

Transformed by the Church

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- [0 : 0 0] Well, General Dwight Eisenhower, the supreme commander of the Allied forces, sent a note to all the Allied soldiers on the verge of the D-Day attack in June 1944.
- It was actually the 4th or 5th of June, so it was just recently all those years ago. And he sent this note to encourage all the soldiers in their fight against the forces of evil that they were going to face as they went across the channel into Europe.
- So, Dwight Eisenhower, the general, wrote a note to all the soldiers about to embark on that journey. They were still in England. And he wanted to encourage them in their fight against evil.
- I'm going to read the note in a second. But what's interesting is if you replace the Allied armies with the Church of God and the evil of Nazi Germany with Satan, you'll get a pretty good picture of how God uses his church to overthrow evil in the world.
- So, I'm just going to read portions of the note, and then I'll make some comments on it. General Eisenhower says this to all the soldiers, You are about to embark upon the great crusade, towards which we have striven these many months.
- [1 : 1 0] The eyes of the world are upon you. The hope and prayers of liberty-loving people everywhere march with you. In company with our brave allies and brothers in arms on other fronts, you will bring about the destruction of the German war machine, the elimination of Nazi tyranny over the oppressed peoples of Europe, and security for ourselves in a free world.
- When you become a Christian, you become part of something much bigger than yourself. You enlist in the war of good against evil.
- As we've been looking at over the last few weeks, we enrolled into this force that, well, there's this cosmic battle going on between the forces of good and evil, between God and sin and Satan.
- But we're not brought into this conflict standing by ourselves. Just like those soldiers waiting on D-Day, they weren't there to fight individually one by one.
- They were there to fight as a collective unit, as part of a small platoon, as part of a company, as part of an army group. We're not fighting alone, but in unison with thousands, upon thousands of others.
- [2 : 2 3] This is the picture of the church. Our goal is the destruction of Satan's kingdom and the elimination of the tyranny of sin over people's lives so that they can live in the freedom of Christ, which we've been looking at over the last few weeks.
- This kind of thing should be the rallying cry of every church service. We're in this battle together. We should see ourselves as brothers in arms, as part of a mighty fighting force.
- It's there to take on this huge thing called evil in the world. The evil is out there, but what we've learned recently is this evil is inside ourselves as well, and it's just as big and just as strong.

And like any force in battle, we will stand or fall depending on how effectively we work together as a unit. And so today, we're looking at how the church as a community needs to operate so that godly change can happen.

And from our passage, there's a few things, but I'm going to highlight two things how the church can do that and what we must focus at doing it well so that our church stands strong and firm. The first thing is we must restore each other gently.

[3 : 40] We will look at restoring each other gently. And then the second thing is carrying each other's burdens carefully. Carrying each other's burdens carefully. So first of all, restoring gently.

In case you don't know it by now, when God calls us to service in him, he doesn't call individuals alone. The whole idea of covenant is he calls families. He calls people in community.

When he created the world, he didn't create one man. He created Adam and Eve. And he told them, go and have a family. He calls Abraham and makes a covenant with him, but with him and his wife and their children and their children's children.

The nation of Israel is born. In the New Testament, when God pours out his Holy Spirit, he doesn't pour it out on an individual. He pours it out on a group. And the whole point is so that his Holy Spirit can be spread throughout all the groups of the world.

The purpose of all of that is so that we are here to help each other in our battle against sin. We can't do it alone.

[4 : 46] To be part of the church community is to help others live the Christian life better. Like soldiers in a war, we have a common enemy, but we also have a common community. We have each other. We're all on the same side.

We're supposed to be fighting the same enemy together, not fighting ourselves. I'm not saying we are fighting ourselves, but we look at what we're supposed to do when things go wrong. So, if we look in verse 1 in Galatians 5, that's why Paul says this, Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently.

But watch yourself, or you may also be tempted. Brothers, if anyone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. The you there is plural.

He's talking to the church community. This is a letter to the churches of Galatia. It's not a letter to one person to do the work of restoring and of fixing when things go wrong.

It's to a church community. To be caught in a sin here is not to be caught out by someone, but more to be caught up in a certain sin or situation that a person can't get out of by themselves.

[5 : 55] Something they've sort of fallen into blindly. Think of the army analogy that we often use. You go out on a recce. It's at night. They told you where to walk.

You kind of listened, but you went back and boom! And you fall into the trap. And now you're like, hey boys, get me out of here because this isn't a good place to be. Luther, writing on this passage, says this about how we fall into these sins.

He says, the saints in this life fall variously into various kinds of sins at various times. Sins of impatience, bitterness, anger, doubt, distrust, jealousy, and so on.

So what does the Bible say that we must do as a collective body when someone is caught up in this kind of thing? When we see they've either made a mistake or they've done something on purpose and they've landed themselves in hot water, how are we to respond?

Well, a few steps I think is going to help us understand what we're supposed to be doing together as a church. Step one, we need to pray about it before we say anything about it.

[7 : 08] We find someone caught in a problem, we need to pray about it before we say anything about it, especially to the person, or especially to someone else. So don't immediately go and tell the person that you're upset or that you're angry or that you're frustrated or that you're irritated about what they've done.

They might have done something, and especially don't do this if it was aimed at you, if you were the target of their particular sin. Rather, go and pray about it.

Pray about the situation, pray about the person, and then leave it up to God to deal with it. What you'll find, very often in a few days or weeks, that that person may well come and apologize to you and say sorry for the very thing that you actually want them to say sorry about.

But you know what often happens? If we speak first without actually thinking or speak first without praying, as I'm saying here, you're going to go to them and it's going to be a disaster because you're upset, you're angry. And then bad words come out, not words that can heal and restore.

Take the time, spend it in prayer, leave it up to God, and then get on with your life and try and be as friendly to that person as possible if you can. I'm not saying go and seek them out, but don't ignore them either. Just be friendly and wait to see if God doesn't do something.

[8 : 25] If you know that you have to speak to them because nothing has changed, then pray for wisdom in knowing what to say, what not to say, and how to say it. And a good place to do that, to get that kind of wisdom, is the book of Proverbs.

Here's a few for us, two for us to think through. Proverbs 12 says this, Proverbs 12, 18, reckless words pierce like swords, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.

Reckless words pierce like swords, but the tongue of the wise brings healing. And so, you've got an opportunity when you speak to someone, your words can either cut them, shred them up, or they can heal the wound that has been caused, whether they've caused it, or whether someone else has caused it, or whether you're part of the problem.

So, be careful about the words that you use, because they can do more damage, or do more healing. Paul is saying, I want you to have words that heal, not hurt.

Proverbs 15, verse 1, a gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. And how many times have we fallen over that trap? Something's happened, oh, I can't believe you've done that.

[9 : 35] And instead of de-escalating a situation that's already sort of, there's emotions, there's electricity flying, it can go either way, and instead of bringing it down with a calm word, a gentle answer, you come in with a hot word, and boom, the whole thing explodes.

So, step one, don't say anything, go and pray about it, and you may well find that the situation is resolved without you having to take any steps. That would be ideal, to be perfectly honest. Just let God sort it out, work in their heart, and then let them come to you, and apologize, or try and ask for help to fix something.

That does often happen. Step number two, be careful about gossiping about what the other person, about that person to someone else.

Be careful of gossiping about the person, or the situation to others. Don't go, something has happened, you've noticed it, you know, Adrian, I can't believe, have you seen, and so, and so, and so, and so, and so, I just really, I really don't understand why they've done that.

Adrian doesn't know anything about it, he's not involved in the situation, why are you telling him? We have to follow the biblical approach of Matthew 18, that Jesus himself says we must follow.

[10 : 50] This is a very important principle for us to get, when dealing with conflict and restoration, and resolving personal issues. It's very easy, but it doesn't seem to often get followed for some strange reason.

Matthew 18, and from verse 15, I would like you to turn there, it's not going to be on the screen, so if you've got your Bibles, just turn with me to keep your finger in Galatians, but join me in Matthew 18. It's often called the Matthew 18 principle.

It's well worth knowing and applying. Jesus here is speaking, various laws, commands about how to live, and he says this, verse 15, chapter 18, verse 15 of Matthew, if your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, but just between the two of you.

If they listen to you, you've won them over. Well done. Good job. Job over. Job done. You don't need to tell anyone else. Just go to them and say, hey, I've noticed something.

Can I chat with you about it? Not, hey, why have you done this? I'm so angry. That's not going to resolve the issue. That's going to make it worse. Okay, if they don't listen, verse 16, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.

[12 : 12] Then you say, okay, only then do you go to someone else and say, listen, there's been a problem, there's a conflict between me and someone else. I have spoken to them.

They haven't responded in a way that's been helpful. Could you please come and help me sort it out? And then say, but please don't tell anyone else. We'll just go and do that. It doesn't have to be a church leader.

It does help if someone is more wise and more able to discuss these things. If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church, broadcast it then and say, listen, we're really trying to sort this problem out, but it's not working.

You need to know that there's an issue. If they refuse to listen, even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector. That doesn't mean you must treat them horribly. It just means you withdraw from speaking with them and relating to them for a period of time.

The purpose, of course, is to restore, not to chase them away, so that they know, listen, there's a problem. There's a break in fellowship. There's a break in relationship. This guy's not talking to me. I need to do something to fix it.

[13 : 15] And you don't just remain silent. Very often, you would have written a note or given them reasons for what's happened and then a way forward. Listen, I can't speak with you.

This is really, it's weighing so heavily on my heart, but I want you to know that I'll be open to any time you come and speak to me about this so that we can restore friendship or relationship.

That's a very good way of getting that done. I can't tell you how many fires would be put out if Christians just did what Jesus told them to do when sorting out interpersonal conflict.

I also can't tell you how many times I've had people in my office or over the years complaining about something that someone else has done or said, and if I ask them, have you gone and tried to sort it out with the person, oh no, I could never do that.

But, it's not my place to say anything. Funny. Jesus, your king, tells you to do that.

[14 : 15] You actually don't, you don't have an option to say, you know Jesus, that's great advice. You know what, I'm not going to take that advice. I'm just going to go and tell everyone else what this person has done. What normally happens when you do that?

Does it normally resolve the situation or does it normally make it worse? Because they find out that you've spoken about it and then what happens? Now they're angry and now they don't trust you and they've got good reason not to trust you. You just made it worse.

Follow Jesus' example, command, you'll very likely resolve the situation. So step one, pray before you say anything.

Step two, don't go and gossip about that problem to someone else. First, go and speak to that person and then take it up if it's not well resolved.

There are situations where you can't go and speak to that person, I understand, but we, you know, those are really heavy situations. Maybe there's abuse or something really heavy. That's fine. You try and get help at that point.

[15 : 15] But even if it is and you're not sure what's happened, don't make an assumption. Rather go and check first what happened there before you assume that you know you've heard and then you make something big that's not actually there.

Oh, okay. Step two. Step three, and here we're back into our text in Galatians, make sure you know that the goal of your communication is restoration, not condemnation.

The goal of our communication when we speak to someone who's done something wrong that we've noticed is to restore them to fellowship, to restore them to fellowship with God and with us and with the church at large.

That means when we communicate, we mustn't use words that blame. But you did this. Why didn't you do that? Not words to find fault.

Every time you do this, when you do this, this, to belittle, to make them feel small or to hurt or to lay more guilt on them, to make them feel even more worse than they already are about something they've done wrong.

[16 : 27] Rather, to restore, when we communicate in that situation to restore, we want to help them find solutions that will work so they don't keep falling back into the same patterns of thinking, the same sinful patterns of thinking, the same sinful patterns of maybe talking, the same sinful patterns of behavior.

We want to give them solutions to the problem that they're facing, not make their problem worse. You with me on that? So far. The word for restore here in the Greek, it's a lovely word, it's used of mending broken nets and setting broken bones.

We restore broken things so they become whole again. So the hole in the net. And so that it can start working properly so it catches fish.

We restore broken bones, army situation, so they can take up the fight again. That's exactly why we do the restoring in the Christian context.

So that they are empowered to fight back against sin better. And you need that. And they must be restored to fellowship because you need help to do that properly. Restoring is the opposite of trying to catch someone out in a sin and then letting them know how badly they've done.

[17 : 45] Restoring aims to help them change so they don't make the same mistakes again. Restoring empowers and equips them to fight back better against sin the next time. So make sure that that's your aim when you go and speak to someone that's caught in a situation.

Think of the battlefield situation. You're out on maneuvers, looking out for problems, issues. A soldier steps on a landmine and he freezes.

Everyone freezes. And if he moves off, he's going to get blown to pieces. So just imagine the situation. There he is. On a landmine. And you're mad because now everything is stopped.

You can't go to your objective. And so you start shouting at him. What a stupid blablabla. What are you doing that for? We told you a hundred times. Does that help the guy not be on the landmine?

No. If you shout loud enough, if you're not careful, he's going to get a skrik. Jump off and then you're all dead. Does it help to shout at everyone else about how stupid he is?

[18 : 54] No. How does that change anything? He's still on the landmine. A leader, a good Christian, goes to the guy, says, listen, freeze, just stop, don't move.

Do exactly what I tell you to do because I know how to handle this situation. It would be cool if I did, but, hey, listen, we're going to do this. Do exactly what I say and we'll get out of here alive.

Take him aside. Situation saved. Listen, when you're walking in the woods and you see a trip, you see something shiny, looks like it's a trip wire, don't walk there. You're helping him change his behavior so he doesn't get caught in the same situation again.

You get that? All right. Well, how are you meant to do this kind of communication? Well, Paul tells us, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual, you, plural, us, the church, should restore him gently.

If you dive straight in, you're very likely not going to be gentle. You're going to be upset, you're going to be angry, you're going to be too involved, your emotions are going to be too high. So, dealing with someone gently looks and sounds very different than if you're angry or upset.

[20 : 06] Obvious, but being gentle, though, doesn't mean being a pushover. One way of thinking of gentleness is as gentle strength. Gentle strength.

Gentle strength expresses power, but with reserve and gentleness. With ability, but not in anger, not in hurtful ways, in a controlled way.

A gentle person still has clearly defined boundaries. There's things that he likes and doesn't like. There's things that people know and expect, and he can be very forthright and very straight, but he communicates his boundaries, he communicates his displeasure, he communicates where things are wrong in a way that doesn't elicit defensiveness and in a way that doesn't make it sound like attack.

So here's how gentle would potentially look and sound. First thing to notice is your voice. Gentle people have, when they come with gentleness, they've got a soft voice.

Hey, Nick, it was great having you at our bri the other day, but I noticed my last beer went missing. We should chat about that.

[21 : 24] Oh, I didn't see. So, I have a soft voice, not a raised voice. Nick, you took my last beer! Okay? Don't raise your voice.

A gentle voice is not raised. It's not shouting. It's not threatening. It's not constricted with the emotion when you're so uptight and you can't say anything and your words are coming out so fast. No, no, no, no, no, no, things are faster, faster, faster. Slowly.

Measured. Cool. Easy. Easygoing. Mellow and warm. I'm a little bit worked up, so I can't actually give you that mellow and warm. My voice actually to me sounds a little bit constricted right now.

Maybe some warm water will help, but at least you'll notice the difference between talking just in a normal, everyday kind of voice. Hey, I see there's a problem.

I've noticed something. I'd really like to chat with you about it. When can you come and see me? That's cool, calm, and collected. Secondly, gentle words. Make sure your words are not blaming or overly emotive, but directed at the facts.

[22 : 30] I noticed this. I saw this happen. I heard this. Did you notice the same thing? Are you aware that that happened? Have I misread it?

Is there a reason that you did that? Stay away from phrases like, well, you always do this kind of thing. I hate it when you say this and that and this and that. If you ever do that again, you better watch out.

Well, that then talks also about our body and our facial movements. Gentle people have controlled body movements. When you talk and you want to restore, this isn't going to help.

Okay? Neither is that. Neither is that or that or Bart Simpson. Herman Bart Simpson.

I mean, that's not going to help. Controlled body movements. Relaxed, open posture. Sitting down is better than standing up because that means you're prepared.

[23 : 38] You're ready to speak. No pointing. No threatening gestures. No raised eyebrows. You said, what? You did, what? Oh, that's surprising.

Just like that, if possible. No thick bottom lips. That makes me... You can just see the steam. Okay?

And no narrow eyes. Mmm, really? Really? Did you... Mmm, did you... That... Mmm. Okay. Just a nice open face. Oh, that's interesting. I'm sorry to hear that.

Folded hands. If you can. So, now these kind of skills take a certain level of ability. Not huge ability, but some. They take practice, by the way, if you're not used to them.

I guess most of us are, but I get animated when I'm upset. When people talk to me who are not normally animated, they get animated when they're upset.

[24 : 39] We all do. But it is a skill that can be learned. Paul says this is for spiritual people, people full of the Spirit. And so, he says, Lord, Lord, I really need help in staying gentle when I speak to people.

And you pray that, and God will help you do that. I don't naturally possess gentleness. I possess... I can be dramatic.

This is not me being dramatic, by the way. This is me being... not very dramatic. But, I have learned how to be gentle and how to speak to people in conflict situations, mostly from other Christians when I've seen it in practice.

And that's the whole point about being in community. You learn good techniques, good handling, good communication skills when you see other people in conflict. One of the best places to see this is in a Christian home.

When you see a mom and a dad sort things out nicely. Or the mom and the child, or the dad and the child. It's such a pleasure to be in a Christian home where people are fighting. If they're fighting in a Christian way.

[25 : 48] There's a... focus on the family, the Christian ministry. They've got a talk on how to fight well. It's exactly this kind of thing, where you lay out where your problems are, but do it constructively.

I want us to notice one thing. Paul doesn't say if someone is caught in a sin, take it to the pastor. He doesn't say if someone is caught in a sin, take it to the elders. Yes, those who are spiritually mature must get involved.

But Paul is expecting a church about our size. This letter is to churches in Galatia. They're not going to be bigger churches than St. Mark's. Paul is expecting a church about our size to have enough people who can undertake to help Christians in this way.

I dare say we've got that, but it's well worth going over this again so that we know what we need to do when someone is caught out and how we can help them. What you could also do is if you notice someone trying to help, someone who's caught in a sin, and they're not doing it particularly well, there's an opportunity to say, hey, I noticed you tried to help.

I see you've got a great heart. There's a few things I've noticed that might help it be a bit better. So that'd be helpful as well. Okay, if you're still not ready to get involved in sort of gentle restoration, then the next verse gives each of us something to do that we can't all sink our teeth into.

[27 : 09] So Paul goes on to say, verse 2, carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you'll fulfill the law of Christ.

That's a command. It's written in direct, you need to do this. There's no who's doing it, so it's everyone's. Everyone's job. All Christians are to help other Christians carry their burdens.

And when you do that, you make Jesus happy. That's what fulfilling the law of Christ means. You're doing the thing that Jesus told you to do, and it makes, it blesses you, it blesses the other person, it makes Jesus happy, and it's just a good thing to do there.

John Stott, in his commentary on Galatians, makes a helpful comment about linking carrying burdens to the church community. Just a few things I want us to think through quickly. Stott says this, notice the assumption behind this command, namely that we all have burdens, and that God doesn't mean us to carry them alone.

You see that? Carry each other's burdens, not look for some who have burdens because some of us don't have burdens. We've all got burdens. Paul had that thorn in his flesh.

[28 : 25] Paul, writing in Romans, tells exactly what kind of sinner he is. We are no different. So we've all got things in our lives that make our lives hard. We all have burdens, and God doesn't mean us to carry them alone.

We've got to share our burdens. That doesn't mean I must chuck it at you and say, hey listen, I really don't want this. Here, take it. And neither does it mean you must take it from me by force, but look out, watch out, be on the lookout.

So-and-so looks like they're having a hard time. Hey, man, how can I help you? Even if it's just a prayer. And then take the prayer, by the way. Don't use it as an opportunity to then tell them how you need an extra pair of shoes or whatever.

Look, you might do. But be thankful for the prayer and allow God to work in that way. But take other things as well if you need to. God doesn't mean us to carry these burdens alone.

Stott goes on to say, some people try to, though. They think it's a sign of inner strength not to bother other people with their burdens. So be careful of that, that you think you're too strong when you're actually not that strong.

[29 : 26] God says, share it. Don't try and do this thing by yourself. You're not a Christian by yourself. You're a Christian amongst brothers here. Why wouldn't you? Let's help each other. We're a band of brothers.

We're a band of fighting men and women. Hey, man, I can see you're struggling. Let me help you so we get the fight better. That's a good way of thinking about how to help each other. Many Christians think that they mustn't share their burdens, that they must only share it with Jesus and with God, because only Jesus and God can help.

1 Peter 1 verse 5 often comes to mind, cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. So they want to go directly to God. Don't worry about the fellowship of believers. Stott says this, but remember that one of the ways, yes, do that, but one of the ways in which Jesus carries our burdens is through Christian fellowship.

We mustn't be too spiritual when the Bible is being earthly. Paul doesn't say here, take your burdens to God. He says, take your burdens to another human being. Well, then do it. He's the apostle of Christ. He knows what he's talking about.

Don't forget, God works through physical means to bring about spiritual blessing on earth. That's the whole purpose of making Adam and Eve and then later of calling Abraham into covenant with him. Yes, God could have spread blessing by himself.

[30 : 41] He uses humans to do it. That's what the covenant is all about. Also, the fact that we're the ones that messed it all up, so we've got to fix it. Well, that's the whole purpose of the church.

We are blessed in order to be a blessing. We are saved from sin in our life to help save others from the sin in their lives. Not just so that we can be happy on ourselves and everyone must be left to their own devices. That's not fighting together.

That's leaving them behind to get shot at by the enemy. What is the burden that Paul is talking about? Carry each other's burdens.

Well, a burden is anything in someone's life that's making their life more difficult and harder to live to the full. Anything. Paul doesn't spill it out here, but it could be anything.

From the consequences of their own sin, well then, restore them gently. What about the consequences of other people's sin? I saw that at Uton multiple times.

[31 : 41] We worked with prostitutes. Man, I can't tell you what they went through in their life to get to sell their body on the street because they, man, they've had a rough life by the time they become a prostitute.

It's not like they grew up and went to matric and they went, you know, I can go become a dentist or a prostitute. Hey, that sounds good. I'll become a prostitute. There's so much bad things in their life that they're so twisted about how sexuality works.

The consequence of other people's sin. We've, most likely, it could be a consequence of their own sin. It's probably a combination of the two, very often. Right?

We all respond to sinful stimuli in a sinful way. Right? So that's okay. We all do that. Not that it's okay, but just saying that it's common to us. People also, a burden is also living with the consequences of living in a broken world.

Read through Romans 8 to see how Paul describes that. Disease, disaster, poverty. You know what I mean?

[32 : 46] Life is hard. We need to help each other. We need to be on the lookout for helping each other. You know, our Western mindset says, I'm okay, therefore you're okay. It just says that.

I've got a flat-skinned TV, I've got a car, you're probably going to make it yourself, you know, because, you know, I'm not great, no great shakes. And then we're like, no, we've all got issues that need help.

People on different stages of their lives. If we see a brother or sister struggling, we're duty-bound to do what we can to help them. We must be careful not to take the whole full load on ourself, but we must do what we can to help lighten the load for them.

How does this look? What are we talking about? I want to suggest that it looks very much like what we've been doing in the transformation challenge. It will look very mundane and ordinary most of the time.

Hey man, I see you're struggling. Is there anything I can pray for? Come on. My, yeah, my back is, my muscles aren't.

[33 : 50] Hey, Lord, please, won't you help heal their muscles? There's other things, but that's what they want. Go pray for it. What's the problem? I don't have a job. Lord, please provide work for this person. Helping will take time, it will take effort, and it will take sacrifice.

Someone's got a burden, if you take it, it's going to make your burden heavier. That's okay. The more you do it, the stronger you get. If you do it well. Don't take it and then chuck it down, you know.

Shame. Changing the world, helping each other. Here, could look like a long phone call in the evening when you're tired and you don't want to make it.

It could be a plate of food to someone recovering from surgery, going out and buying the food and cooking it and taking it to them. It could be a lift in a car to someone who doesn't have one.

It could be buying data so someone can send an email or send a WhatsApp. Maybe it means buying a phone. So it's very, it looks and sounds ordinary, this bearing each other's burdens and restoring each other, but remember, in the kingdom of God, what looks ordinary is actually not because this is exactly what God uses to change the world.

[35 : 05] He doesn't do it without us. He does it with us and how we interact and talk to each other. The cross looks like a piece of wood. In reality, it's a throne. Death looks like defeat.

In reality, it's new life. Jesus looks like an ordinary man. In reality, he's the king of the universe and the bringer of life and blessings and all good things.

Back to Dwight Eisenhower as we close. He continues in his note to the Allied forces. I'll quote it and then I'll give our Christian interpretation again.

He says to the soldiers, your task will not be an easy one. Your enemy is well trained, well equipped, and battle hardened. He will fight savagely.

But the Allied forces have inflicted upon our enemy great defeats in open battle, on the ground, and in the air. We have at our disposal great reserves of trained fighting men.

[36 : 07] The tide has turned. The free men of the world are marching together to victory. Friends, the tide has turned. Evil has been conquered.

Jesus, the great captain of our salvation, has gone before us and gathered to himself men and women from every nation, tribe, and tongue who have been freed from the tyranny of sin and Satan.

We have an army of spirit-filled, Bible-believing men and women who will see this fight through. In the words of Churchill, I'm going to mix our metaphors here, we will never give up and we will never surrender.

We march together under one banner, Christ our Lord, and our victory is assured. Does that make you want to be part of a church and do some good for each other?

I hope so. Let's pray. Let's pray. Dear Lord Jesus, we've all got our burdens to bear, Lord. We all suffer from our own sin and the sin of others and living in a sinful, broken world.

[37 : 13] And we need your help, Lord, above all. But Lord, you have chosen to use others to receive help from and to give help to. Lord, help us to fulfill your command to help and love and carry and restore and to do it nicely and gently and sweetly and kindly and wisely.

Do that for us, Lord, here at St. Mark's and help us to look for opportunities to do that. Be with us, Lord, in the weeks ahead as we seek to do your will and build your kingdom here.

In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.