

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

“Butterfly Driving A Truck”

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We barely brushed on it, but this is what it says. “For Christ did not send me to baptize.” All these divisions, all these different people from different places, all these different leaders, and some were getting behind Paul, some were getting behind Apollos, and so they had all these factions. Paul was saying, “I’m glad that I didn’t baptize a lot of you so that you don’t get into the Paul faction,” and that causes division.

Here’s what he says. He says, “For Christ did not send me to baptize.” What’s baptism? Baptism is a physical representation of something that’s happened to you spiritually. When you get baptized, are you more holy now? Did you get transformed because you went under the water and came up? No. You got wet, and you proclaimed what has happened in your heart. There’s nothing magical, there’s nothing majorly spiritual. That is a physical thing that’s happened that we’re able to witness.

You are giving us something to witness. He says, “For Christ did not send me to baptize,” because that’s not going to fix the division in Corinth. Baptizing you is not going to fix the sexual immorality in the church. Baptism isn’t going to fix it. That’s not it. He says, “Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel.” The answer is going to be the gospel.

What’s the gospel? He says, “not with wisdom and eloquence.” It’s not even going to be me preaching the gospel. It’s going to be the gospel itself and not me and my earthly ability to speak eloquently. The power is not that I’m able to convince you to change because of the gospel. The power is not that I’m going to speak eloquently and that somehow me and my fleshly ability, I can’t fix the problem. Paul can’t fix the problem. As eloquent as he might speak, he can’t fix the problems that they have, because there’s no power in that. I don’t have the power to change you.

You don’t have the power to change yourself. So, look at what it says. It says, “For Christ did not send me to baptize.” That’s a physical sign. “But to preach the gospel, not with wisdom and eloquence, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.”

I’m going to spend the rest of the time just talking about that. The cross of Christ—do not underestimate the power of the cross. The cross isn’t your earthly ability. The cross isn’t something you did. The cross is something Christ did. The gospel—never underestimate the power of the cross. The cross is what transforms. The cross is what changes people. It’s what’s going to fix the church in Corinth. It’s what’s going to fix us. It’s what’s going to grow us. It’s what’s going to make a difference. The cross is it. That’s where all the power is, because that’s where God is at work. In the cross.

And so, to provide a solution, Paul always turns them to the gospel and the power of the cross. Now that’s not to say that the gospel is just the cross, because if you read on in **1 Corinthians**, the 15th chapter is all about the resurrection, and that’s a part of the gospel of Christ. So, the gospel is the answer to all the issues we’re going to deal with. And the issue we just dealt with was division. They’re divided. They’re divided all over the place in factions. And so it’s the cross. It’s kind of a weird symbol, isn’t it? The cross. Any of you have a cross? Wear a cross ever? You got, like, some jewelry? There’s a nice cross. Maybe

some earrings. Wear them on special occasions. It's a cross there. Maybe you got a tattoo of a big cross somewhere. Right? I don't know. You got a cross.

I used to wear a wooden cross when I got saved when I was 14, and I used to wear it. Somebody gave me a cross, and I was like, this is cool. And so, I had a chain, and I'd wear it around, and I'd wear this cross. I remember I was in the locker room one day, and one of the guys on the—I don't know who it was, but I don't remember why I was there. It might have been gym class or something. And he says, "So that cross is huge. That's bigger than the cross Jesus died on." And I was a little bit offended. But I wasn't offended. He wasn't saying that because he didn't like my fashion sense. Right? I mean, really. I mean, I had the mullet. I was looking good. Right? That wasn't the problem.

The problem was that the cross is offensive. The cross is a very offensive symbol. The cross is scandalous. So, the cross was a symbol of people who had been criminals and terrorists. And it was the way we murdered them and got them out of our way. So the cross is like an electric chair. The cross is a needle in the arm. A cross is—so it'd be like if I had a big thing around my neck, and it was a big severed head, and it had a gun up against it with a bullet coming out. And it's like, "Hey, that's a really weird thing to be wearing at school." "Well, you know, I'm a Christian." "Yeah, but that doesn't make any sense."

That's bizarre. I mean, even Christians didn't use the cross as a symbol until about maybe 400 A.D. Nobody was walking around with crosses. That was dangerous to wear a cross. It wasn't until Constantine showed up and he basically made it so it's not illegal to be a Christian in 313 A.D., and then he outlawed crucifixion, that they would use that, and they started using the cross after that as their symbol. Before that, anybody know what they used as a symbol? Anybody know what the symbol is? The fish. Yes, the fish.

They used the fish. It's called the **ichthys**. The ichthys. And ichthys is a Greek word. This is my friend Landon. Are you nervous? So just sit down here with me real quick. So, Landon and I, neither one of us are—I don't know him. It's just the middle of—it's early church time, you know, and it's dangerous to be a Christian. If I tell him I'm a Christian, I might want to talk to him about Christ. I think he's a Christian, but I don't know if he's a Christian or not. So, I'm nervous about it. And so, you know, I'm just kind of looking away, and he's kind of looking away because he's nervous too. But I want to ask him if he's Christian. But if I ask him, "Are you a Christian?" he might say, "No, I'm not a Christian," and you're going to die. Right? We're going to get you arrested. He's going to turn me in. So, what I would do is I would take a stick, or I might take my foot, and I'd make an arch kind of up like that in the ground. Just kind of—just like that.

I'd do an arch like that. So now, if he's not a Christian, he doesn't know the code. He doesn't know the code. He's like, "This guy's got some kind of Tourette's or something going on there." He's just making weird, weird things in the ground. But if he is a Christian, then what he'll do is he'll go along the bottom. So, you go along the bottom, and you finish off the fish. And so, okay, so you're going to have to move a little closer to finish it. There you go. There you go. Good job. So now he finishes off the fish. So now there's a fish there, and now I know that he knows that I'm a Christian, and I know he's a Christian, and so now we can talk, and now we can have fellowship. And so, there's a lot of places like that even today. If you were to go to China, if you were to go to some of these places, it's really scary to be a Christian.

So, thank you for coming up here, buddy. Thank you. We can help it demonstrate what the ichthys is. And the ichthys is a Greek word. It's the word for fish, and the word is an acronym.

So, let's throw it up there. That's how the word is spelled, and if you take each word individually, it's going to spell Jesus, and then *Christos*, Christ, *Theo*, and then Son, and then Savior. And so, by making this fish on the ground, or by the symbol of it, you're actually making a proclamation. You're having a statement of faith there. You're saying, "This is what we believe." All the Christians, all the fish people, all the fish people believe that Jesus is the Christ. He's the Messiah. We believe He's the Son of God, and we believe that he is the Savior. And so there's a theology in all this stuff. And so, when Paul writes the ichthys in this—when Paul is writing that—there's no cross that's the symbol.

When he's writing in **1 Corinthians**, the cross isn't the symbol of Christianity. When they get this in **1 Corinthians** and he says, "the power of the cross," that sounds like kooky talk. He doesn't say "the power of the fish." He says, "the power of the cross," which isn't even the symbol of Christianity. And he's saying that's where the power is. That's where the power is for this church to be transformed, for this church to be changed, as in the cross. And so, verse 18, it says this: "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing." "But to those who are being saved, it is the power of God."

Now who are those that are perishing? Anybody remember **John 3:16**? "For God so loved the world that whosoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life." They shall not perish. So those who don't have eternal life, what will happen to them? They will perish. So, all the people that think this is foolishness will perish. All the people that think that the cross is foolishness will perish. And so it reminded me that this word for foolishness is a word *moros*. It's a Greek word, *moros*. And it's where we get our word *moron*. So, if you believe that the cross has any kind of power at all, you're a moron. The world thinks you're a moron. They think there's something wrong with you.

Actually, it would translate a little bit more like *silly*. When I was in Seattle, Cooper was little—he was little—and he had his favorite band. His favorite band was a guy named **Casper Baby Pants**. And I loved Casper Baby Pants. I saw him in concert because I was so into Casper Baby Pants. Anybody remember the band **The Presidents of the United States of America**? You remember them? And they sing, like, the song "Lump"? Right? The guy that's the head of that—after he had gotten done with his grunge career out in Seattle, he still lived in Seattle, and so he decided to start making music for little children. And so he became Casper Baby Pants.

And so, I used to go, and he still played with a guitar with four strings on it. And one of his favorite songs—our favorite song, Cooper and I—our favorite song was "Butterfly Driving a Truck." "Butterfly driving a truck, oh yeah. Butterfly driving a truck" That's just silly. Why is that funny? Because it's silly. Why is it silly? Because it doesn't make any sense. Why? Because butterflies, as a general rule, can't drive trucks. Right? If you have a butterfly that drives a truck, then it's like, I don't know, man. They don't have legs. They can't open the door. You can lock them in the cab, and they ain't going anywhere. Right? They can't do the shifter. Butterflies can't drive trucks. And so, when you sing "Butterfly Driving a Truck," you're like, that's pretty fun. I like that. That's good. Because it's just foolishness. It's just silly.

And that is the way the world thinks of the gospel. You go up to somebody. How many of you have shared the gospel with somebody? You go up to somebody and say, you know, here's what I want you to

understand. I want you to understand that you're a sinner, and that the wrath of God is going to come upon you if you don't repent and turn to God. But God loves you. And the way he fixed this whole thing is two thousand years ago, he got crucified on a cross. It's as though I just told him that a butterfly was driving the truck. They look at me like, "What?" That makes no sense at all. It's just ridiculous. You're talking cookie talk. Cookie talk.

So, Paul is going to lay out the drastic difference here between the message of the cross, which is received by the saints. The saints—if you're a saint, it's because you have received and believed this cookie talk. You believe what is foolishness to everybody else. For some reason, you believe that Christ died and that there's power in the cross. There's power in the gospel. That it transforms lives. And there are contrasting views.

There are two contrasting views. Either you see it as the power of God when we talk about the cross, or you see it as foolishness, as cookie talk. And this is universal. This was the way it was in the **1 Corinthians** church, the **Ephesians** church, to the church in Atkinson, to the church in Geneseo, to the church in China today. It's universal. There are two ways that you will look at the cross. You will either look at the cross as, "This is cookie talk. It makes no sense. It's foolishness. It's butterfly driving a truck," or the gospel is the power of God.

And it is everything that I put my faith and my hope in, because everything relies on the cross. You have two choices in life, and you believe one of the two. And there's no middle ground either. It's not like, well, I kind of believe this or that. No. I mean, you can't end the week—in a week at different times—say, well, I kind of have my faith in earth. I have earthly things, and I have my faith in this and that that I can control, and in my own knowledge, and I have my faith in that. You can at times do that, but you can't hold them both at the same time. Okay?

And so, what he does—he wants to explain this, Paul does. We're not going to get very far. Look at this. Look at the time. I've gotten through one verse. What is it that he said? He said, "For 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." And so, he decides, I need to explain what this means. And so he gets his Bible out, and he goes to the book of **Isaiah**, and he quotes a story that was very well known by all of those. But for those of us in this room, I would guess very few of us know this story, unless you read in the Old Testament a lot. You read **2 Kings**, you read **2 Chronicles**, you read all those things, you read the Old Testament prophets. If you don't read those, you won't know these stories. So, I'm going to take the rest of the time, and I just want to explain to you what he is saying when he says this.

It is a quote from Isaiah. And here's what it says. It says, "For it is written: 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate.'" Now here's the story behind this quote. Remember, we had the Jews in the Old Testament. We had the United Kingdom. Who were the kings there? We had Saul, David. We had Solomon. Then the Assyrians came in to the north. They beat up the northern ten tribes, beat them up, took their lunch money, took them captive. That just left the southern kingdom, which is called **Judah**.

There are only two tribes down there. There are different kings that were in these. A king comes along in this southern one called Judah called **Hezekiah**. And Hezekiah isn't like a lot of the other kings that were

there, because most of the kings that were leading these countries were evil guys. They were bad guys. They were leading their people to worship other gods, to have high places. They were worshiping in places they shouldn't have been worshiping. They were supposed to be controlled. It was supposed to be in Jerusalem they were worshiping. They were going to other places and putting up like, well, we don't want you to drive so far, right? Keep you away. And then there was no control of those places. So they're worshiping other gods like **Baal** and stuff in those places. They had these like poles, like an **Asherah** pole. That's not the same as like a Festivus for the rest of us. Remember that in *Seinfeld*? A big pole, they said. But it is a piece of worship.

They were worshiping through this Asherah pole. Hezekiah is a good guy. He tears all this stuff down because he's good. He wants to follow God. And I have a lot of respect for Hezekiah and how he does this, but he's not perfect. And so, if you turn to **2 Kings 18**, let me turn to it—to 2 Kings, I mean—18. We're going to look at verse 13. Verse 13 says this. Is that right? Yeah. I mean 17. It says, so who is it that beat up the northern kingdom? That was **Assyria**. He took them captive. So they want more than just the northern kingdom. They want the southern kingdom too.

It says, "So Hezekiah king of Judah sent his message to the king of Assyria in Lachish: 'I have done wrong. Withdraw from me, and I will pay whatever you demand of me.'" "The king of Assyria exacted from Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver." So, three hundred talents—that's like eleven tons of silver. That just to get you off my back, he's saying, I'll give you whatever you want. And he gives them all this silver. "And thirty talents of gold." So that's about a ton of gold. I mean, you buy a wedding ring and you're like at twelve hundred, two thousand dollars for the ring, you know, for the gold. Here you go. That's a ton of gold. "Hezekiah gave him all the silver that was found in the temple of the Lord and in the treasuries of the royal palace. At this time, Hezekiah king of Judah stripped off the gold with which he had covered the doors and doorposts of the temple of the Lord and gave it to the king of Assyria."

Here's what's happening. The Assyrians are coming in. He's got a major problem. How many of you in your life right now have a major problem? Okay? When you have a major issue, a major problem in your life—whether you're the king and the nation is coming in, or whether you're just having trouble making ends meet, or whatever it is, or you're having problems with your kids, or you have a problem like that—there are two ways that you look at this, right?

And Hezekiah has a couple of options. He can turn to God and say, "God, I am really putting my faith in you for this." Or he can say, "I'm going to use politics and my own brain. I'm going to stay up late at night. I'm going to worry all night, and my brain's going to go a million miles an hour. I'm going to come up with some type of earthly, reasonable solution to this problem, because I think I can figure it out and deal with the problem. Because God—I don't know that God's going to fix it, and if he does, he won't fix it the way I want him to." "So, I'm going to figure this out."

And so, what Hezekiah does is what he shouldn't have done. Hezekiah says, "I'm going to solve this myself using politics." Okay? The answer to our national problem is to get involved in politics. And so, I am going to jump in. I am going to have a meeting with the king of this other country. And I am going to kiss his butt as much as I can. That's my solution to this problem. I'm going to take all the silver we got, and I'm going to give them all the silver. I'm going to take a bunch of gold, give them a ton of gold. I'm going to even go into the temple, which is where I should be putting my faith—as in the God that lives

there—and I'm going to take the gold off the doors. I'm not going to give them all of it, because I still want to hold a little bit of faith in God, but I'm going to give them that gold. And maybe they'll relent.

That's his solution. And you're like, well, that worked, right? Kinda, for a while. And that's how it always is when we have some major issue in our life. And we patch it up, and we're like, well, this will solve it for a while. Right? This will fix it for a while. And now I have a little bit of relief. And so, he gives them some money. But that's not what the king of Assyria wants. He doesn't want tribute. He wants to take over the whole nation and be in charge of the whole thing and take them captive. That's what he wants.

And so, if we go a little bit further down—go to verse 19—it picks up in verse 19, and it says this. “The field commander said to them, ‘Tell Hezekiah this is what the great king, the king of Assyria, says: On what are you basing this confidence of yours?’” Listen to this. Listen to this. “What are you basing this confidence of yours, that you're not giving up to me? You say that you have the counsel and the might for war, but you speak only empty words. On whom are you depending, that you rebel against me?” “Look, I know that you are depending on Egypt.” Why? Because he's not only been trying to make things okay by giving money and stuff to Assyria, he's also on the backside been doing his political game over here, trying to get, hey, can you guys protect us? Oh yeah, we'll protect you. But they're not going to protect you. They don't love you. They don't care about you. They're going to use you.

You're in a nightmare here trying to solve this on your own. You have a God that loves you, that wants to deal in your life and fix your problem, and you're going everywhere but him. He says, “Look, I know you're depending on Egypt, that splintered reed of a staff, which pierces the hand of anyone who leans on it.” That's a description of Egypt. You lean on them; they're just going to pierce your hand. You're going to go away bleeding if you depend on Egypt. “Such is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who depend on him.” “But isn't he the one whose high places and altars Hezekiah removed?” Like, I don't understand your faith. You removed all the high places in all these towns because you were to your God. Hezekiah don't understand the power of God. There's just a lot of confusion.

It says, “You must worship before this altar in Jerusalem.” So, the reason Hezekiah removed the high places and altars is because they were being disobedient to God in those places. And so, he was doing the right thing by tearing them down. Now, we use human arguments all the time. Arguments like this. When you use human arguments to fix your problems and you just rely on yourself, there's a few things that are happening.

One, you aren't really relying on God. You aren't really relying on God. When you rely on politics to answer your nation's problems, when you rely on, we're going to find somebody that's just going to figure this out and solve our problem, and I'm going to rely on, oh, this person says he knows a lot about it, so I'll rely on him—you aren't really depending on your God. You're depending on Egypt, is one of the arguments he's making. He's also making an argument of these political alliances. You can't trust Egypt. They pierce the hand of everybody that's there. So, you're making a mistake, first of all, in not depending on your God. You're making a second problem in that you're trusting in Egypt. And the high places and altars that Hezekiah removed were for the very God that you say you're dependent on for protection.

So, look at verse 26. Then **Eliakim**, son of **Hilkiah**, and **Shebna**, and **Joah** said to the field commander, “Please speak to your servants in **Aramaic**, since we understand it. Don’t speak to us in Hebrew in the hearing of the people on the wall.”

Okay, so here’s what’s going on. These guys are out in front of the wall of Jerusalem, and there’s people on top of the wall, and they’re listening to them talk. And as they’re talking, they’re saying all these things. They just were saying you can’t trust in your God. You shouldn’t be trusting in Egypt. You should just surrender. And all these people on the wall are listening to that.

And so, the guys on the ground are like, “Listen, don’t speak in that language. Speak to us in Aramaic. They don’t know Aramaic. Speak to us in Aramaic because you’re going to lead them in a way that we don’t want them to be led.” And so, he’s using human arguments, and he’s concerned.

Let’s turn over to verse 27. “But the commander replied, ‘Was it only to your master and to you that my master sent me to say these things, and not to the people sitting on the wall, who, like you, will have to eat their own excrement and drink their own urine?’” Come on. Then the commander stood and called out in Hebrew, “Hear the word of the great king, the king of Assyria! This is what the king says: ‘Do not let Hezekiah deceive you. He cannot deliver you from my hand.’” “Do not let Hezekiah persuade you to trust in the Lord when he says, ‘The Lord will surely deliver us. This city will not be given into the hands of the king of Assyria.’” “Do not listen to Hezekiah.” “This is what the king of Assyria says: ‘Make peace with me and come out to me.’” “Then each of you will eat fruit from your own vine.”

He’s saying, listen, it’s going to be good if you just surrender.

And it’s into this situation that this prophecy that we have in **1 Corinthians** is spoken. You’ve got a nation. You’ve got Hezekiah, who is trying to decide, where are we going to place our trust, and where are we going to get the power to not get eaten up by Assyria? What’s going to save us? Is it going to be our own intellect and our own knowledge and our own figuring out a plan and staying up all night to sort out the numbers and figure it all out? Is it we’re going to run politics? We’re going to hire the right leader that’s going to do this? Is that what we’re going to do? Or are you going to depend on God?

And what Hezekiah does at the beginning is he doesn’t depend on God. He doesn’t. He does what most of us do, if I’m honest—try to figure out some kind of a plan of how to figure this out. And then last, if that doesn’t work, then maybe I’ll go talk to God about it and see if maybe he can fix it. And so, when Paul is talking to the Corinthians, he’s saying that eloquent speech—and that, you know, that’s what everybody in the world thinks is important and good, right? You got the Greeks, they’re into philosophy. You got the Jews, they’re into good writing, and they’re into that. That’s important to all of them.

The world looks at all the eloquence and all that and thinks that’s the answer. But that is the same thing as saying, “We’re going to trust in our politics. We’re going to trust in this to save us from the Assyrians.” It’s the same thing. Will you put your faith—where is the power? Where is the power at? Is the power in Egypt? Is the power in our gold? Is the power in our money? What is the power? Where is it? Where do we trust? Who can really fix this for us? And the answer is God alone, and the cross, and the gospel. And he wants them to understand this.

So, in **Isaiah 29** it says, verse 13, “The Lord says: ‘These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.’” He’s speaking to these people under the reign of Hezekiah and saying, listen, they say that I’m their God. They say they love me. They say they trust me. But their hearts are a long ways from me, because they don’t even involve me in the process here. Why am I not involved? How can you say I’m your God if I’m not even involved? You’re not coming to me. You’re not trusting in me. You’re trusting in Hezekiah and him coming up with all kinds of solutions and politics. And politics is not the answer to every problem.

“The Lord says: ‘These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is based on merely human rules they have been taught.’” So, they’re not really worshiping me. Their worship is about things that the rabbis have said, and they’ve reasoned and they’ve figured out theology and this. They have faith in theology. They have faith in church history. That’s not where the power is. The power is in the cross. The power is in God. “Therefore, once more I will astound these people with wonder upon wonder.” “I will astound these people with wonder upon wonder.” “The wisdom of the wise will perish. The intelligence of the intelligent will vanish.”

Why is it a wonder? Because it makes no sense. So, the so-called wisdom and intelligence says, it makes no sense. So, it’s a wonder.

Now, I’m sometimes accused here at church of not being political enough—for not seeing the answers to our problems in Trump, or seeing the answer in Biden, or seeing the answer in any other political leader, or seeing it in alliances with other countries. I just don’t—I don’t see that in Scripture at all. I never see that in Scripture. I see that when the people thrive, it’s because they put their faith and their trust in their God, and they yield to him. And oftentimes that other stuff is a distraction that keeps us away from it. So as a nation, they find that thing—we find these human strategies and political alliances and political leaders—we find that to be the answer.

But Judah was tempted to trust political alliances, right? Especially Egypt. We see this in the story—to save them from Assyria. Political alliances, that’s how we’re going to fix it. We got to have the right politics. We got to do the right thing. We got to do all this. We got to—we got to figure this out. And Isaiah is repeatedly saying that it is rebellion against God.

And here’s why it’s rebellion against God. Because it shows a lack of faith in God’s sovereignty. Number two, it substitutes human power and wisdom for God’s solution. Why don’t we want God’s solution? We’re smart enough to figure this out on our own. No, you’re not. And three, it often leads to compromise and corruption. Because I didn’t follow God—because I didn’t follow God—I got involved in all kinds of corruption. And now you’re finding stuff in the papers and on the news about your leader, and there’s corruption, and there’s scandal. And you’re like, well, why is that? Because, there had to be compromise, because there was an earthly way.

So, we don’t trust God because we think we can solve our problems on our own, and we don’t trust God because of our pride. We say, “We got this.” And we don’t trust God because we can’t see it with our earthly eyes. And we don’t trust God because it’s outside of our knowledge.

So, we don't trust God because we think we can solve our problems on our own, and we don't trust God because of our pride. We say, "We got this." And we don't trust God because we can't see it with our earthly eyes. And we don't trust God because it's outside of our knowledge.

And so, what does Hezekiah do in 2 Kings 19? Let's look at this. Let's pop over to verse 17. I just want to give you the end of the story, because it's a pretty cool story. Verse 17—do I have the right book? 19, verse 7. "It is true, Lord, that the Assyrians have laid waste these nations and their lands. They have thrown their gods into the fire and destroyed them, for they were not gods, but only wood and stone, fashioned by human hands. Now, Lord our God, deliver us from his hand."

What is happening? Hezekiah has tried over and over, with alliances and with all these kinds of things, to try to come up with an answer to make sure that his nation doesn't get taken over by Assyria. It's a hard sell. It's a hard thing to figure out. And he has tried all this other stuff, and it has not gone well. Now they're about to attack him. And what does Hezekiah do? He finally does what he should do, and he prays to God.

"It is true, Lord, that the Assyrian kings have laid waste to these nations and lands." Everything that those guys were saying when they're outside that—you know, they're too powerful for us—you're right. They're absolutely right. They are going to kick our butt. They're going to take our land, because we can't defeat ourselves. Everything they're saying is right. "They have thrown their gods into the fire and destroyed them." Everywhere they've gone, they've taken the gods in the places they've gone. They've taken their gods and thrown their gods in the fire, because their gods were not as powerful as Assyria and their god. "But only wood and stone, fashioned by human hands." That's all those gods were. "Now, Lord our God, deliver us from his hand, so that all the kingdoms of the earth—"

Why? Why do we want you to be the one that delivers us? Why do you want God to be the one who gets you out of that problem? Why do you want God to be the one that helps you reconcile that relationship? Why is it that you want to be on your knees and have God intervene and come in and be the one who fixes it, and not you? Because look what it says here:

"Now, Lord our God, deliver us from his hand, so that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you alone, Lord, are God." If you go around saying, "Well, I was able to kind of fix all my problems and all this kind of stuff," you must be God. You might begin to think that you have the power to fix all these things. Other people say, "Hey, you know what? I'm pretty smart. I was able to fix this whole thing. This whole company was in bad trouble, and I fixed it. This church was in really bad trouble. Boy, I fixed it." No. You get on your knees and you say, "God, I want you to do some great things, and I want you to fix it so that everybody will know that it was God that did it. It was God that did it."

And so, he puts his dependence upon God, and it may seem foolish to everybody around him. The Assyrians think it's foolish. But he says, "Deliver us." And why? Because the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing. It's not only foolishness, but it's offensive. Why is it offensive? Why is the cross offensive? It's offensive because when you say that the cross is what's necessary to give me a relationship with God, you're saying that—yeah, I do a lot of good things, right? Many of you go around and you say, "I'm a pretty good person." You know, when I see freaks on the side of the road, I don't throw things at them, right? When people ask me for something, I usually try to help them out. I'm

not mean to people. I don't use a lot of profanity. I help little old ladies across the road. I'm a pretty good person. Maybe I even go to church on a regular basis. So, I'm a pretty good person.

And what the cross says is that, given all of that great stuff that you do, what your life deserves is to be crucified on a cross. That that's what you deserve. Because your righteousness doesn't earn you any points with God. Your righteousness is like filthy rags. And so even all the stuff I've done—and you're saying that what my life really deserves is crucifixion on the cross, eternity in hell—that's offensive to me. Why would you say that to me? That seems like kookie talk. That seems ridiculous. That doesn't make any rational sense. That's a butterfly driving a truck. But to us who are being saved, this is where we go.

Us who are being saved—God—is the seemingly foolish idea of trusting in God really the truly wise thing to do? Is the message of the cross foolishness, or is it true wisdom? Did Hezekiah—did he regret his decision to cry out to God? When he cries out to God, we never saw the end of the story. Maybe that was a big mistake. Did God come through for him? Did God defend Judah?

After Hezekiah prays, Isaiah sent a message to Hezekiah. Verse 34, it says, "I will defend this city." This is the message. After Hezekiah prays, God talks to the prophet, because that's how God talked to people. He talks to the prophet, and he says, "Go tell Hezekiah this." And Isaiah takes this word to him. This is what God says. He says, "I will defend this city and save it, for my sake and for the sake of David my servant." Turn to 2 Kings 19:35. I'm going to finish up with this, and then we'll pray.

This is what happened. If you're wondering if this was a good idea to put our faith and all of our eggs in God's basket, this is the answer. It says, "That night the angel of the Lord went out and put to death a hundred and eighty-five thousand in the Assyrian camp." Did they even pick up a sword? No. Did they go out to meet them? No. Did the army even say, "You know what, we've got to come up with a battle plan. We're going to go out there and try to figure this out and make sure you've got the good armor and the good spears and the good swords"? No. What were they doing? We don't know. They might have been playing chess, because they're not involved at all in the victory. They pray.

God decides, "Okay, well, I'll just defeat them." Come on. That's butterfly driving a truck. That can't be true. Look at what it says: "That night the angel of the Lord went out and put to death a hundred and eighty-five thousand in the Assyrian camp. When the people got up the next morning, there were all the dead bodies." So, Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, broke camp and withdrew. I would think so. He returned to Nineveh and stayed there.

That didn't happen because he had a great plan, because he had lots of intelligence and great knowledge, and he was able to stay up all night and figure out a wonderful plan. It happened because he trusted where the power is. The power is not in you and I. It's not in our human wisdom. The power is in God. And God's solution for us as people—the power—is in the cross. What seems foolish to everyone around us, except for us who are being saved. The power is in the cross. Let's put our faith and trust not in him at the end, but at the beginning. Come to him and say, "God, I'm coming to you first, with no power of my own, not with eloquence, not with anything." "I come to you and I just lay myself at your feet, and I say, 'God, this is my battle. I am fighting this.'" It is hard. I don't know how to fix this. I'm in a hole. I don't know what to do. I've come up with every solution I can come up with, and I don't have one. "God, go before

me.” “Fix this problem.” “I’m taking this weight off of myself, and I’m giving it to you, so that you will receive glory as the God that does miracles.”

Let’s pray. God, we choose the foolishness of God instead of the wisdom of men. We put our trust in you. Save us. Unite us. Defend us. Use us with your power and might and strength. And I pray this in Jesus’ name. Amen.