

## SERMON TRANSCRIPT

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Would you take God's Word; God's holy, inerrant Word; the Bible, and would you open to Romans chapter 1. We're continuing our series, "Foundations for Our Faith." The book of Romans has been called, and well it should, the Constitution of Christianity; what an incredible book this is.

Last week, we talked about the Good News, the Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Today, we're going to talk about the bad news that makes the Good News good. The title, "The Lost World." Our world is lost. And our world is on a collision course with judgment and you don't have to be a rocket scientist to figure that out. Think of entertainment alone. Think of the things that we amuse ourselves with; that we laugh at. Not only have we reached the bottom of the garbage pail, friend, we have eaten right on through the garbage pail. And we are laughing our way into Hell and meanwhile crime has soared, families are destroyed, millions of babies are being killed in their mother's womb, suicide and violent crime are the leading causes of death for our young people. We are told, however, that people are not to be called sinners. Don't call anybody a sinner today. If you call anybody a sinner today you are intolerant. And so the sin today is not to commit the sin but the sin in the minds of people today is to call the sin a sin. That is the sin. Everybody today is to be tolerant.

We are in trouble. Now again, we're being told, "Don't call it sin. Men may be sick but they're not sinful. They may be weak but they're not wicked. They may be ill but they're not evil." And so almost anybody can give an excuse for the way he or she lives. But, I want you to look at our Scripture today, because our Scripture today is like a great courtroom; Almighty God is the Chief Justice. The apostle Paul is the prosecuting attorney, and he's going to show, beyond the shadow of any doubt, stutter, stammer or, or equivocation that this world, this lost world is without excuse; sin is inexcusable and it is headed for judgment. That judgment is called the wrath of God.

Look if you will in Romans 1 verse 18, "*For the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness.*" "*The wrath of God;*" the word wrath means that which burns. Now we've been told today that, "God is a God of love and therefore God cannot be a God of wrath." God is a God of love; He's infinite, measureless, fathomless love. But that's a part of the nature of God, that's not all the nature of God. God is also a righteous God, a holy God, a God of judgment, a God of wrath. And if you take part of the truth and try to make part of the truth all of the truth then that part of the truth becomes an untruth. God is also a God of wrath and a God of judgment and He has anointed me to tell you today. I don't mean that I'm special because I'm anointed, I mean that I believe that any preacher of God with the Holy Spirit upon him is going to preach the Bible as the Bible is written and the Bible says in Romans 1 verse 18 that, "*The wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold the truth,*" who literally smother the truth, "*in unrighteousness.*" And Paul, now, is going to show why this world is a lost world and ready for judgment.

There're three things I lay upon your heart in the passage, beginning in verse 18 and going right on through to the end of the chapter. And I want you to keep your Bible open in your hand because some of you are going to want to argue with me. But I will not argue with you, I will refer you back to the Word of God. Now if I preach something or say something today that is not backed up by Scripture then you can disagree. But if it is backed up with Scripture, you take it up with God and don't take it up with me; I am reading from the holy Word of God. And there're three things I want to lay upon your heart today to show you why the wrath of God is surely descending upon this world and why we are on a collision course with judgment.

First thing, man's willful; listen to me, **man's willful self-determination**. Romans 1 verses 19 and 20, look at it, "Because that," he's talking about why God's going to judge the world, "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them for God has showed it unto them. For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead," now watch this, "so that they are without excuse." Now what Paul is talking about here, primarily, are those that we call the heathen. Those who have never set in a beautiful sanctuary like this and heard the Word of God preached. Somebody says, "Well, maybe they could be excused. Maybe they could be excused on the basis of ignorance." Others think that they could be excused on the basis of genetics. Others think, perhaps, they could be excused on the basis of environment. But God says, "There is no excuse," because God's existence, first of all, "is clearly seen." There is **the revelation of God's truth**.

Now notice how God reveals Himself to mankind. Look if you will in God's Word here. First of all, He says that it shown in them; do you see that? Look if you will in Romans 1 verse 19, "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them." Now that's an inner witness that everybody has. I don't care where he lives, young or old, rich or poor, all of us have that witness in our hearts. We call that conscience. Williams translates this, "It is clear, God's existence is clear to their inner-moral sense."

Now, every time a man says that he's an atheist, listen to me, he's lying, he's lying; he is lying. John 1 verse 9, "Christ is that light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world." It is absolutely clear to every man that God exists. If he says that he doesn't believe in God, he's a liar. You say, "Now, I don't, a, Adrian, I am an atheist but I'm no liar." There is a trucking company that has business all over the United States of America. The owner of that company gives all of his prospective employees a lie detector test. And on that test, he asks this question among other things, "Do you believe in God?" Almost all of the people say yes they do. But every time that a man says that he does not, that machine says he's telling a lie. Every time, he is telling a lie. Down in his heart he knows that God exists. Every man does, it is clear to them. That's what the apostle Paul is saying here, "God has manifest it in them, God hath showed it unto them."

So you see, first of all, “*In them,*” that’s conscience; “*Unto them,*” that’s creation. God has two witnesses that say He exists; creation and conscience. The inner, subjective witness of conscience; the outward, objective witness of creation. The blazing stars; this universe; how did it happen? Everybody knows that out of nothing, nothing comes. To be an atheist you have to believe that nothing times nobody equals everything. That’s not intelligence. But that’s what the man would have to believe. But you see, God has set His witness in the sky. Psalm 19 verses 1 through 3; put that in your margin, “*The Heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament sheweth His handiwork. Day unto day it uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.*” Anybody, any place, any time can go out and look up at the stars and say, “That didn’t just happen.”

In the French Revolution, a revolutionary told a French peasant as they were pulling down the churches and destroying the houses of worship; he said, “Peasant, we’re going to destroy everything that reminds you of God.” And the peasant pointed to the stars and said, “Citizen, begin with those stars.” You see, “*The Heaven’s declare the glory of God.*” Psalm 19:1.

To be an atheist is not a sign of intelligence, not really. I mean, do you believe this all just happened? Suppose I were to pluck some parts out of nowhere, just cause them to appear and then put them in a bucket and shake them around for a while and then they become a button and then after a while a compass; and then after a while a steam gauge; and then after a while a speedometer and then a gas meter and finally a watch. And I’m wearing it and I say, “That’s the way it came about.” You’d say, “Adrian, I just don’t believe that.” Of course not, of course not, But somehow, people have thought that by some fortuitous concurrence of whatever, that something as wonderful as the human eye just simply happened.

I got a letter and here’s what it said. You’d be surprised at some of the mail. Here’s what it says. “Dear Adrian Rogers, your sermons on evolution need balance.” And then he goes on to say, “Isn’t it past silly, that you would want to attribute the creation of the universe to a savage, Hebrew, tribal deity?” He’s talking about God now. “A savage, Hebrew, tribal deity, who is recent, by comparison, and who Himself is a product of evolution? The Biblical God evolved from a vile-tempered, foul-mouthed, woman-hating, genocidal maniac to a loving God in forty short booklets.” Now there’s your miracle. He’s talking; the forty short booklets he’s talking about are the first books of the Bible. Well, the world is full of people like that.

But there is the revelation of God’s truth, that’s verses 19 and 20. And then there’s **the reach of God’s truth**; everybody knows. But here’s the sad thing, there is **the resistance of God’s truth**. Look again in Romans 1 verse 18, “*For the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold the truth in unrighteousness.*” Now I looked this word up, hold, in many translations and let me give you some of them. Some give it, “*Hold back the truth.*” Others give it, “*Smother the truth.*” Some, “*Repress the truth.*” Others, “*Suppress the truth.*” Others, “*Who stifle the truth.*” All of them mean essentially the same thing. When it says, “*They*

*hold the truth,*” it literally means, they resist, they smother, they stifle, they hold back the truth of God. They do not want to know. Now blindness is tragic but willful blindness is horrible. There’re none so blind as those that put out their own eyes. And it’s not that they cannot believe; it is they will not believe.

Brother Jim, you and I know a dear friend, George, down in Merritt Island, Florida. George, who used to sing in your quartet. George, one of the youth; he was an honor student in school. But he wrote a letter to the editor of the paper down there and he said, “When people stop praying to a non-existent God to save them from a non-existent Hell, then perhaps, finally, this world will be populated once again by people instead of sheep.” He was a conceited, arrogant, little atheist. But he came to our church where Brother Jim and I were ministering down in Florida. And he came, really, to kind of show off, to argue and to make fun. But the finger of God touched him; he got under conviction and he got saved.

I called him into my office; I wanted to talk to him. Because I wanted to know what happened in his life and how a man who was so arrogant and he’s brilliant; how a youngster like that could be so poisoned against the things of God. And so I talked to him about his faith and found out whether or not he was truly saved and he was truly born again; made new. Then I said to him, “George, tell me why you were an atheist.” He said, “Mr. Rogers, Mr. Rogers.” He called me Mr. Rogers. He said, “Mr. Rogers,” he said, “Before I came to this church, before I heard the Gospel, before I gave my heart to Jesus Christ,” listen to this, he said, “I was so sure there is no God.” He said, “And now, I can’t even remember the arguments.” “I can’t even remember the arguments.” The problem, friend, was not in his head; it was in his heart. It wasn’t that he could not believe it was that he would not believe. Men, women, boys and girls who do not believe in Almighty God hold back the truth. And that’s the reason the first step in man’s three-fold step to Hell is willful self-determination.

But now let’s go on to the second thing. When there is a willful self-determination, when men hold back and suppress the truth, there goes to the second step and that is a **wicked self-deception**. First, self-determination; “I will have my own way.” And then there comes a wicked self-deception. And how does this self-deception work out? Well, basically, again in three steps. First of all there is a **selfish indifference**. Look in Romans 1 verse 21, “*Because that,*” verse 20 says, “*They’re without excuse. Because when they knew God,*” that is, they knew God exists, they know all about God. Not all about God, but they know, His eternal power and Godhead. “*So that, when they knew God,*” watch this, “*they glorified Him not as God,*” they didn’t worship Him, “*neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations and their foolish heart was darkened.*” Self-deception; wicked self-deception, they are deceived, their foolish heart is darkened. Why? Because they have this selfish indifference; they don’t glorify God.

By the way, if you, if you come today as an intellectual, to think that you can figure God out; if you’ve come to study the Bible to satisfy your curiosity, you’re not going to learn. You see, truth is not given to satisfy your curiosity; truth is given to

cause your worship and your thankfulness. And if you learn truth and you don't glorify God and if you're not thankful; the very truth that you have you're going to lose.

Because, there comes that selfish indifference in verse 21, indifferent to God; they don't glorify God, they're not thankful to God. And then comes **sophisticated ignorance**. Now, I've chosen the word carefully; sophisticated ignorance. Look in Romans 1 verse 22, "*Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.*" They're none so blind as those who refuse to see but those who refuse to see think that they see perfectly clear. They profess themselves to be wise. They think that we are the fools; they think that they are the wise people.

Now, here's the sad thing. Nature abhors a vacuum. And if a man does not believe in the true God that doesn't mean that he'll believe in nothing; what it does mean is he'll believe anything. He will believe anything. And you see it, it is amazing as you study, it's not that men will not believe it's what men will believe.

Do you know, until 1962 in America we had, pretty much, a moral and spiritual consensus in this country. Then the Supreme Court outlawed the right of children to pray in schools; to pray openly, vocally and publicly in schools. And from that time on America has been on a downhill slide. Why? Light refused increases darkness. The Bible says in Romans 1 verse 21, "*Their foolish heart was darkened,*" verse 22, "*Professing themselves to be wise, they became as fools.*"

So here it is; first of all selfish indifference; that's verse 21. Verse 22; sophisticated ignorance; they think they're so smart. Verse 23; **shameful idolatry**; look at it, "*And they changed,*" the word changed literally means they exchanged, "*exchanged the glory of uncorruptible God,*" underscore that if you don't mind, "*uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man.*" That's the first thing. They want to glorify man; that's humanism, when he makes man the center and the circumference of all things. "*Made like to corruptible man,*" but not finished yet, "*and to birds, and to four-footed beasts,*" now watch this, "*and creeping things.*" There's not a sadder verse in all the Bible; where men actually will worship bugs; creeping things. Up here at the top the incorruptible, uncorruptible God, and men, made in the image of God are worshipping bugs. You don't think people worship bugs! They worship bugs. I'm telling you the truth.

Go to Egypt, do you know what the chief god in Egypt is? A bug, a scarab, a beetle; they worship bugs! Men, made in the image of Almighty God. This is what man does, his selfish indifference leads to a sophisticated ignorance and finally to a shameful idolatry.

You know what an idol is? All an idol is is a magnified sinner. Men take their worst vices of war and greed and lust and pride and make gods out of them. That's the reason why the idols are always so grotesque looking. Fat Buddha; look at them. Look at the idols of the heathen; the maniacal faces, the evil that men carve into

sticks and stones. Why? Because these are the worst things that are in man. But here; man is so wicked. He takes his vices, he makes a god out of his vices and then he worships his vices by participating in them. Nothing is too good for a man's god. And so he worships his worst vices. You see, first of all, the sinner molds the idol and then the idol molds the sinner.

Now, I said that nature abhors a vacuum. Oh, you say, "But, by the way, Adrian, this is the United States of America and we don't have idols here." Who are you kidding? Who are you kidding? What is an idol? An idol is anything a man loves more, fears more, serves more or values more than God. For example, the Bible says, "*Men are lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God,*" Second Timothy chapter 3 and verse 4. We exchange, we substitute the glory of Almighty God for these kind of things. And we've learned the way of the heathen by idolatry.

How did we get into the mess that we're in in America today, where the place that ought to be the safest place in the world; the mother's womb, it has become the most dangerous? Well, put this verse down in Psalm 106 verses 35 through 38. Speaks of God's people and it says, "*But were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works.*" Now remember when we kicked God out of our public schools in 1962, we created a vacuum. And now we've seen these eastern religions and other things come in to America. "*But were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works.*" Now watch this, "*And they served their idols; which were a snare unto them. Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils, unto demons, and shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan; and the land was polluted with blood.*" Idolatry, it's in America today. And from the Almighty God of the universe, were worshipping now bugs and worms and killing our unborn.

Now, here's the third and final step of this threefold thing. And I've told you it's not a pretty picture; the lost world. Mankind's willful self-determination; mankind's wicked self-deception; and finally **mankind's woeful self-destruction**. Look at it. Begin now in Romans 1 verse 26 and 27, here it is, "*For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections; for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature. And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet.*"

Now let me just stop right there. What happens? How does a society self-destruct? Well, again, He gives us three steps. First of all, and it's always true; **they become sexually perverted**. Verses 26 and 27 speak of the filthy and unnatural sins of Sodom. I want you to see how God speaks of these sins. If you were to look at verse 24, He calls the sin, uncleanness; He depicts it by lust and by dishonor. Look in verse 26, He calls it, "*Vile affections, and that which is against nature.*" Look in verse 27, He calls it unseemly. That's what God is talking about when He's talking about the sins of Sodom; sexual perversion; men with men. How does God feel about that? You don't

have to guess. Put it in your Bible, Leviticus chapter 18 and verse 22, *“Thou shall not lie with mankind, as with womankind; it is an abomination.”* And the judgment of God is smoldering against this sin. Our Lord Jesus said in Luke chapter 17 verses 26 through 30 that, *“The last days would be like the days of Sodom.”*

I refer you to Luke 17, put it in your margin, put it in your margin. Oh, may God have mercy upon this nation. Begin in verse 26, *“As it was in the days of Noah, so should it be also in the day so of the Son of Man.”* That is, when Jesus comes again, *“They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all.”* Now notice verse 28, *“Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot,”* you remember Lot was in Sodom before God destroyed Sodom, *“they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from Heaven, and destroyed them all.”* Now listen to the Word of God, *“Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed.”* Our Lord said, *“The last days are going to be marked by revival of sodomites just before He comes in judgment.”*

Oh, you say, *“But wait a minute, God couldn’t be judging America; haven’t you seen the stock market, Pastor? Why, we’re in an economic revival.”* So was Sodom. Let me give you a Scripture, Ezekiel 16 verses 48 through 50, well let’s start in verse 49, *“Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride,”* boy, America reeks with pride, *“fullness of bread,”* no economic deprivation, *“fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. And they were haughty, and committed abomination before Me; therefore I took them away as I saw good.”* They were proud of their sin, they were haughty, but they were full of bread and idleness. It wasn’t an economic downturn. Second Peter chapter 2 verse 6 says that, *“God turned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes and condemned them with an overthrow, making them an example to those that after should live ungodly.”* There was sexual perversion as a result of turning from God. God left Sodom, with its smoking ruins, *“As an example to those that should after live ungodly.”* About the only thing we learn from history is we don’t learn anything from history. What used to be called sin began to be called sickness and now it is a socially accepted practice; but the Bible calls it sin. God’s Word is so clear.

Let me give you another verse, Isaiah 3 verses 8 through 9, *“For Jerusalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen; because their tongue and their doings are against the Lord, to provoke the eyes of His glory. The shew of their countenance doth witness against them; they declare their sin as Sodom, they hide it not. Woe unto their soul! For they have rewarded evil unto themselves.”* But it’s not just the sin of sexual perversion, it’s the sin of immorality in any form: adultery and fornication.

Did you know that last year American’s spent, listen to this, billions on pornography? Do you have any idea how much pornography even 1 billion dollars

would buy? Where is all of that? And let me tell you what's happening to it. It is now being piped into the living rooms of Americans and they're paying to have it piped into their living room. The *U.S. News and World Report* stated this, "During the 1980's, the advent of adult movies on video cassette and on cable television, as well as the huge growth in telephone sex services, shifted the consumption of porn from the seedy movie theatres and bookstores in to the home. As a result, most of the profits being generated by porn today are being earned by businesses not traditionally associated with the sex industry. By long distant carriers like AT&T; by cable companies like Time Warner and by hotel chains like Marriot, Hyatt, Holiday Inn; that now reportedly earn millions of dollars each year supplying adult films to their guests." That's where we are in America. I'm telling you folks, America, as I said in the introduction, we have eaten through the bottom of the garbage pail.

Some years ago I was driving, I saw two little guys about that high with a brief case scurrying off into the woods; and I know little guys like that have no business with a briefcase in the woods. They were just about that tall; maybe seven, maybe eight; maybe this tall. I pull my car over, I didn't know where they were; they were out in the woods somewhere. I said, "All right boys, come out." I didn't hear anything, I said, "You heard me, come out." After a while, two little boys like squirrels came out of the woods; stood there in front of me. I said, "Go get the briefcase." They said, "What briefcase?" I said, "Get the briefcase." They went back in the woods and came out with the briefcase. I said, "Open it." And they opened it and it's full of filthy magazines, filthy magazines. I said, "Where did you boys get this?" They said, "Belongs to some other boys; we took it from them!" I said, "What would your momma think if she saw this?" "You're not gonna tell our momma are you?" I said, "I don't know. Let's just talk about it a little bit here. What would your mother think if she saw this?" I said, "Boys, would you put garbage in your mouths? Don't put garbage in your head!" I said, "If I don't tell your momma, would you look at this anymore?" "No sir! No sir! No, no, that's it." I said, "Give it to me." Said, "Yes sir." I put that briefcase full of pornography in my car. I said, "God, if I have a wreck. Both of us are in big trouble."

How do you get rid of a briefcase full of porn? I drove past a high school and there was an incinerator in the back of that high school; I went and dumped the whole thing in that incinerator. I think of little boys like that, little guys like that, I think of my little grandsons. That burns me up; that they have to see this filth and live in this world like that. Friend, we are a world that is sexually sick. They'll never know what God intended for a glorious, wonderful, monogamous marriage; one man for one woman till death do them part. My heart bleeds that they'll not know God's plan, many, in this world today.

And so what mankind became, first of all, sexually perverted and then he becomes **socially perverted**. Look if you will in Romans 1 versus 28 and following, "*And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; being filled with all*

unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful of, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without natural, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful.” Socially perverted.

And then they become **spiritually perverted**. Notice in verse 32, “Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.” What does that mean? We get our pleasure from watching immorality, ungodliness and wickedness. These people become our heroes; people who are so spiritually perverted. They know the judgment of God but they don’t care. They strut right into Hell.

Three times in this passage of Scripture it says, “*And God gave them up. And God gave them up. And God gave them over.*” You know what I’m afraid of? That God is going to let Americans have their own way. Do you know the worst thing that God could do to America? Is just step back and say, “Okay, it’s yours. It is yours.” God has put a wall of fire around America. God has blessed America. God has hedged us about. But when God gives up on America, and I wonder how long it’s going to be before He does; I wonder if He hasn’t already. The worst thing God could do for you, friend, would just simply be to leave you alone in your sin. Just give up.

There’s a passage of Scripture, Hosea 4 verse 17, that says, “*Ephraim is joined to his idols; let him alone.*” You say, “Pastor, that’s such a dark, dark picture you painted today.” Yes; you ready for some Good News? Now listen to me, it’s the bad news that makes the Good News good; it’s the bad news that makes the Good News good. What is the Good News? Romans 1 verse 16, “*For I am not ashamed of the Good News of Christ, the Gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.*” And God sent me here today to tell you, if you want to be saved you can be saved. Isaiah 1:18, “*Though your sins be as scarlet, they should be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they can be as wool.*” And you can have every sin forgiven. God, the Holy Spirit, can come live in your heart to give you peace and power and purpose. And you can know beyond the shadow of any doubt or peradventure, when you die or when Jesus comes, you’re going straight to Heaven. If I could give my heart to Jesus Christ for you I would but I cannot, but I can invite you to come to Him. And I can tell that, “*Whosoever will, may come.*”

Would you bow your heads in prayer? Heads are bowed; eyes are closed. And if you want the Lord Jesus, I’m going to invite you to pray like this. Would you pray right now, “Lord Jesus,” just pray. “Lord Jesus, I need You. I’m a sinner; my sin deserves judgment but I need and I want mercy. Jesus, thank You for paying for my sin with Your blood on the cross. Thank You that You took my place; that you took my shame, my suffering on that cross. Thank You, Jesus. And now, Lord Jesus, I

receive You this moment into my heart as my Lord and Savior. Forgive my sin, cleanse me, Lord Jesus. Save me, Jesus.” Pray that and mean it. “Save me, Jesus.”

Did you pray it? Then pray like this, “Thank You for saving me. I don’t ask for a feeling; I don’t look for a sign; I just stand on Your Word. You’re now my Lord and my Savior. Thank You for saving me. And begin now, Lord Jesus, to make me the person You want me to be. And because You died for me I will live for You.” Tell Him that, “Because You died for me I will live for You. I will follow You the rest of my life. I will never, never be ashamed of You, Lord Jesus. And give me the courage to make it public. In Your name I pray, Amen.