

1Corinthians 17-11-26b

Let's resume our study now in 1 Corinthians chapter 1 and we're looking at the concept of baptism and that we have perhaps been a little too quick to make assumptions about its mention in the early days of the church. Matthew asked a question during the break about whether we have really had the same understanding of the word baptizo as it might have fallen on ears in the days when people were speaking Greek. And in the last page of the preface to his book, Blackley actually has a footnote on this, and he says, instances of other writers besides those of the New Testament may be referred to showing that the word baptism or baptize does not always involve water.

In Isaiah, in the Septuagint version, 21 verse 4, Isaiah 21.4, in the Septuagint, we read, e anomia me baptize, iniquity baptizes me. Josephus also in the wars, and it gives the chapter and verse there, says of robbers who crowded into Jerusalem, e baptizanten polon, they baptized the city. In other words, they baptized it in crime, they soaked it in crime.

I am soaked in iniquity. You could almost use the word soaked as a synonym. Diodorus Siculus uses the word, this is very small print, I apologize that I'm stumbling over it, idiotēs baptizon theis aesteris, this is Greek but it's just microscopic, to baptize private individuals in contributions.

So Diodorus Siculus says to soak to them with contributions, just immerse them. All of which instances it is manifest were without the least drop of water. So yes, it was a word that was used in a figurative sense commonly.

But I want to turn to the word of God here for a moment because we think about Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch. We think about the Samaritans, we think about the conversion of Paul and we want to quickly take a look at all of these things. If you first of all turn to Acts chapter 8, Saul in Acts chapter 8 says, Acts 8 is unconverted, he's not yet the apostle Paul.

And so he's breathing out threats and making havoc of the church in verse 3, entering every house, dragging off men and women, committing them to prison. Then you have the verse we alluded to earlier, those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word. And of course this is everywhere amongst Israelites, there's no notion that any of this is for the Gentiles as of yet, that's going to be Paul's bailiwick.

Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them. The multitude with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. This was the marker, the authentication that he had a message from God that these miraculous things were performed.

Unclean spirits came out with a loud voice from many who were possessed, many were paralyzed and lame were healed. There was great joy in the city. Certain man called Simon, previously practiced sorcery, astonished the people of Samaria claiming he was someone great.

All gave heed from the least to the greatest, said he's great, the power of God. But when they believed Philip, verse 12, as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God in the name of Jesus, both men and women were baptized. Now let's just back up a little bit and instead of assuming that they all immediately got dunked, verse 11, they heeded Philip because he had astonished them with his sorcery, I'm sure because he had astonished them with his sorceries for a long time.

But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God in the name of Jesus Christ, that's the message of the cross, right? I plead with you by the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Philip is preaching the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. They believed the message of the cross and that that is the means of entrance into the kingdom of God, right? Both men and women were baptized.

When they believed, they were baptized. It doesn't say they lined them all up and took them to the nearest body of water. It says when they believed, something happened.

They were baptized. Simon himself also believed and when he was baptized he continued with Philip and was amazed seeing the miracles and signs which were done. Now we don't know what this baptism was.

Could it have been water baptism? Could it have been spirit baptism? We don't know. So if we don't know, we need the context to tell us, right? We're just open-minded at this point. So we keep reading.

Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem, who are the apostles? Peter, Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Simon the Less, James the Less, you know remember there's double names, half of them have the same names as the other half, the other Judas and so on. Those are the eleven minus one of the Judas's that are in Matthew 28.19, right? Those are the apostles. Wait in Jerusalem until you receive spirit, that was Acts 2, right? When the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, part of the 28.19 crowd, right? Who when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit.

So what do I now know about the baptism earlier in the chapter? Must have been water baptism. If they had been baptized with the Spirit, they wouldn't need Peter and John to come down and pray for them to receive the Spirit. Where are these people? Look at verse 5, Samaria.

What kind of people live in Samaria? Mixed race, Jewish, you know the whole woman of Samaritan extraction, the woman at the well, Mount Gerizim, Mount Ebal, alternate copy of the law and all the rest of that. For as yet, verse 16, he had fallen upon none of them. Okay, I'm clear now.

Whatever that baptism was early on was not the baptism with the Spirit because the Spirit had yet fallen on none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. So Peter

and John come down, they laid hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit.

The water baptism didn't get them there. And this is a post-Pentecost water baptism. Simon the Sorcerer and all of these people who believed the preaching of Philip got dumped.

But, when the apostles hear that they have believed, they come down and lay hands on them and now they receive the Holy Spirit. Now you think about this. What age are we in? What dispensation? Church age.

Well, when they believed in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and were saved, why didn't they get the Spirit? Isn't that supposed to happen in the church age at the point of your salvation? Weren't you regenerated, indwelt, sealed, gifted, all the rest of it, the five-fold salvation ministry of the Spirit? These people did not get that until Peter and John came down and laid hands on them. What is going on? They were even water baptized and it didn't do it. What's going on? They laid hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit.

When Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money and said, let me be an apostle too. Notice Philip probably laid hands on these people like he does the Ethiopian eunuch. This is the same Philip that baptizes the Ethiopian eunuch.

What's stopping me that I be baptized? Philip says, well, you want to be baptized, I'll baptize you, and he dunked him. But the Spirit falls on Philip and whisks him away. It doesn't do anything to the eunuch.

Why? The eunuch did not have apostolic hands laid on him to receive the Spirit. The Ethiopian eunuch didn't speak in tongues, didn't suddenly have any miraculous efforts, but the Holy Spirit yanked up Philip and planted him in a different place. So Simon saw through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given.

He offered them money saying, give me this power also that anyone upon whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit. Peter says to him, your money perish with you because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money. Not the Spirit purchased with money.

The gift of imparting the Spirit, baptizing with the Spirit, by touch. You thought that this that was given to the disciples who became apostles by the Lord Jesus himself could be purchased. Simon's not asking for the Holy Spirit.

He's asking for the power to confer the Holy Spirit. Your money perish with you. You thought the gift of God, the honor of being the means by which someone receives the Holy Spirit could be bought with money.

You've neither part nor portion in this matter. Who's got part and portion? It's Maros, by the way. Part, portion.

Maros. You've neither part nor portion in this matter, for your heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent of this your wickedness.

Pray to God, if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you. You are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity. Simon answered and said, Pray to the Lord for me, that none of the things which you have spoken may come upon me.

When they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, they being Peter and John, they returned to Jerusalem. Why is that? As you go, make disciples, teaching them, baptizing them. Peter and John do exactly what the Lord told them to do.

They baptize them, they lay hands on them, they receive the Holy Spirit, and they teach them. When they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans. Then right after that you have Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch, and if you look at the end of that chapter, the eunuch says in verse 36, See, water! What hinders me from being baptized? Philip says, If you believe with all your heart, you may.

That's not in all of the texts. He answered and said, I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He commanded the chariot to stand still.

Philip and the eunuch went down to the water and he baptized them. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more. Philip ended up in Azotus.

It doesn't say that the eunuch received the Holy Spirit there. In fact, it says that the Holy Spirit seemed to have come upon Philip in a mighty way. Then you have the Damascus Road in chapter 9. Turn the page over, you know what happened, Saul is blinded, hard for thee to kick against the pricks, go on to Damascus, look at verse 10.

There was a disciple of Damascus named Ananias. To him the Lord said in a vision, Ananias. He said, Hear my, Lord, arise, go to the street called Straight, inquire at the house of Judas, for one called Saul of Tarsus.

For behold, he is praying. In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias coming in and putting his hands on him that he might receive his sight. Ananias said, Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he has done.

He has authority to bind all who call on your name. The Lord says, Go, he is a chosen vessel of mine to bear my name before Gentiles, kings and the children of Israel. I will show him what great things he must suffer for my name's sake.

What town is this? Damascus. Where are the 11 apostles? Where did Peter and John just return to after preaching in Samaria? Jerusalem. So Paul has had a confrontation with the Lord Jesus Christ.

He is going to be the next and final apostle. Who is going to baptize him? Peter and John are in Jerusalem. He doesn't say, wait at the street called Straight and you will see a man called Peter come to baptize you.

Come to lay hands on you. What does it say? There is a man called Ananias that is going to do that. So verse 17, Ananias went his way, entered the house, laying his hands on him.

He said, Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, notice they had no prior correspondence about this. God has to tell Ananias there is a guy there that has been struck blind. And he says, well if it's Saul, what I've heard about him, I didn't hear that Jesus talked to him on the road.

I heard that he's got authority to lock me up. Who appeared to you on the road as you came has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit. What two things has Ananias been sent to do? What does he say? The Lord has sent me to do what? Lay hands on you that you may do what? Receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Immediately we read into this that Ananias does lay his hands on him. What two things happen when Ananias touches Saul? Fell from his eyes something like scales and received his sight and he arose and was baptized. He arose baptized.

What two things was Ananias going to do? Give him his sight, impart the Holy Spirit. When Ananias touches him, what two things are said to have happened? He received his sight and he's baptized. If you line those up in parallel, being baptized is receiving the Holy Spirit.

When he had received food, he was strengthened. You get the idea, would they have hauled him down to the nearest body of water and dunked him and then brought him back and given him food? He's been prostrate for days, blind. But when he stands up, he's baptized evidently, right there and then.

We just assume they hauled him off to a pond or a stream. But if you look at it in parallel, which is the common Semitic way of talking, look at your parallel disticts in the Psalms and the Proverbs. So, Brother Saul, the Lord has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Immediately he received his sight and he was baptized, i.e. filled with the Holy Spirit. So, you have Cornelius, you have Peter's vision in Acts chapter 10. Arise Peter, kill and eat, what God has cleansed you must not call common.

This now means that the door has been opened to the Gentiles and the Gentiles are now able to receive what has previously only been, and remember the eunuch, the Ethiopian doesn't seem to be a non-Israelite, fully-fledged member of the church just yet. He's reading Isaiah. The Christological import is explained by Philip and he gets dunked, but this would essentially be the baptism of John, right? Philip does the baptism of John for the eunuch.

So the eunuch doesn't join the church with Philip because the gospel has not yet been opened to the Gentiles. But with Cornelius, a devout man who feared God, an angel appears to him and he says, Your prayers and alms have come up before God, send for Simon, whose surname is Peter. It doesn't say send for Philip, send for Peter.

He's lodging with Simon the Tanner. So he calls him. The next day as they went on their journey during their city, Peter went on the housetop to pray and he gets the vision of the sheet.

And so he goes and sees Cornelius, a centurion, a just man who fears God, but is not a Jew. Peter meets him. Verse 28, you know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company.

Go to one of another nation, but God has shown me I should not call any man common or unclean. I came as soon as I could. He preaches to Cornelius' household.

Verse 44, Acts 10-44, While Peter was still speaking these words to this Gentile household, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. That didn't happen when Philip preached this identical message in Samaria. Peter and John had to come for the Holy Spirit to come.

It didn't happen to the eunuch when Philip preached the word to him, and even when he was baptized in water. The Holy Spirit came because Peter was there. Peter preached the word.

The Holy Spirit fell. Those at the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. This is a first.

And it's Peter, one of the Matthew 28, 19, and 20 guys, that is the instrumentality by which it happens. Even Paul is circumcised the 8th day in Hebrews when he gets it in the previous chapter. Those at the circumcision heard them speak with tongues, magnify God.

Peter answered, Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Spirit, just as we? He commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord, and asked them to stay a few days. In the previous case, the Samaritans were baptized with water, and then when Peter and John came, they received the Spirit. Here, Peter comes, they receive the Holy Spirit, and then they get baptized.

The water baptism part of it seems to be incidental, or it can either be before or after in these days, but it doesn't have anything to do with the baptism of the Spirit. So, then they have the, Bryce Peter Killeneat, he talks about that again in 11, verse 16, I remembered the word of the Lord, he said, John and Dede baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit. If therefore God gave them the same gift as he gave us when we believed, who was I to withstand God? When they heard these things, they became silent.

God has granted to the Gentiles repentance with a view toward life. Flip a few pages over, and you have the Apostle Paul, you have the Jerusalem Decree, you have the ongoing ministry, you have the ministry at Corinth, actually, in chapter 18, and you eventually have the case where

Paul encounters those who have received only the baptism of John in chapter 19. It happened while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus, finding some disciples.

He said, did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed? Acts 19.2. Did you receive the Holy Spirit? Why is Paul asking that question? He knows they believed because he found them as disciples. You believe in Jesus? Oh yes. So what's his question? Did you receive the Holy Spirit? We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.

He said to them, well, into what were you baptized? Into what were you baptized? Into John's baptism. Paul said, John baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying that they should believe on him who would come after him, that is on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, and when Paul laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.

So Paul's concern is, have you been baptized with the Spirit? That's the baptism that counts. Now, why does it come when Paul is there? He's the 12th apostle. You apostles, as a sign of authority for your message, will be able to impart the Holy Spirit by touch.

Paul preaches Christ to them as the fulfillment of the prophecies of John the Baptist and the other Old Testament prophecies, and the Holy Spirit came upon them. They were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Even when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them.

The men were 12 in all. So, here's the upshot. It can be argued that while there is water baptism accompanying the first generation in the church, both Israelite and Gentile, both Jewish and Gentile, that it is more a concomitant, a teaching tool, a reminder, an identification with John the Baptist anticipating the Lord Jesus with its significance of, I'm leaving my old life.

The Jewish mikvah, everybody knew what that represented. I'm leaving the old and entering into the new. You didn't become Jewish because you went through the mikvah.

This was sort of a committal, a public avowal, kind of like taking a vow. Shave your head. You could go through the mikvah.

There's a number of ways you could let the public know. You could wear sackcloth and ashes and let people know that you were on a particular course. You're not required to wear sackcloth and ashes.

You weren't required to shave your head. You weren't required to take a vow. In the Old Testament we saw Friday night, you weren't required to dedicate something to God.

But if you decided to, here is the way to do it. So, there is water baptism being practiced, no question. Philip does it for the eunuch.

Paul probably did it here for these at Ephesus, although you can argue also that the baptism and the laying on of hands and the Holy Spirit is all the same thing. And maybe he didn't baptize. And Paul says, I didn't come to baptize.

And honestly, Paul did not even come to lay his hands on and impart the Holy Spirit, which may be what he's alluding to because people would say, well, I'm a better Christian than you because Paul laid his hands on me and I got the Spirit. Which would be a more powerful argument than Paul dunked me in the water. Well, Apollos dunked me.

Well, Peter dunked me. If Peter laid hands on some of them and they received the Spirit, if Paul laid hands on them and they received the Spirit, I'm better than you. I got dunked and you only got sprinkled.

The guy that did it was a higher rank than yours. But what it does do, I think, is certainly put water baptism of whatever sort into perspective. Paul says, Christ did not send me to baptize.

He sent me to preach the cross. And nothing should make the cross of Christ of no effect. And so we do greatly err not knowing the Scriptures or the power of God if we let an issue.

Remember, Jesus used that very phrase when he chastised the Pharisees and Sadducees for arguing about resurrection. And he said, you err greatly not knowing the Scriptures or the power of God. The woman was married, seven guys, whose will she be in the resurrection? He says, you don't know the Scriptures.

First of all, Scripture will answer your question if you look at it closely enough. But secondly, why have you divided into parties here? You are part of that threefold leadership that is supposed to be shepherding the flock of God. There is civil leadership, there is priestly leadership, and there is teaching leadership.

You guys are the teachers and you argue among yourselves and the sheep are scattered. He looked at the people and said, they are like sheep with no shepherd. Because the spiritual leadership of the day was embroiled in controversy.

Why aren't you looking to the poor? Why aren't you doing your job? So he had the same idea here. And Paul is going to go on, as we go back now to 1 Corinthians, to indict the Corinthians for not being sensitive to the poor. That's going to be a big part of the argument a little bit later in the letter.

You're saying, I'm of Paul, I'm of Paulus, I'm of Cephas. And there's people going hungry in your congregation. What's the matter with you? You're straining the unity and then you are sinning against one another.

You are doing harm to the body of Christ. You're dishonoring the body of Christ. So let's go back now to 1 Corinthians and continue with Paul.

Verse 18, the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. Why does he say, us who are being saved? And it is a present tense. I thought we were saved at the point of belief.

Once and for all saved. Those of us who are being saved. Well, you remember in the first chapter of one of his other letters, which I picked the wrong one here.

Paul in Galatians chapter 1 verse 4 says, as he did in this letter, Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ who gave himself for our sins that he might deliver us from this present evil age according to the will of our God and Father. Deliver us from, out from, ek, this present evil age. Save us from this present evil age.

Well, when we believe in Jesus Christ we're not in an ejection seat and we get sprung out of the present evil age. We are delivered in it and through it on a continuing basis. And you get the idea that that's what he's talking about here.

To us who are being saved. Those of us who are being delivered out of this present evil age. What's evil about every present age? It's the world, the flesh, and the devil.

It is subjectivity. It is eyes on self, eyes on people, eyes on circumstances, eyes on acquisition, eyes on false measures of success. The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing.

Are perishing. Doesn't mean they're at the point of death. They're perishing.

They are partaking in an ongoing basis of death. Change of mind away from works of death and faith toward God. You can be a part of that which is perishing.

Peter argues in his letter that what kind of people ought you to be knowing that this earth and everything in it is going to be burned up and it's going to melt with unquenchable fire. The message of the cross. Lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect.

For the message of the cross. The cross of Christ is inextricably bound up with the message. That's why the cross is the universal symbol of Christianity.

Because the cross conveys the message. It is a message of being sacrificial toward self and beneficial toward others in the ultimate sense with the Lord Jesus who gave himself for us that we might be united with God. That message that there needs to be a redeemer, there needs to be a mediator, is foolishness to those who are perishing.

Why are they perishing? They assign no weight to the notion that there is a need. That there is something wrong. They are perishing and they don't even know it.

And so the message of the cross, there needs to be a reconciliation with God and it is a costly... Why the cross? Why does it have to be so bloody? This is what you often hear from atheists. If I was going to consider your silly Christian faith and this whole bloody God who made the

Israelites slaughter untold numbers of animals in the Old Testament for his own glory. He just wants to see blood, blood, blood everywhere.

Guts, chop them up, burn them up. It's costly, it's nonsensical. He just has them, not even just the animals, but the best of the animals.

This is anti-Darwinian. Their flocks and herds are going to be weak and anemic because they take all the best ones and slaughter them. This God is just nonsensically silly.

And what's this whole idea of sacrifice? If you get into your vegetarians and your vegans and they're saying, you know, I could never go with this God because he's so insensitive to animals. I'd look up somebody, I was reading something and they said, well, you know, why do you kill and eat sentient creatures? And I was thinking sentient, that's like a man from Mars and he can think like us. And I thought, well, sentient means they've got a brain and thoughts and abstract reasoning and so on.

But I looked up sentient in the dictionary because I hadn't looked at it in a while. And it just means capable of feeling. It means sentient, having senses.

Well, for crying out loud, a snail's got senses. An earthworm's got senses. Touch the end of an earthworm, he'll move.

So an earthworm is sentient. I always thought sentient meant, you know, you could debate the thing. You could talk to it and argue with it and it would talk back.

Anyway, your vegans, vegetarians get really angry at God and there are very few, other than for purely dietary reasons, that don't have a big beef with God, if I can use that term, over the sacrificial system. It's cruel. SPCA would be all over you for just wantonly, and they'll show graphics.

Look at these Muslims and they're still doing sheep sacrifices. Watch. I defy anybody, who's anybody, to watch the butchering of an animal.

Watch as their flesh is sliced and the blood gushes out. Watch as their entrails leave their bodies. Well, of course it's gruesome.

We have a natural aversion to that. But this is a direct appeal to emotion. Let's think on these things, not emote on these things.

But there's the argument, why is God so cruel? And how can you slaughter sentient creatures in God's name and eat them? So ultimately, the ultimate expression of this, why argue about animals? Look at Jesus on the cross. Why does God require that a man be murdered to forgive sin? People say, you know, if God's God, He can do anything He wants. Why doesn't He just forgive sin? Just arbitrarily say, sin? Forgive it.

People? Reconcile. Everything is good. It's all okay.

Why the blood and the suffering? Why the cross? The message of the cross is of suffering and of penalty. Severe, ultimate penalty for sin. Why? God's God? All of this is unnecessary.

I, in my infinite human wisdom, judge God to be silly. What a waste. What a waste of animals.

What a corrupt and twisted God it must be that would require murder and death and bloodshed. Let me remind you of two things. First of all, in the perfection of the Garden of Eden, where there was no sin, how many animals died? How many animals served as food? How much bloodshed was there in the garden? In the millennial kingdom, other than for remembrance sacrifice, what am I trying to think of? Memorial sacrifice, looking back to the cross, ritual sacrifices in Ezekiel's temple, what is the diet going to be? When did the diet change to include slaughtering and eating animals? After the flood.

What was the flood for? To show that the wickedness of man had arisen as a stench in God's nostrils. The imagination of his heart was only evil all day long. And God said, I'm not going to destroy the earth again by a flood, but what I am going to do is have you eat animals.

Because the eating of animals is a reminder to you of your sin. You have to kill to survive. Something has to die so that you can live.

That's the message. Something has to die so that you can live. Why is that? Why does something have to die so that you can live? Did you know that no tree in the garden died so that Adam and Eve could live? The trees produced fruit, and it didn't cost the tree anything.

Trees sustained. Adam is there. It's a symbiosis.

Adam tends the garden. The garden feeds Adam. It's all good.

There's no harm, no foul, no loss. It's mutually beneficial. Why do we eat meat? It is a reminder that something has to die so that we can live.

I'm here to tell you that if you get too high on your horse and start saying, nothing is going to die so that I live, what are you going to think about Christ? Christ doesn't need to die so that I can live. They are of a peace. The animal sacrifices picture.

By the way, remember the peace offering, the fellowship meal, which was both a sacrifice and a meal? And some argue that every animal that was slain in Israel for food was prepared as a sacrifice and was treated as a sacrifice. Not all sacrificial animals were meals, but there are some who claim from Scripture that all meals were sacrifices and that there was the thought, kind of like how the Native Americans are portrayed, well, I pray as I eat Mr. Deer here to the great spirit, and I'm sorry that you had to give your life for mine, but it's the way it is. It is a reminder.

It humbles us. We are destructive just in being alive. And anybody who thinks they're not had better be a full-time vegetarian farmer who uses no animal products for fertilizer because all of

your vegans and vegetarians, just so you know, the soy, the cotton that is grown so that you've got clothes, that stuff's all fertilized, not with fertilizer that they go out here in the hills of Oklahoma and gather one pile by one pile and slowly fill up a truck.

You know where they go to get the fertilizer that grows all of the food that feeds the vegans? It all comes from CAFOs, Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations. That's where the concentrated fertilizer comes from, and you have to search the earth to find any vegetable matter that isn't grown using organic animal fertilizer that comes from CAFOs. You're not extricating yourself from responsibility for cruelty to animals.

In fact, you're better off eating grass-fed beef that has lived a wonderful life, died a quick painless death, in most cases, and had its day in the sun to graze. I love driving around the countryside and seeing all of these happy cows and they get a hammer to the head and they're done. It's wrong to be cruel to animals.

Someone who is cruel to animals will be cruel in other areas as well, just as an area of corruption or an area of evil in one area of sexual sin will manifest itself in other areas. These things cannot be contained. You can't take fire in your bosom and not catch other things on fire.

You're going to get burned in other ways. Cruelty is a sin. Cruelty to animals is a sin.

We want, obviously, to not be cruel to food animals anymore. I think it's a good idea to look for cage-free eggs or free-range chickens and such because I don't think it's right. We passed a CAFO on our way to Arizona and back in West Texas, and that is a crime.

I wrote a letter. I don't believe in just looking at something and saying, that's a crime. If I see it, I want somebody to know about it, and I want to exert what small influence I have to make a difference.

Those CAFO things are evil. No animal should be treated that way. Standing there in their own filth, water, stench, there's nothing right about that.

To the extent that I'm able to discern where my food comes from, I don't want it to come from there. I don't want to support those people. I hope they all go bankrupt and go out of business.

Somebody that puts a chicken in a cage and doesn't let it walk around and it's all deformed and all it does is pop out eggs and then it's thrown on a heap and ground up into something that's fed to other animals, that's wrong. To the extent that we can have an influence, we ought to argue for change. But to the extent that we are in this world, we are going to create destruction.

We have to kill to live. We kill plants. We kill animals.

If you're going to grow plants, you're going to kill animals. Field mice, gophers, the owls that

prey on them, all of the life. There's people that are worried about the insects.

Well, you know how many insects you kill with pesticides trying to get your crops to grow? I'm sorry, but if you're in this world, you are going to be an agent of death. You don't want to do it any more than you have to and you do not want that death to be cruel. But why? Why the cross? What is the message of the cross? Something has to die so that you can live.

And all of life is a reminder of that. And it should humble us and it should take us to the Lord Jesus, who, through his death, gave us life. And every time I tear into a big juicy steak that I've just grilled, I am reminded there was an animal that was once alive walking the earth as I am now alive walking the earth.

It gave its life that I could live. And when I say the blessing, that thought travels through my mind. It's just like my spiritual life.

Jesus had to die so that I could live. And rather than try to distance myself from that thought, it's like the traditional celebration of the Lord's table. If you decide that you want to partake of that ritual, not a thing in the world wrong with it.

I would never divide over somebody taking communion or not taking communion. But if you partake of that observance and you think about the bread being crushed between your teeth, unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood, Jesus said in John, and many people couldn't follow him after that because they couldn't reconcile themselves to the idea that something would have to die so that they could live. Think about it.

This is the meaning of baptism. We are united with Christ in his death so that we can be raised to new life like his. If you try to distance yourself from the suffering and death, you're missing the message of the cross.

It should unite us. It should bind us together. It should strengthen the unity of the spirit and the bond of peace.

That's the message that Paul is prepping the Corinthians for, and he's still really in his introduction here in chapter one. So we'll continue this study next time, but let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for the wonderful truths that you reveal to us about the Lord Jesus Christ, our savior, our mediator, our high priest.

He is so many things to us. Such blessings come to us in and through him. We pray that God, the Holy Spirit, will make our hearts sensitive to that reality, that as a result, we can present ourselves a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable in your sight, which is our reasonable service, and that we can not be conformed to the world but transformed as our minds are renewed in looking at these truths, and that we can discern your will in our individual hearts and lives, in our corporate and group thoughts and testimony before the world, that the light of the gospel will shine from us and draw others to you through the Lord Jesus.

We pray all these things in Jesus' name. Amen.