

# Why Jesus Offends

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Date: 23 April 2023

Preacher: Cory Brock

[ 0 : 00 ] We're working our way through the Gospel of Mark, and this is a really rich six verses. I think you could probably construct a seminary curriculum just from these six verses.

We're not going to do that today, don't worry. We're doing the project that Mark is doing across this Gospel, which is he's writing from the perspective of the eyewitness who is traveling with him, Peter.

And what Peter is doing through Mark is asking the question, who is this man? That's the very first thing we read about in Mark 1. Who is this? Who is Jesus?

And so far in the Gospel of Mark, the answer has been mostly that he's very successful. So he's cast out demons, he's cast away diseases, he's even defeated death.

And now when you hit Mark 6, there's a transition. And that transition is away from Jesus' successes in some way and seeing a lot of his rejection.

[ 0 : 57 ] And so in this passage, he's rejected, and you're going to see a whole host of passages in the coming week all about the fact that Jesus was rejected everywhere that he went. And in Isaiah 53, we read it a little while ago.

It says that the Messiah would come one day and be despised and rejected by men. And Mark says he was and he is.

He's rejected. And so this morning, let's think together about how Jesus offends the people in his hometown, why he's so offensive, and then why he also marvels at us at the end of this passage.

So let's look at that. First, how Jesus offends. All right. In verse one, it says that Jesus goes to Nazareth. That's his hometown. It's 25 miles from where he's been, Capernaum.

And one commentator says that Nazareth is an obscure hamlet of earthen dwellings chopped into 60 acres of rocky hillside with a total population of 500 at the most.

[ 2 : 02 ] Meaning that this is kind of a place where everybody knows everybody. It's a village. It's rural. And it's clear in verses two and three that when he got there, they knew his reputation.

They talk about where did he get the power to do the deeds he's done? They've heard about it. This is very likely his second trip to Nazareth after his ministry started. We read about the first one in Luke chapter four.

So he had a reputation. They knew his deeds. They knew he had become a rabbi. And that's why he gets asked right there in verse one to preach in the synagogue. So this is very normal.

We've seen this already once in Mark that if you were respected rabbi, you would get asked all of a sudden to stand up and preach in the middle of the synagogue. And he does that. He preaches.

They respect him for it. And then in the midst of that, you know, they say he's got great wisdom. That's the word they use, which means skill in this Greek word.

[ 2 : 56 ] They're saying he's got skill with the Bible. He stood up. He opened the Old Testament. He explained it so well. And they're saying who gave him the ability to teach the Bible like this?

And then in the very next verse at the end of verse three, it says, and so they took offense at him. Now, you see, it's saying that they were amazed by him.

They were astonished by him. They saw his great skill. They had heard of his miraculous deeds and they took offense at him. The Greek word there for offense is scandal.

So and the reason for saying it is because you hear it. It's the English word scandal. They took a scandal. They took. He was scandalous to them. They were scandalized by him.

And it very, very much means they hated him. They were repelled and outraged by him. Why? Why and how? That's the question of the passage.

[ 3 : 52 ] They're offended, but why? You know, Jesus, he says it in verse four that a prophet is without honor. And what does he say? He says, in his hometown amongst his family and even his relatives.

So you see Jesus is saying, my family rejected me, my hometown rejected me and my extended relatives rejected me. That's everybody.

And even now his synagogue, his home church rejects him. So this is the church to use that language inappropriately a little bit. This is the church that he grew up in.

You know, it would be like the kids downstairs coming back in 10 years, 20 years after they've gone off and moved away and coming back and getting the sense when they walked through the doors of St. C's, this place that they had once loved that we all hate them.

And that's exactly what Jesus experienced when he came here. Now why? The point is that Jesus Christ is offensive. He's scandalizing.

[ 4 : 48 ] He creates scandal everywhere he goes. And why? Well, one of the reasons we learn here is you have to go back to Luke chapter four, the first time that he visited his hometown.

A similar incident happened. He went into the synagogue. He preached. He opened Isaiah 61, which says that I came, the Messiah would come to set captives free, to be for the poor.

And he says, and today that is fulfilled in your hearing. In other words, he was saying, that's me. I'm the Messiah. And then he said, and I have come not only for the Jews in this town, but for the Gentiles too.

And it says they tried to throw him off a cliff. Now, you see, he's saying they hated him that day because he said, I am the Messiah. And I'm also for Gentiles. So he's saying, I reject partiality between ethnicities.

I'm not going to come and just be the Messiah for one nation, but for all the nations. And they hated him for that. You see, they hated him for his inclusivity. That he was saying, I am the Messiah, but I'm also going to include everyone.

[ 5 : 50 ] And they hated him for it. So we get a sense there of the kind of things that they were so upset about here in the second visit. Now, listen, in the last century, there's been this movement in the university called the historical Jesus movement.

And the historical Jesus movement is trying to get what they say, get behind the text of the gospels to try to construct the real Jesus, the Jesus that is the true Jesus of history, not the Jesus of faith, as people often say.

So they're saying, look, the gospel writers wrote from the lens of faith, and we can't really trust what they had to say all the time. And so you have to actually study the gospels to get behind the gospels and try to piece together who the real Jesus was.

Now my point in saying this is not this, but let me mention this, let me say first, you can't do that. You can never do that with a text. Think about it. You know, in 2023, a historian in 2023 says, you know, I know, sure, Peter was there, Peter was an eyewitness, and Peter was the eyewitness that stands behind the gospel of Mark, but I'm here in 2023.

And I can, you know, what I can do is I can read through and say, well, that happened, but that didn't really happen. And you see that the philosophers help us here. They say, that's quite silly. You know, how could you say to an eyewitness, well, I think from my perspective in 2023 that that happened, but that didn't.

[ 7 : 13 ] The eyewitnesses, it's a silly project, but even more, and this is the main point for mentioning this, when you read the historical Jesus literature, if you want to, I've read some of it, when you read it, what you see is this, that every historian constructs the real historical Jesus how differently?

You know, they go through the gospels and they say, well, this part's true, not that part. Well, the next guy says, this part's true, not that part. In other words, you realize everybody is picking things that they like and trying to construct the historical Jesus.

But, and you know what you see most often? You see a narrative that goes something like this. Jesus was a great moral figure and they murdered him because he sought moral reformation, but he never said he was God. He never said he was the Messiah.

He never wanted to be that. He never wanted to be worshiped. None of that. That's that the real history is the Sermon on the Mount. You know, when he talks about ethics, that's the real Jesus. When he talks about being God, being the way, the truth, and the life, that's the stuff that we have to throw away.

Now, here's the point. In the first century, when he came to his hometown, they rejected him because he was so inclusive. He said, I've come for Gentiles.

[ 8 : 24 ] And guess what? When you read the historical Jesus movement, they love that part. You know, modern people love that part. They say, well, he came for Gentiles too. I like that. That's historical. But when he says, I'm the way, the truth, and the life, and nobody can come to the father except through me, that's the part we have to cut out.

When he says, woe to you if you reject me, that's the part that modern people reject. You see, in the first century, they had no problem with a person saying, there is an exclusive Messiah, not at all.

But they hated the inclusivity. But in the modern world, we love the inclusivity, but we hate the exclusivity. And you start to realize that in every single century, Jesus gets rejected for opposite reasons.

There's always a reason, but sometimes the reasons are battling against one another. Nietzsche comes along in the 19th century, and he says, you know, I hate Jesus. I reject Jesus. He's so offensive because he has a religion of weakness.

He props up the poor. He tells people not to seek power. And you know, that religion is holding back the progress that we could be making in science and all sorts of ways, because there's all these people walking around saying, we should be more about the poor.

[ 9 : 27 ] And so Nietzsche hated the fact that Jesus rejected power. But then you come to the 20th and the 21st century, and everybody loves the fact that he rejected power, and that he was for the weak and for the poor.

And you start to realize it doesn't matter what century we're in. Everybody rejects Jesus. Everybody's offended by him and scandalized by him in different ways. Now, let me say this.

Jesus always scandalizes for different reasons at different times. And that's actually very helpful to realize. And the reason it's so helpful is because if you're here today and you are looking for truth and you're looking for real religion, spirituality you haven't found yet.

If you're looking for that, and you have come across things that you realize, this really fits my personality. This philosophy, this religion, this movement, this group, this workout plan, this community that I found, this really fits my personality.

If you found yourself finding hope in a religion where you're not offended, it's not real. If you come to some religion or some philosophy in your life and you say, you know, I really like this, it just fits kind of everything I'm looking for, then you've got to be willing to say that it's probably not something that exists in the objective world.

[ 10 : 50 ] It's a construct. See everybody that wants to make Jesus into something they're not offended by ends up creating a construct. You should expect to be offended.

If God is real and he actually has come into your life, you should expect that there are things about him that you're going to be offended by, that he's confronted you. And if it's anything less than that, then you've got a construct.

You've got a modern construct, not the real thing. Jesus is always offensive and it's really important that he is. It's really important. Now, let me make two points before we move on about this.

Remember here, his family was scandalized by him, repelled by him. They thought he was crazy. We've already seen that earlier in the gospel and it's mentioned very explicitly here.

His brothers are named. He had at least four brothers, at least two sisters. These are biological brothers and sisters, sons and daughters of Mary and Joseph.

[ 11 : 46 ] And let me say that the fact that they rejected him helps us believe that this is true. That what we're reading about right here is real, not fake.

Let me put it to you this way. We read across the gospels only about his brothers rejecting him and hating him. And then by the time you get to the end of the story, when you get later on in the New Testament after he was crucified, all of a sudden you realize that this man that's mentioned here, James, one of his brothers, is saying, my brother is the Lord and he gave his life away to his own biological brother.

Now here it says James rejected Jesus outright, but later on after the crucifixion, all of a sudden James is the leader of the church in Jerusalem who's going to give his life for his own brother.

Now oh boy, do you have a brother? Do any of you have a brother? And let me ask you, can you imagine getting into a situation where you would say that about your brother? If you grew up with your brother, think about the sibling rivalry.

It makes sense that they hated him. If you grew up with this guy and then he's coming back and saying he's the Messiah, oh man, would you hate him? But then all of a sudden at the end of his life, his own brother worships him.

[ 13 : 03 ] And that's inexplicable. If you have siblings, you know that's inexplicable unless it's real. And even more than that, Judas is mentioned here.

Judas is the author of the little book of Jude later on. Judas, Jude are the same names in the Greek text. And Jude writes in Jude verse five, my brother, he doesn't say that, but he's talking about his biological brother, my brother Jesus carried the Israelites across the Red Sea.

Can you believe that? A brother saying about a brother, my brother centuries ago was the one who carried the Israelites across the Red Sea. And you know that the only, see what happened?

This is what the historians actually say. Larry Hurtado across the street, Rodney Stark, some of the great historians of the first and second century. And they say this, what is it that made that change in the lives of these brothers of Jesus?

It's because Jesus died and they saw it. And then later on, they saw a man that was alive again. And all of a sudden they said, he is the Lord.

[ 14 : 05 ] Everything that he said is true. It's real. Now, the second thing, that's the historical takeaway, but there's also something more personal and the personal, the existential takeaway, if you will, and it's this.

Have any of you been despised and rejected by your hometown?

Have any of you experienced the loss of a relationship? Someone deep and dear to you, your family, your mom, your dad, your sibling, your friend?

And they left you. They abandoned you. They rejected you and you couldn't understand it. And you need to hear today that Jesus says, that's me.

I was rejected. My family hated me. My friends. My home church rejected me. My hometown. And many of you can probably tell stories in different ways of how that's been in your life.

[ 15 : 04 ] Now, let me take it further. Are you today the one who has rejected somebody else in this life? You know, somebody that was close to you, that loved you, that depended on you, and you were the one that rejected them in some way, in some detail.

And you see, this is the great truth of the passage. What's the real scandal? What's the real scandal in this passage? It's this, that Jesus Christ came to be rejected so that to those who have rejected others, he might say, you're forgiven.

See, here's the scandal, the offense of the gospel is that he came to be rejected. He came to say to you whether you're the victim or the perpetrator, and we're all both.

He came to say today, I came to be rejected by you so that I could be for you. And today, whether you're the one who's rejected others or you're the rejected, either way, for all your sins, you can be forgiven and you can be reconciled to God and to the people in your life that you're far from.

That that's possible. That power, where does that power come from? That power comes from the scandal, the true scandal, which is the gospel itself, that you rejected him and he saved you anyway.

[ 16 : 20 ] See the real scandal is the scandal of the cross, that God came to die in the middle of history. That's the power, that's the secret. The only way I can think about this, maybe a slight image metaphor that helps us a little bit is to say it like this, you're a parent.

And the trope of the obstinate teenager, some of you have lived through this, the trope of the obstinate teenager, the teenager that says, to their parent, I don't want you, I despise you, I hate you, and what does mom and dad say?

Mom and dad says, you will always be welcome at my table. And that's exactly what Jesus Christ came to say to you. You reject me, you reject me, but I've come to make you welcome at my table.

Now, secondly, and we've got to be quick, why he offends? Now we look there at how he offends, but let's get a little deeper briefly why he offends, because there's something we haven't yet mentioned that's here in the text.

And it's clear in verse three. In verse three they say, is this not the carpenter's boy? Sorry, is this, sorry, excuse me, is this not the carpenter, I should say?

[ 17 : 29 ] Not the carpenter's son. He is a carpenter's son, but is this not the carpenter? Now that's a word in Greek, tecton, and it's translated carpenter here, but it just means actually handyman.

So a tecton we see across extra biblical sources can be a stone mason, a carpenter, a woodworker, somebody who builds agricultural tools like a plow, somebody who gets called out to do building repair on stone or wood.

That means that Jesus probably did all of that. He probably was a stone mason. If Jesus was here, he could fix the stones outside of our building. He could build agricultural tools.

He was very handy. He had a great skill, a great trade. That's important for all sorts of reasons, but all we can say today is that this is not an insult because every rabbi even, the greatest rabbis at this time were expected to have a skill.

So there was a three-tier process to education. The first thing was every boy was expected to memorize the Torah, all of it, and then to learn a great trade, a great skill like carpentry or stone masonry, something like that.

[ 18 : 33 ] Jesus had done that. The problem's not that he's a carpenter. It's not an insult. What are they saying? He never got to tier two or three. It's a three-tier system. And by tier three, you get accepted by a rabbi as an apprentice, and you learn to become a rabbi.

And you see what they're saying. He's a carpenter. He never became a rabbi, but yet people are following him, and he's called a rabbi here. So that's one reason. The second reason that they're upset is because they say, isn't he just Mary's son?

And some people will suggest that they say this because Joseph is probably dead. Maybe not. Even if Joseph was dead, it would not be normal for Jews to say, to name a person by their mother, not by their father.

So it's probably that Joseph may be alive, and that's exactly the point. They're saying, is this not Mary's son? And most of the commentators think they're actually pointing to the fact that he was born outside of marriage.

They're saying he was birthed out of wedlock. And they're saying, isn't this Mary's son the boy that was born too early? And more than that, they're saying, Mary, it's Mary's son.

[ 19 : 43 ] Mary is poor. Mary is not a special person. And Mary says that of herself in the Magnificat. She says, why am I to be blessed among women?

Why wasn't Jesus born to an emperor? But I'm Mary. I'm just normal person, and I'm poor. You see what they're saying? They're building a picture.

They don't mention this, but I think it's probably in the back of their heads. If you're from Nazareth, you wouldn't say this. But Jesus is from Nazareth. And Nathaniel points that out earlier. He says, nothing good has ever come from Nazareth.

In other words, Nazareth is not cool. Nazareth is not Edinburgh. Jesus would have never been from here. I tried to, at first I thought, well, I'll pick a place outside of Edinburgh and say, it's like being born in this place or growing up.

But then I thought, well, some of you are going to be from there. I could do it easier from Mississippi, but then it wouldn't make sense to you. But it's like that.

[ 20 : 42 ] Nazareth is not cool, and nothing good comes out of it. And that's exactly the point. You see the point. The reason he offends them, the real reason, is because he is so normal.

He's so ordinary. That's why they're so upset. One commentator says, in spite of what they had heard and seen, powerful deeds, great wisdom of teaching, they in Nazareth failed to penetrate the veil of his ordinariness, which characterized this man who had grown up in their village.

They said, I watched this boy play stickball outside of my kitchen window. He's too ordinary. He's too normal. He's far too human to be divine.

He's far too normal and boring and mundane in his vocation. He's from a place that's not that great. He doesn't have a great job. All of it, they never got passed.

He's a first-tier education guy. He's not elite. And what they're saying is, we're offended. There's lots of ways to be offended. Let's move on, but let me summarize it. They're offended and we're offended because we want Hercules.

[ 21 : 54 ] When we make movies about messiahs and heroes, they look more like Marvel than they do this. And that's always been the case. Nietzsche said, this man is too weak, he's too normal, he's poor.

He wants an emperor. He wants a man of power, not a baby born in a manger, not a poor boy, not a poor man, not the scandal above all of a crucified criminal.

Or for some of us, maybe it's more like this. He's so ordinary and that's exactly the problem. See, Jesus and his ordinariness becomes a mirror. When you look at him, they looked at him and they thought, he is me.

But when I look at him, I see something that's not like me and that's that, oh boy, I see what I should be, but what I'm not in him. You see, his very presence meant their judgment.

They had to realize that self-esteem was not going to be enough to sustain them or us. And his ordinariness then becomes a mirror for us and then we're scandalized by it.

[ 22 : 58 ] Or another way to think about it is this, the gospel is just too normal, it's just too ordinary. It's just as simple. The gospel that he came to bring has no arduous process.

It's not a three-year internship. You don't have to have a degree. You don't have to follow a rabbi in this world among us. You don't have to follow me or anybody.

None of that. You don't have to do this many prayers. You don't have to do this many good works. There's no arduous process. It's too simple. It's too ordinary. It's too common.

It's too universal. It's for everybody. There's no partiality in it and that offends us. That offends humanity. We want to be able to do more. We want some people to earn it and some people to be left behind.

And so at every level we're scandalized. We're looking for greatness. We see ordinariness. The shock of history is God came to die.

[ 23 : 53 ] God came to be despised. God came to be rejected by men. The Creator came to be rejected by the creature. And that is a scandal and it's upsetting.

And people in every century for all of history have hated it. We first reject it. Now lastly, that means we've got to see what we need. What we need to do today, this morning.

And the third thing is why he marvels at us. Very briefly. Why he marvels at us as we close. At the end of the passage, that's what it says. He marveled at them.

He marveled at their unbelief. In verse 5, verse 6, sorry. You see, there's a paradox. They see his wisdom. They see his greatness.

They see his power. And they reject him. And then the text says because of that, Jesus marveled at their unbelief. Unbelief there is the word built on the word faith.

[ 24 : 51 ] Ah, pistia. No faith. No pistice. Not at all. If we translated it as literally as possible, it would say he marveled at their no faith.

And he was struck by it. They saw evidence for who he might be and they rejected him in that evidence, through that evidence. There was empirical evidence in front of them and they hated him in the midst of that evidence.

And that leads us, let me just close this by saying there are two riddles here to mention and one thing to do. And the first riddle is this, his emotional life. You see, when it says that he marvels, that's an emotional term.

And it's saying here that Jesus was taken aback. Can I say this? That he was scandalized by their unbelief. That he was shocked by it. In his heart, in his emotional life, he was taken aback by their lack of faith in him.

By the fact that they refused to see. Now the Bible only tells us that this happens two times. Once here at no faith and once at faith. He marvels when the Centurion, who is a great Roman power, comes to him without ever having met him and says, you can save my family.

[ 26 : 05 ] And he marveled at this Roman soldier's faith. And here again, this is the second time it happens. Only other time, here it's at unbelief, not belief. And you see what Mark is trying to say in the big picture.

Here's a scandal. Everybody who should believe never does. And everybody who shouldn't believe does. And that's the marvel. That's another shock. That's another scandal.

And Jesus has taken aback by it. Now you see what Mark's doing. He's saying, you need to realize how human he is. He is shocked by their unbelief. He is God. He knows everything. He knows on the one hand, he came to be rejected.

And yet at the same time, when he is rejected, he's shocked and astonished and marvels. And Mark wants to say, look at the riddle of this man, that he could be both God and human at the same time.

So emotional, righteously emotional, yet knowing what he came for, knowing that this would happen. And he even puts it in another way. He says, it says Jesus could not perform miraculous deeds because of their lack of faith.

[ 27 : 11 ] And you say, wait, he couldn't perform because of them? He isn't he God and Mark's trying to say, well, he's also human? Don't you see?

And then the paradox, but he did anyway. It says he couldn't, but he did. He couldn't perform miraculous deeds, but then he did a couple times. You see, Mark's trying to say, you need to see how human he is, how emotional he is, rightly in this situation.

Now that leads me to the second riddle quickly. The second riddle then is the riddle of sin. You see, Jesus has taken aback his emotional life. He struck because of the riddle of sin.

This is what the theologians talk about throughout the centuries. They've coined this little phrase, the riddle of sin. And the riddle of sin is basically this. Jesus experiences it. He's God, but he experiences the riddle of sin.

It's in his face. And he says, whoa, how can the creature reject the Creator? It's an enigma. You see, sin can't be explained.

[ 28 : 12 ] That's the point. Sin, sin is inexplicable. It's irrational. Sin in the New Testament is senselessness. It doesn't make any sense. We don't know why we reject him.

And let me suggest to you that for that very reason, maybe, maybe, if you're struggling with unbelief today, maybe it's not really because of science. It's not really because of evidence.

It's something much deeper than that. It's an enigma. Why do we sin? Why do we hate God? Why do we reject Him? Why are we so offended by the Messiah? We don't know. How could sin enter into a world that is good?

I don't know. It's the riddle of sin. And even Jesus here in his humanity and his emotional life is taken aback by it. And in the New Testament, we have a word for it. It's translated lawlessness, anomia.

Paul says, sin is lawlessness. You could say, sin is chaos. Sin is senselessness. It doesn't make sense. This is how you know if you're reading a Christian book, a theologian or something.



[ 29 : 14 ] And they're asking the question, what is sin? And the first thing they do is say, sin is dot, dot, dot, perfect definition, perfect dogmatic, systematic theological definition you've ever heard, quoting the confession after confession after confession.

Okay, we do have good definitions for sin. But at the same time, a good theologian, finally, they realize at some point, Christians realize, I don't know.

I can't explain it. It's an enigma. It's that's the first thing we have to say about it. And Jesus is taken aback by it here. And here's, and here's the shock. Here's the scandal.

Paul says that there's one other thing that is anomia. That is lawlessness, that is senselessness, that is chaos, that is a riddle. It's not just the riddle of sin, but he says one more thing. What is it?

He says the cross is the lawlessness of history. Sin is a riddle, but so is the cross. What is going on at the cross? We can say things about it.

[ 30 : 10 ] We know on the one hand, yet we don't know. There's depth to the cross that we will never understand. How could God die? How could the Creator become the creature?

How could the Creator become the creature who's murdered at the hands of the creatures? The cross is lawlessness. It's sin. And it's the very solution to the riddle of sin at the very same time.

Now that means there's one thing to do, and this is the last word. You notice in this passage that there, he says, because of their lack of faith, their no faith, he didn't do anything.

And that means that Mark wants you to see as we close that he ties faith so closely to receiving Jesus' power. And if you're coming today to receive Jesus' power, or you're not sure, let me say that faith is what you need.

And so for some of us today, maybe we need saving faith, starting faith, faith that gets us down the path for the first time of following Jesus, the way of Jesus.

[ 31 : 13 ] And what is that? Starting faith, saving faith. It's simply this. It's when you come to a place where you say, I don't know why I reject the Lord, but I'm willing to say it's senselessness.

And I'm actually willing. It's less about your brain and more about your heart. It's less about science. It's less about proving that there's a Creator. And it's more about saying, I don't have all the answers, but I'm willing to give myself to him.

His brothers did. His own brothers did it. And that's starting faith. That's saving faith. And Mark is tying the power of the gospel so closely to faith here in this passage that that's what we've got to embrace.

That's what we've got to have. We've got to have faith, not no faith. We've got to put away our no faith. Now for the rest of us, if you're a Christian today, lastly, maybe you've got starting faith.

You've experienced saving faith, but maybe today is the day that you need to step back into the way of faith. Because faith is not something you start with and then move on from.

[ 32 : 19 ] Faith is the life you live. It's the way of faith. It's the ground you're always walking on throughout your whole life. And if you've struggled with a bit of hardness and coldness, then today might be the day to say, I've got to come back and see that I need the way of faith in my life.

And the way of faith maybe could be said like this. It's practicing the presence of God at all times. It's knowing that God is near and therefore you respond by abiding in him.

Of saying Jesus really is the resurrected Messiah in his spirit, really is here in my life right now. And so I want to abide with him.

You can abide with him as you answer your emails on Monday, as you wash dishes, as you put your kids to bed, as you go to university class at every level of life.

The way of faith is finding ways to abide with him and in him. Ceaseless prayer, God consciousness, knowing he is near and next to you at all time. Jesus was rejected so that you could be accepted.

[ 33 : 20 ] And so abide in him, remember what Jesus, the handyman said on one great occasion. He said, who are my brothers? Who are my sisters? Who's my mom?

Who's my dad? Who's my family? And he says, anybody who by faith does the will of the Father. That's my family.

And that's for you. Let's pray. Let's help us to be scandalized by the cross so that we would realize how much we don't know and what we really need this morning.

So we pray, Lord, that you would give us saving faith and the way of faith. Put away our unbelief, Lord, and help us. We have so many areas where we don't believe.

We don't believe sometimes in your providence and your goodness, in the power of the gospel and the forgiveness of sins. We don't trust you. We don't believe that we're really Christians sometimes. We don't believe that what you said is true.

[ 34 : 19 ] We don't believe your word. We struggle as Christians with unbelief. Help us, Lord. Help us with our unbelief. And we pray that in Christ's name. Amen.