take? It takes repetition and it takes resistance. So if you show up and you want to exercise, you don't have one killer workout and eat the way you want for the, you know, rest of the month. That's not an

appetite for success. You've got to keep going. You've got to repeat that. In the same way you don't show up and lift a one pound dumbbell and do that for the next 20 years. No, you lift something that's a little bit heavier and you get stronger and you grow. And then you lift something else that's a little bit heavier and you get stronger and you grow. And the same thing is true of our faith. It requires repetition and it requires resistance. God is calling us to repetition in the regular gathering together weekly because we need it. The world will try and entice you in a certain direction. And every Sunday God's calling us back saying, "Orient your life. Orient your heart around this." And God's calling us to an increase in resistance. He's telling you not to be satisfied with what you think is the lowest effective dose of Jesus that will get you into heaven. He's saying to some of you, you need to join that Bible study. He's saying to some of you, you need to take 15 to 20 minutes in the morning and spend time with Me in God's word. Wherever you are, it's a half step ahead of where you currently are right now is where God wants to meet you. It's where God wants to challenge you to go because that is the place where God communicates Himself to you. And this knowledge is a gift God uses to transform you. It's a gift that God uses to change you, to conquer sin, and to annihilate satan.

And that's why we need to see not just this first command about receiving gifts, but we need to see the second command of this text. It's not just that God wants you to receive the gifts, He wants you to become the person God has made you to be through the church. Become the person God has made you to be through the church. But if we're going to become the person God has made us to be, then we have to do two things according to this passage of Scripture. And the first, is we need to resist the destructive discipleship of the devil. And look with me, this is where we see this destructive discipleship in verse 14. Chapter 4, verse 14 say,

¹⁴that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried around by, notice this, every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.

What Paul is refusing to let us lose sight of in these verses is that we're at war. Think about the language that he's using right here; cunning, deceit, resistance that wants to take you away. Now, you may hear that and you think, "Wait, I thought the Bible said that once I become a Christian, nobody can tear me away from Jesus." That's right. No one can tear you away from Jesus. But what is this text talking about? What this text means is that when you pledge your allegiance to Jesus Christ, you become a threat to satan. He knows he's lost you. But he also knows you've just joined the army that will one day crush him. That means he wants you to be as complacent and ineffective as humanly possible. And satan does that by trying to get little hooks in you trying to distract you. Sometimes even with things that are fine and good in and of themselves. Money. Work. Fun. He wants to make Jesus seem too boring or too demanding. And then you as a Christian will be less effective. So what Paul is trying to show us here, in other words, is that the devil is trying to disciple you. The devil is trying to shape your being changed every single day, little by little, think about what we've been studying in the book of Genesis. You're made in the image of God. And that means many things. But one thing that it means is that we as humans are designed to represent something. And we look like what we love. We become what we behold and what we cherish. And that's what's going on in this text. Paul is showing us that there are people who will entice the church in Ephesus and will entice the church in the Brazos Valley. Paul is showing us that there are people who will confront the church with divisiveness, with false teaching, and the church needs leaders, need community,

and needs knowledge to stand against that. Because the devil knows you are being changed every single day. And he wants to be the one who's trying to change you. So the question is, are you being shaped by Jesus through His word in the local church more than anything else? Or if you're honest, are you being shaped more by what you see on TV, what you hear on the radio, what you're absorbing from the world around us. Because one of Satan's primary tactics is to take things that are important, really important, and make them seem ultimate. More important than anything else. That can be money, it can be work, it can be politics. These things feel real because they feel immediate. If I don't have money, I can't pay the rent. If this person gets elected, think about all these things that are going to happen. So a little diagnostic question to ask yourself this morning is what really makes you feel alive? What really generates emotion deep down in your soul? And if the answer to that question is anything other than Jesus, it doesn't mean you're a bad Christian, it just means you've just recognized your weak spot. And that's good because Satan already knows what it is. What I want us to see is that Satan has no need to tempt you with murder if he can distract you with money. Satan has no need to try and stunt you by trying to get you to commit a felony when he can use Facebook or Fox News or anything in between to try and distract you and make you less effective. Remember, remember what Satan offered to Jesus. He said, "If you worship me, look out over this hillside. Worship me and I will give you everything you can see. All the money in the universe. The entire culture. All the power. All the political kingdoms." He was willing to throw it all away. And hear me. These things are important. I spent the better part of the last decade of my life fighting to combat abortion and stand for religious liberty. These things are important. But notice what this text is showing us. It's showing us what Satan fears and what he doesn't. Satan doesn't fear losing a culture. He's willing to give it all away. But what Satan fears is a church that is united and growing. Because he knows that it is the weapon that God will use to crush him and he will do anything, anything to stop it. And he will do everything in his power to make it and you less effective, more complacent, and drawn to counterfeit versions of the good life that will never actually satisfy you. That is why Jesus is saying to resist the destructive discipleship of the devil. Instead, if we're going to become the person God has made us to be, we need to pursue the total transformation of Jesus. To pursue the total transforming power of Jesus. And we see this in the last two verses of this passage. In verse 15 it says what?

¹⁵speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,

In every way. Think about the language of this text. This about the implications of these words. We have a picture of total transformation. There is not a square inch of your soul that God is not interested in changing. We're not just to grow up in our knowledge, just in our Bible memory, just in our service, but in every single aspect of our life. Because if you're a Christian, God has declared you a saint. God has declared you holy. God has declared in Christ and like Christ. And what He's doing is spending the rest of your life changing you into that which He's already declared you to be. Showing the watching world, "I have declared this person to be like Christ and look at them. I am making them into Christ even now." Jesus is forming you. But Jesus doesn't do that by waving a magic wand and making you immediately when you become a Christian a perfectly serene, perfectly holy, perfectly wonderful, never stressed out human being. No. What does he do? He says, "Take up a cross and follow me." He puts you on a path. He shapes you one step at a time with teachers and community, with knowledge. And notice the last

aspect of this transformation. Verse 15 says we're to grow up in Christ. But notice how we grow up in verse 16. Verse 16 says we grow up,

¹⁶from the whole body, joined and held together with every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

Now this is, this is really easy to miss. It feels sort of like metaphoric language. We're talking about heads and bodies and joints. What's going on here? Well, to answer that question, think about how this verse started. Jesus has ascended, He's giving gifts to the church, the first gift this passage says that we receive are pastors and teachers and leaders who are designed to give support and structure to the church. But what is the point of a joint or a ligament, some of your Bible translation might say? It's to provide structure and support to the other parts of the body. So, in the context of this passage, when we see this language of joints, held together by every joint, the joints are talking about pastors the body is equipped with. So that's what we see. So why does that matter? Well, for me, a television in my home exists for one thing which is basically to watch sports. And I watched a lot of sports in my life and heard a lot of commentary from broadcasters about athletes. You can hear on any given day, "Oh my goodness, look at that hitter. His legs are as big as tree trunks." Or, "Oh, goodness, look at that person over there. His arms look like steel cables." But there's one thing I've never really heard. "Look at that pitcher. Did you see his ankle?" Or, "Man, I saw the Rock on Instagram. Could you believe his elbow?" No. I mean, joints are not designed to call attention to themselves. Joints, when the body is working properly, are not the star of the show. Joints are simply the things that are training and holding everything else together. So why is that important? It's important because it shows us how we are being transformed. The implication of this text, please don't miss this, if Jesus is the head of the church, and if the pastors and teachers and leaders are the joints of the church, that means you are the muscle of the church. All of us together are the muscles that propel this body forward. So if the nations are going to be reached, it's not just because the body has joints, it's because all the muscles of the church are working together to go and tell the gospel to the nations. If we are going to be a church where every generation is reaching the next generation, it's going to take all the muscles of the church. And if the muscles of the church are to be strong, then they have to be exercised together the way Jesus intends. Through a life together with structure from leaders that God has given. Serving with people God has given. Strengthening people in the knowledge that God has given, that lead us to love God more deeply and to live more maturely and faithfully.

So what does that mean for us here at Central? One of the things that I'm excited to announce this morning is a plan that has been long in the works to help us do exactly that. Grow in the knowledge of God. So what I'm about to announce is one of the primary things that when I came to serve as Executive Pastor, that Pastor Phillip asked me to spend as much time as I humanly could developing, researching, and building out for the sake of this local church. Because by God's grace, we do so many things incredibly well here at Central. We have programs that are fantastic for our children, for our students. We have all sorts of outreach that go out to the entire Brazos Valley that appoint people around the world that serve missionaries that take the Gospel to the ends of the world. We have incredible community in our life groups. Incredible teaching in all sorts of things. But one of the areas where we as a staff have identified that we could do even more is by providing a venue where we can devote ourselves to deep study

and deep learning about God Himself. And that's why I am thrilled to announce the establishment of what we're going to call the Central Institute. And over the next several years, we're going to be building a permanent ministry of this church that will host everything from forums, to seminars, to core classes that are designed to reach people where they are and challenge them to grow deeper in the word of God. And right at the core of the Central Institute is what we're going to be calling The Training Program. The Training Program will launch this fall. And what it is a one year intensive program spread over two semesters that's designed to transform your understanding of Scripture and of God and even your life. Because what we have done to do that is custom design a program that will integrate the story of the Bible, the doctrines of the church, the habits and practices of what we ought to be doing as Christians to be formed by Jesus. And we're doing this, not because we're trying to create superstars. We're going this because this is what we need to do to train Christians. This is what we all need. That's the main point of this passage we studied this morning. Deep knowledge of God leads to deep love of God. And that means this program isn't for scholars, it's not for super serious Christians, this training program and anything that we'll be doing in the Central Institute is for every single person in this church. So if rolling up your sleeves and reading and studying is interesting to you, we're going to have more information about this on the Central website very soon. But we're doing this because it's clear to us that the people of this church are hungry to learn and know and love and serve God to the best of their abilities. And because this is the pattern that we see laid out in this text. Leaders equipping Christians in community while growing in the knowledge of God. And the reason why we're doing this is because when we gather together on a morning like this, when we hear the word preached, when we sing together, when we gather and we serve one another, satan doesn't just hear lessons and lyrics, he hears a drum beat. He hears a war hymn. He hears Jesus assembling an army made up of you and me. And when you run after God, when you seek to know Him more fully, let's be clear, you are doing nothing less than joining in the defeat of sin and satan and joining the victory march of the Lord Jesus Christ. That's why this text is pleading with you, receive the gifts that God has given you for the church. Become the person God has made you to be through the church. Because Jesus' strategy for completing His total annihilation of sin and satan is by fueling His church and forming His people. The question is whether you will cooperate with that strategy.

Let's pray.

Father, we thank You. We thank You for Your word. Your Word that became flesh and dwelt among us and lived and died that we might know you and live with You eternally. I know that there are people in this room this morning who are carrying unspeakable hurts. I pray that You would draw near to them. That the offer of the Gospel would welcome them. That they could know that if they look away from their sin and find their identity in the cross of Christ, You will welcome them with open arms. Father, there are people in here who need to commit their lives, who need to turn away from their sin. I pray that this text and this morning would work in all of our hearts to make us more like Jesus. Form us, fuel us, and give us love for the Savior who died for us. We pray in Jesus name. Amen.