

1Corinthians 17-12-31b

Let's pick up our study now in 1 Corinthians chapter 2, and this ought to be something of interest to us because we are immersed in this conflict of ideas to a huge extent. All media in education, on the internet, in entertainment seems to be, I'm sure there's some godly material, but most of it seems bent on undermining, if not outright destroying, Christian faith and the foundations of it. And as I said in the first session, the technique is a common one.

If you can't handle a problem or if you can't address a problem, then you define away the problem. I've told you years ago, when I was going to seminary, there was a big debate raging about whether or not, in terms of the new dispensationalism, if Jesus was already in heaven on the throne of the kingdom or if that is still future. And this new dispensationalism came in and had a lot of new ideas and was a break from what had been traditional for over 100 years.

And so some seminary professors were on one side and some were on the other, and everybody was looking to the school for the answer. Well, what is it? Are we classic dispensationalists or are we new dispensationalists? And a new president came to the school and he said, you know what? There is no debate. There is no question.

We're not saying anything, yay or nay. And so everybody was just free to go their own way. They said, the debate is not something we're going to address.

And so do what you want. We have no position. And it was extremely anticlimactic because here's an opportunity to say, you know, there is an answer in Scripture.

We are the best qualified people on the planet to figure it out. Let's go to the Scriptures. Let's search the Scriptures and see if these things are so.

And instead it was, eh, every man for himself. We're not going to take it up. And so when it comes to morality, are certain practices and certain lifestyles moral or immoral? Are certain choices moral or immoral? What does modern society say? It's not a moral question.

There is no yes, it's right or no, it's wrong. There is no issue. If you make an issue out of it, there's something wrong with you.

We just define it away. And questions of origins, well, we're just going to talk about how evolution happens. We're not going to address origin.

Where life came from, not a part of evolution. If you're talking evolution, you're not talking about where the life came from, just how it developed. So we don't have to answer that question.

It's not a part of our ethos. So you just shove it away. You ignore it.

There are people who suspect that maybe they've got something deeply wrong with them.

Little clues and dashboard lights go off in their physical body. And they just say, you know what? There is no problem.

And they just turn a blind eye. And, you know, it gets them later. But there is a sort of ignoring and a refusal to address things.

It's like Pam Tillis, the queen of denial. You just, it's not there. There's nothing wrong with what I do.

There's nothing wrong with how I act. There's nothing wrong with my lifestyle choices. And there's something wrong with you if you bring up the question.

The problem is with you. It isn't that there's anything wrong with society or the way children are being raised or anything else in our culture. It's Christians that are the problem.

Christians need to go. They're the ones that keep making an issue out of this, you know, black and white, right and wrong, fornication, adultery, pornography, whatever it may be, that you've got the problem. Just stop talking about that stuff and then there is no problem.

Well, in chapter 2, Paul says, your faith should not be in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. So the Jews are looking for the power of God and Paul says, they're not going to get a sign. And we're not going to answer the questions of the people who are the Greeks who want wisdom.

Is this a contradiction? He says, you know, the Jews want a sign and the Greeks want wisdom. The implication being they're not going to get that. But here he says, your faith should be in the power of God.

Well, if God didn't give a sign, then what is your faith in? What kind of power is it in? In other words, what sign do you have? What sustains your faith? Why are you a believer? That would be an interesting paragraph to write. I believe in Jesus because... It might not be that easy a question to put an answer to. What does Paul say? Your faith is not in wisdom, reason, argument, evidence, preponderance of facts that you've garnered, but it's in the power of God.

What power? What is the power of God? Well, it's not a sign like parting seas and healing and raising people with physical maladies, right? So what is this power that our faith should be in and is in? It is the miracle that God does in our heart, in our soul. And we recognize this. We see a difference in ourselves.

Now some of us were saved at such a young age, we don't have a lot of previous history to say, I used to be in Egypt and now I'm on the road to Canaan. You know, the kids that were born during the 40 years wandering, they didn't have a memory of slavery in Egypt and oppression and so on. But their parents told them about it.

They had vivid recollections. Here's the story of our family and what we did in Egypt and now

we've gone to the promised land and some of us are blessed that we didn't have to travel 40 miles of bad road before we got saved. But you still recognize the remnants because God has begun to save us, but we are not fully saved, are we? And every time our corrupt nature asserts itself, every time we make really selfish, sinful choices, it's the slaves that are saved mentality.

It's an experience of the past. You don't have to remember, well, before I was saved I was a horrible person. Any time I forget my salvation, any time I choose to abandon what God has done for me, I am that person again.

And we who have been delivered from sin, Paul says in another place over in Romans, why should we go back to it? Why should the dog return to its vomit? You ate something that was bad. That was a bad choice. Anybody that is a dog owner has seen that the dog made a bad choice, ate something, up it came.

But if you're not careful, they'll go try to reconsume it. We're supposed to be slightly smarter than that. If we've been delivered from something awful, we shouldn't be trying to go back to it.

But every time we fail, it is a reminder that we have an option. We don't persist in failure. We don't live in it.

We're not victimized by it. We're not trapped in it. We avail ourselves of God's grace.

We acknowledge our sins. He is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us and to restore us to living in the light and having fellowship with Him. That's your 1 John 1.7 and 1 John 1.9. And so we know the difference.

We know what it is like to be a victim of our own failures and our sins as well as any of us are also occasionally victimized by the fallen nature and the sins of others. And we see it. But we have a choice.

We can live in the light. We can walk in the light. We can go to our Father and receive these wonderful gifts of grace.

That is God's power. That is what sustains our faith because we have experiential knowledge that is better than any parting of the sea, any healing of the blind, any momentary. You know, you can see magicians do this stuff all the time.

Hello there, I'm David Copperfield. Watch this. Here's that street magician guy that picks up a dead bird.

Seemingly he's just passing by and here's a dead bird under a tree and he picks it up and blows on it and throws it in the air and it flies off. I can't remember that guy's name. Chris Angel.

He used to have a little program on. He was kind of like a tattooed, pierced magician. He's got a funny hairdo.

He also levitates. He flies around and you watch him and he's in midair. He's like the ascended Christ.

He's just between heaven and earth, floating around and people are awed. How did he do that? But nobody believes that Chris Angel can actually fly. Nobody believes that he actually took a dead, wormy bird and breathed on it and brought it to life.

We know that our senses can be fooled and appearances can be one thing but in our heart of hearts we know reality is something else, right? But the power of God to change our hearts and the hearts of those in our periphery is observable and repeatable and testable. That power is not something that you can argue with when you experience it in your own life. That's what Paul is talking about here.

If you're not having that, if there's no real difference when you are either a victim of or a perpetrator of sin and if your days continue and there's no real difference in that day and the day that you selflessly went and helped somebody do a thing, you need to go back and revisit the roots of your faith because this is what Paul is talking about. Your faith should not be in the wisdom of sin but in the power of God. And if God's power is not manifest in your life, God's not in your life.

God can't be there without there being power. It is the power of God for deliverance. Romans 1.16, I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ.

It is the power of God with a view toward, eis, unto, looking at deliverance, salvation, sozo, salvation, to save in Greek. No point being a Christian if it's a culture, if you just want to wear crosses and put fish on the back of your car, if you like the squeaky clean fellowship of people who don't cuss. Being saved, remember what he said back in chapter 1, we talked about this a little bit on the break, to those who are being saved in verse 18, it is an ongoing deliverance and it's not complete.

Why do you think God leaves us here? To sin. Once we accept Christ, we ought to just eject. There ought to be a giant spring under us and bang, we're in glory.

Okay. But we're not. We're here.

And we are allowed to continue to rub up against corruption and sin, both ours and that of other people. Why? Because we see the power of God to deliver us out of it every day. Every day.

All the time. Our sin, other people's sin. Personal sin, the sin that is endemic to the world of people.

Cultural, communication wise, media wise, what you perceive all around you. It's everywhere and yet the power of God is greater. It is the power of God that is the focus of our faith.

And so at the end of the day, what are we talking about? Look at what God has done. Not, we made society better. I tied a finger around my string and it helped me remember not to do a bad thing today.

I repeated to myself the mantra, every day in every way I'm getting better and better. I'm okay. You're okay.

Let's have accountability. Let's just get together and review our thoughts and we'll help each other get better. That would be boasting of the flesh, right? Look at how I made something better.

We glory in the cross because of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, God's power enters our lives. You can't logic somebody into that. You have to be looking for it and when you find it, you have, dare I say it, the experience of it.

It is not just gnosis, it is epi-gnosis. It is experiential practical knowledge. It makes a difference in my life.

My heart is changed. The hearts of people around me are changed. Skeptical, scornful, unbelieving world is never going to get that.

Oh yeah, yeah, sure. That's what you think. Well, you're not going to convince them of something that only you can see.

It's the old illustration I always give. Take somebody blind from birth. You go to them and try to explain to them what the color green is.

If you haven't seen green ever in your life, somebody trying to tell you what green is, you just have no ability, no frame of reference. There's no way you can convey to somebody blind from birth what a particular color is. You can say it's vivid, it's the color of life.

Tell them the difference between green and purple, between chartreuse and violet. Explain that to somebody who has never experienced color. It can't be done.

You cannot explain it. Now people can observe the change and that can be a more powerful witness. The wife that is a believer can win her husband without a word because he sees what she can't really even describe.

He sees the change. He sees the difference. He sees the peace.

He sees the power. Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks you a reason for what? The hope that is in you. Now, what kind of hope? Why would somebody ask me a reason for my hope? What kind of hope would it have to be? It would have to be a hope they don't have, right? I hope I get something good for Christmas.

Well, everybody's hoping that. I hope I stay healthy. I hope I keep my job.

I hope things turn out well. I hope I have a happy day. Why would somebody ask you a reason for your hope? You've got something I can't seem to find.

There is something about you. Why do you have this peace? Why do you have this stability? Why do you have this optimism? Why do you have this ability to work through great difficulty? And it just crushes me. I see hopelessness.

You look at the same thing, and you've got strength. You've got power in your life. Where is this power coming from? You say, the Lord Jesus is my Savior.

God is my Father. I'm living on a plane that isn't defined by my circumstances, not even defined by my own failures. I've got a fresh environment of existence, and my Father in Heaven loves me.

The Lord Jesus Christ died to save me and has connected me with eternal life, and I think it's great. Things are good now, and they're going to be better in the ages to come. God's got it all in His hands, and my faith is in Him, not just to save me, but to keep me.

That's His power in my life. You share that with somebody because they are looking for that, and when they walk through that door, now they are going to experience power, and they are going to see the transcendent wisdom of God. But you can't put the caboose in front of the engine.

It doesn't run backwards. That comes first. This is Paul's whole point.

But he talks about those who are perishing versus those who are being saved in verse 18. Those who are perishing don't see it. They are perishing.

The word there is from *apolumi*. I want to talk a little bit about that word because the world is passing away. There's a connected word that John uses called, it's a compound word, it's the preposition *para* which means alongside in Greek like parallel, paralegal, the person that stands by a lawyer helps them, a paramedic, *para*, alongside, and *ago* means to go.

Ago is kind of like *halak* in Hebrew. You're traveling. You're walking typically.

So to walk beside or it comes to walk past, to go in the sense of you're here but you're leaving. That's what they used to say to pretty girls. I hate to see you go but I love to watch you leave or something like that.

Leaving in the sense that you will soon be gone. These two words are used for the cosmos. You have God loving the world which is the world of people in John 3.16, the cosmos of people.

God so loved the world. It's not that he loved the planet *per se*. But there is also the use of cosmos to talk about the fallen world, the world that we are supposed to not be conformed to.

Be not conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, Romans

12.2. James talks about this in James 1. Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this. What? We're all believers. We're steeped in the word of God.

We've studied it for years. So if somebody said, I heard that the Bible says that pure and undefiled religion before God is defined in the Bible. So what's the rest of that verse? This would be something we should probably practice, right? Pure and undefiled religion.

What is pure and undefiled religion according to James? Remember? If you're salvation dependent on answering that question, well, Sam, before I let you through the burly gates into glory, what is pure and undefiled religion? Answer the question and you win the big prize. What is it? James 1.27. Oddly, to visit orphans and widows in their trouble and to keep oneself unspotted from the world. Seriously? Pure and undefiled religion before God is to help little old ladies and babies and don't be spotted by the world.

That's what it says. What does it mean? It says to visit orphans and widows in their trouble. What is this? By this all men shall know that you are my disciples, that you what? This one's easier.

What did Jesus say? By this all men shall know that you are my disciples, that you what? Love one another. If there's a lady that needs help because she's a widow, if there's an orphan that needs help because they've got no parents to care for them, what do you do? This is not visiting in the sense of, hi there, I've come to stay. This is to come help.

You're outward looking. You are loving one another. This is a metaphorical allusion to love your neighbor as yourself.

Love one another, right? And what's the other part? To keep oneself unspotted from the world. Now is this the world that God loved when he sent Jesus to die? How do you get spotted by the world? This is not reconnaissance. Keep yourself unknown to the world.

You haven't been spotted because you're in defilade. You're under camouflage. It's not unspotted by the world.

It's unspotted from the world. What is it to be spotted by the world? If this is pure religion and undefiled in the eyes of God, we better know what this is, right? Romans 12, 1 and 2, I beseech you brethren by the mercies of God that you do what? Present your bodies a living sacrifice holy and acceptable. Okay, we know that in the Old Testament these lambs and goats and oxen and so on could be blemished.

They could be defiled. They could have touched something. They could be in some way disqualified.

What is it to be spotted? What is it to be blemished? What is it to be disqualified as a sacrifice to present yourself before God? What is that? I would guess that it has something to do with sin, right? It would be some contamination that exists in the world that should not be a part of me.

We are to be in the world, in the cosmos but not of it. So how do I identify the parts of the world that spot me, that blemish me, that defile me? How do I know? Is it okay to be on Facebook but not okay to be on MySpace because MySpace defiles me, Facebook does not? Is it okay to text but not to tweet? What is it? The world does all kinds of things.

The world watches television. If I watch TV, am I spotting myself? Television is largely governed by the world. The Internet is largely governed and all of the detritus that floats like flotsam and comes to the shore like jetsam.

You do know the difference between flotsam and jetsam, right? Flotsam floats. Jetsam was jettisoned and it washes up on the shore subsurface type. Flotsam you can see.

Jetsam sometimes you can't see. Flotsam and jetsam of the world. So how do I know if I'm being spotted? This would be a handy thing to know.

Judgment is coming. You do know we're all going to stand before the judgment seat of Christ. We're supposed to take every thought captive for Christ.

So should my thoughts be the thoughts of the world? How thoughty do I have to be? Should I just be thinking scripture all day long and never engage, never discuss, never watch, never observe, never listen? What is it? Pure religion and undefiled is to keep yourself unspotted from the world and to focus on benefit to others. Love, sacrificial to self, beneficial to others. Jesus said, as I have loved you, you should love one another.

Adulterers and adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Same book, James chapter 4 verse 4. James 4.4. You perverts, you prostitutes, James says. Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmyship with God? So to be unspotted from the world, I need to not be friends with it. What does it mean to have friendship with the world? If I'm friends with the world, I am an enemy of God.

Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God, wants to be friends with the world. How does worldly friendship work? What cements a friendship in the world? Well, I like how you make me feel. I feel comfortable in your presence.

You and I like the same things. We do the same things. We are similar.

We share this similar interest. There are a lot of friendships where people like to sit around and backbite and talk about whoever is not present, engage in character assassination and gossip and try to lift themselves up by tearing others down. That's a worldly basis of friendship.

Well, I have failings and I can't keep from getting drunk on the weekends and neither can you, so we're birds of a feather and we flock together. Worldly pursuits, things that the ends thereof are the ways of death, even though they may seem right at the time, to be impulsive, to be compulsive. Oh, isn't it fun and daring to shoplift? Isn't it fun and daring to commit acts of vandalism? Isn't it fun to break the traffic laws? These are obvious things, right? What's not so

obvious? Friendship with the world, enemyship of God.

1 John 2, verses 15-17 helps us understand it. Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, all of this is Cosmos, and this is wild because Cosmos is in John 3.16. How does John 3.16 start? Everybody say it.

For God so loved the world. Say it again. For God so loved the world.

1 John 2.15, do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. Well, I thought God loved the world.

So God loves the world, but we're not supposed to love the world. It's the same word. So what's the difference? Cosmos can mean more than one thing, can't it? God can have compassion on the world of people in the ditch and send his son so that whoever believes in him doesn't have to perish, but can have everlasting life.

When we are commanded to not love the world or the things in the world, it isn't, don't have a heart for the lost, don't care that they are perishing. We have a hymn, rescue the perishing, care for the dying. What does it mean when it says do not love the world in this sense? Don't be enamored with the things that corrupt, that spot us, that drag us into sin.

How do you know it does that? Because you have a new nature and you know when you have sinned. You have a conscience. The Holy Spirit convicts us of sin and we have the power of God to recover from it.

And if we examine ourselves, if our heart is to be pleasing in God's sight, what did David pray? Try me and see if there be any wicked way in me. Search me and know my heart. If I'm not sure how much of the world has leaked into my life, if I'm not sure whether or not some aspect of my contact with the world is a problem, how can I access the power of God to find that out? What does the Bible say? Ask.

If you don't feel like your spiritual life is hitting on all eight cylinders, if you don't recognize in yourself a passionate love for God and the things of God, it's like, okay, but I'm really busy over here doing something else. If we are not a Romans 12 1 and 2 sacrifice and we're okay with that, there's a problem. If I want to recover from that, I need to ask.

If I need to do that, I need to ask God. I need to ask God for the power of God. I need to ask God for the power of God so that it will be given.

I need to access the power of God by faith and I do that by saying, Lord, you know what I don't know. You have wisdom that I don't have. You have power that I don't have.

I can't save myself and I can't free myself from sin. I can't always even know what it is I'm doing that's messing me up. up, but you do.

It is the wisdom and the power of God and it comes to us through the cross. What is 1 John 1.9?

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Did you ever hear somebody say, well you need to forgive yourself? I've seen that line here and there, well you messed up but you've got to forgive yourself.

That is the most pointless, useless, vapid, shallow, empty, unhelpful piece of advice. Well forgive yourself. In other words, sear your conscience with a hot iron and stop thinking about the fact that you goofed.

No, you need God's forgiveness, you need God's cleansing, you need God's rehabilitation. That's the power of God, that's the message of the cross, that there is power available to do what we can't do. You cannot forgive yourself.

All you're doing is basically counseling someone to go into denial. It's not so bad. You're okay.

You're still basically a good person. Just forget about that. That's forgive yourself.

You're not the judge, you're not the court. You don't get to forgive yourself. You don't have the power, you don't have the authority, you don't have anything by which you can forgive yourself.

God is the author of forgiveness. If we acknowledge our sins to Him, He is faithful and just to forgive and to cleanse. Why don't people advise each other, well you need to forgive yourself and then you need to cleanse yourself.

You need to give yourself the power to not do that anymore. Well nobody advises that because it's impossible. It is the power of God for deliverance.

We are being saved. It is an ongoing process. The alternative that Paul gives here is apolumi, to perish.

You're either being saved or you are perishing. Remember I talked about this a couple of weeks ago. These are present participles.

This is an ongoing status. If you know people who are unbelievers, they are perishing. They are passing along, headed for destruction.

And it is destruction. Chapter 2, verse 6, in our passage. We speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing.

This is para ago, headed for apolumi. They are coming to nothing. It is all of the words that Dawkins and Harris and the atheistic, agnostic, scornful, pessimistic world has ever said, it's all coming to nothing.

Peter argues what kind of people ought you to be knowing that everything is going to burn up. If the earth crashes into the sun, who cares what your profound arguments were, where are you going to be? Well I know where I'm going to be, and I know where you're going to be,

because we're all going to be safe in the hands of the Heavenly Father for all eternity. These people are not.

Perishing. Apolumi is used two different ways in Scripture. It is used for that which is lost, and it is used for that which is destroyed.

Let me just give this to you really quick. This will be about four minutes. Jesus in Matthew 10.28 said, Do not fear those who kill the body, but cannot kill the soul.

Rather, fear him who is able to destroy, apolumi, both body and soul in hell, in Hades. Fear him who can destroy body and soul in hell. Well, we know what that says, we're not real sure what it might mean.

In Luke 5.37, the same Jesus says, remember the wineskin analogy, no one puts new wine into old wineskins. The old wineskins have already stretched, you put the new wine in there, and as it ferments and expands and creates gases and such, the old inflexible wineskins will burst apart and become, they're no longer a wineskin, they're a useless piece of split leather. No one puts new wine into old wineskins, or else the new wine will burst the wineskins and be spilled, and the wineskins will be apolumied.

Ruined. It's not a wineskin when it doesn't hold wine. It's not what it was.

It's been destroyed. John 10.10, interesting use of apolumi here. The thief does not come except to steal and to kill and to apolumi.

To steal, to kill, to destroy. He can destroy your door frame, he can destroy your window pane, he can destroy stuff that he drops on his way out, he can do damage, he can steal to kill and destroy. This is your worst criminals, those who do wanton violence.

I have come, Jesus said, that they may have life and that they may have it more abundantly. The thief doesn't come to have life and abundant life, it is the opposite. What is the opposite of not just life but abundant life? It is death and abundant death.

It is to lose, to be killed, and to be destroyed. And the highest, furthest level of that isn't just loss, and it isn't just being killed, it is being destroyed. John 10.10, apolumi.

John 17.12, Jesus, the high priestly prayer, you remember he's talking to his father here, and we have the record of that prayer, while I was with them in the world, I kept them in your name. Those whom you gave me, I have kept, and none of them is lost except the son of Apolia, the son of apolumi, the son of destruction, that the scripture might be fulfilled. We know that this is Judas, right? He is a son of destruction.

Acts 5.37, after this man, Judas of Galilee rose up. This is a different Judas. He was a Christ pretender.

After this man, Judas of Galilee, rose up in the days of the census, drew away many people after

him. He also perished, and all who obeyed him were dispersed. In other words, he was killed.

This rabble rouser, false messiah, rose up, people followed him, he was destroyed, and the followers were dispersed. Romans 9.22, God wanting to show his wrath, make his power known, endured with much longsuffering, vessels of wrath prepared for Apolia, destruction, annihilation. Now, you say, okay, I know what apolumi means.

It means to be utterly wiped out, but Jesus says in Luke 15.8, what woman having ten silver coins, if she apolumies one of them, remember the head, it's not a necklace, it's a headless, it's a head lace, it's a head decoration, a forehead decoration made of coins. You go around and it has ten coins, and one of them falls off, and it's perdere in Spanish or in Latin. Perdition is loss.

You can lose a fact you don't remember to lose. So she loses a coin. So she lights a lamp, sweeps the house, and searches carefully until she finds it.

So something can be found, meaning you have possession of it, and it is there, it exists. Look here, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, they're all here. One hundred sheep, they're all here.

But if one is lost, does not the shepherd go out and try to find it, because it is not here. It does not exist in the fold. There's only 99 sheep, one is lost on the hills far away.

Now you say, but the coin still exists, the sheep still exists. In the experience of the observer, it does not exist, it is gone, and they have to go seek it, and when it is found, now it exists again. It went out of existence until it was found, now it exists.

So not just to be destroyed, the idea of the destruction here is, it is not present, it doesn't exist anymore. Jesus said in Matthew 10, 39, he who finds his life will lose it, he who loses his life for my sake will find it. Another one of those, wisdom of God is greater than the wisdom of men, it's counterintuitive.

So those who are perishing, what does it mean? It means when you look at the inventory of people, it's like the coin or the sheep, not present, and they cannot be found. That's why it is called the second death, to be cast into the lake of fire, there is no recovery from that. That sheep is gone, and it's gone permanently.

So in essence, what are we saying? In my view, I believe scripture teaches that the lake of fire is apolumi, it is annihilation, Enoch was on the earth, and he walked with God, and he was not. And in terms of the earthly context, there is no Enoch, he is not, he ain't here anymore. You can search the world over and never find him, Enoch does not exist in the worldly context.

So within a given context, in the inventory of the necklace, the coin is not there. In the inventory of the sheep in the fold, the sheep is not there. And in the inventory in the eternal future, if you go to the lake of fire, there is no other place where you can be found.

You're gone and you're gone permanently. The one argument I consistently see where people

say, well, you can't say that it's annihilation because the same word eternal is used for eternal life as is used for their destruction or their experience in the lake of fire. And they want to say that it's eternal conscious torment.

But what it means is that loss is permanent. You're not going to be the woman with the flashlight finding the coin. It's not going to be the shepherd who goes to the hills and finds the sheep.

When it says everlasting punishment, Jesus is talking about the sheep and the goats and he says, these will go to everlasting life, these to everlasting punishment. And the punishment is you're gone and that is permanent. There is no finding.

You're not going to come back from that. So those who are perishing, this is a serious business and you basically get what you choose. If you choose life, you get life.

If you say there's no such thing as eternal life and there's no such thing as God, guess what? For you, there's not. You are going to fulfill all of the atheistic descriptions of what death is. Your body is dead meat.

There is no soul. There is no afterlife. There is no nothing.

That's right. You're going to come back and get a chance to try to explain why you ought to persist at the great white throne. That is going to fail and you will be gone.

So part of the message of the cross is there is eternal life and there is eternal, the concomitant is not eternal torture, it's eternal death. You are gone and you stay gone. You don't have to explain how a righteous God can dangle living people over an open flame forever.

You don't have to explain it. That's not what the Bible says. The Bible says there is eternal life, we who are being saved and there is eternal death, those who go to the lake of fire.

That's what's on the line with the message of the cross. You don't have to scare people with hell nor do you have to explain hell. All you have to say is your choice is life.

The Bible doesn't dwell on the alternative hardly at all, which is surprising given if it's eternal conscious torment I would think that would be pretty much the biggest deal in the world to try to avoid. What does the Bible present? I have come that they might have life and have it more abundantly. That is our hope.

That is the message of the cross. It's foolishness to those who are perishing but to those who are being saved it is the power of God. It's life.

Life now, quality of life can be eternal. Things you do that are mundane for other people have a quality of persistence. The good that they accomplish persists and goes on.

You partake of eternity now. We are being saved and we will ultimately enter into those

eternal realms. That's what Paul is trying to get the Corinthians to focus on and to stop scrapping over who's the best teacher or what's the best philosophical argument.

That was chapter one. Now he's into chapter two and he's going to talk about spiritual wisdom. That's where we'll pick up next time.

We often quote the verse, eye has not seen, ear has not heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man the things that God has prepared for those who love him. We say, we don't know what it is but it's going to be great. But we forget to look at the next verse.

God has revealed them to us through his spirit. We do know them. What are they? That's what we're going to be seeing in upcoming studies.

But we'll close here in a word of prayer. Father, we do thank you for the Lord Jesus Christ and the life that we have in him, the hope that we have in him, the opportunity to shine as lights in the world so that others can see Christ in us and be drawn toward that light. We pray that as we seek to present ourselves as holy and acceptable sacrifices that your spirit will illuminate our lives, show us those places where we can are being spotted by the world or are in danger of being co-opted by love for the things of the world that we can have a change of mind, can identify those things and can leave them behind as we keep our eyes on Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.

And for the glory that was set before him, he accomplished your plan and purpose. There is glory set before us and we pray that we can follow his example and reflect his glory in yours now and in the ages to come. We pray these things in Jesus' name.

Amen.