

# What If?

## Series: Not About Me #1

### 1 Corinthians 1:1-3

Dr. Matt Cassidy --- December 30, 2018

[Prayer]

*Lord, we lift up our souls to You on this day. We put an end to 2018 and look forward to 2019. We celebrate Your reckless love. Lord, I'd ask that You would open our hearts to the power of that love in our lives and the power of bringing us to a place that we couldn't get to otherwise; that You first loved us; that You humbled Yourself and brought Yourself into our lives. You pursued us like a reckless lover. We rebuffed You and You continued to come after us. Lord, I'd ask that Your Spirit would ignite our souls, our minds, our wills, that we might live in a way that reflects that love. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

Good morning, everyone! Please have a seat. I want to first thank everyone for all the work they did on making the Christmas Eve service a great event. I haven't looked at any of the numbers --- we take attendance for the sake of knowing what to do next year for parking and otherwise --- but I think it was the highest attendance we've had. And it went very smoothly, so thank you for all you volunteers --- thanks for showing up early, thanks for bringing friends, thanks for coming, thanks for making Christmas Eve awesome this year. So give yourselves and the other guys a clap.

I'd like to spend the next three weeks or so looking at the Books of 1 and 2 Corinthians. I took a seminary class in the summer of 2017 and the title was Paul the Pastor. And we looked extensively at 1 and 2 Corinthians. For three weeks I'd like

to look at that with you guys. If you'll do that for homework --- continue to read those two books together --- I'm going to give you some insight on that town that will help you understand why Paul writes words that he doesn't write in any other book and the way his style of writing is different in these two books. I'll tell you a little bit about that in just a minute.

## Introduction

As an introduction, there is a darkness inside of us that is committed to and determined to ruin us. It keeps us from enjoying God. It keeps us from enjoying other people. It stops us from apologizing, for taking responsibility, for admitting our wrong. Or it keeps us from exposing a weakness. It keeps us from forgiving other people. Pride is the grip of a grudge. That's why we're able to hold on. Pride is why we lie about our past. It's why we cheat at silly game boards --- because we don't want to lose. It's darkest when we are amused at someone else's failure. Pride stands in the way. It divides. Pride divides. It divides our relationships with other people, it divides our relationship with God.

**... it is pride which has been the chief cause of misery in every nation and every family since the world began.**

---- C. S. Lewis

C. S. Lewis said this: "It is pride which has been the chief cause of misery in every nation and in every family since the world began."

Pride is insanity. It is a form of crazy in that it causes our God, the creator of the universe, to stand over to the side so that we might enter the spotlight; that we would get front and center. There is a gravitational pull that is so dense that it pulls

us into this place where we think that we should be the center of all things. And that's how we keep score on things. The Bible says it's a concentration on the self.

**Pride is ruthless, sleepless, unsmiling concentration on the self.**

--- C. S. Lewis

C. S. Lewis again, in another quote farther in the chapter, writes, "Pride is ruthless, sleepless, unsmiling concentration on the self."

Pride turns all things into a means. We evaluate our relationships, whether a job is a good experience or a bad experience, or an event, anything we might attend, is ultimately set forth on this ego calculation of *Was it good for me? Did it work for me?* And so pride draws us to this way of keeping score so that if it's not the person, place, or event, it's somehow, *If I don't get something out of it, then I'm not going to continue this.*

## **Two Forms of Pride**

### **SUPERIORITY Form of Pride**

Fundamentally, there are two forms of pride. You can see this in multiple expressions, but there are two umbrella forms of pride. The pride that we most commonly recognize is the boisterous one. I'm going to call that the superiority pride. That's when we look at friendships or events and we're comparing and we're thinking *I'm smarter* or *I'm thinner* or *I'm better or wealthier*, or whatever it might be. And so it's this robust thing. And the ultimate question is *Am I being appreciated*

*for that? Am I being recompensed for that? Am I being valued? I'll find someone that will value me and then I'll go there.*

Don Miller --- he's a clever author --- when he writes a simple chapter on pride, he says --- his name is Don Miller --- "You know, it's like I have a radio station in my head --- KDON --- Don --- all morning, all night." And I would say -- I would add this to his insight --- it's classic rock. It's the good stuff. That's one kind of pride.

### **INFERIORITY Form of Pride**

There's another kind of pride --- not superiority, but inferiority pride. It's a person that thinks about themselves all the time, but poorly. They think of themselves comparatively. They don't feel like they're in a good place. They don't feel like they look good. They don't feel like they are good. They don't feel like they have enough. And they're constantly beating themselves up.

But listen --- it's still all about them. They're still comparing themselves and they're always thinking about themselves. So I would add this to Don Miller's explanation: it's KDON, 24 hours a day, all about Don, but it's kind of that sulky, self-loathing folk station that you listen to for too long and you think, *How can anyone NOT want to take their own life at the end of this?*

### **Humility**

But the point is, whether it's superiority or inferiority pride, it's still pride, because it's all about you. And humility shows up, in contrast --- and humility, by the way, is not thinking less of yourself, but it's thinking about yourself less. It's kind of the concept of being self-forgetful. You even forget you're in this equation.

And a humble person is not needy for attention or approval, and they look at relationships and jobs and events not as means, but as ends within themselves. *Is it a good thing within itself?* If you meet a humble person, you come away thinking, *Wow*. They're almost forgettable in themselves, because in your remembrance of a conversation, they were wondering how *you're* doing. They're happy, they're relaxed, because that ego calculator program --- it's not running. They're just in the moment. They're enjoying the person, they're enjoying the job, they're enjoying the event, because the program isn't running. There's a lot of power in humility. If pride divides, humility unites.

### Pride Is Expensive

Pride is very expensive. The Bible says this quite clearly. Pride comes before a fall. It comes before destruction. It comes before isolation, because pride divides.

### Pride "Bends" You

Let me give you a free example of that. First, pride "bends" you. Yes, it's the Christmas season, and I've read a lot of C. S. Lewis and a lot of the phrases today will be from C. S. Lewis. He comes up with this word "bent." It's our sin nature that's torqued. And the way pride bends you is this. St. Augustine said that pride is not a sin --- it is the root of all sins. It is this demonic petri dish that is able to grow all kinds of diseases. And so pride is the root of the other expressions.

And it's expensive in that **it can bring about anger or bitterness**. It can lead to anger and bitterness. You can be angry about injustice. That would be righteous anger. But then there's a point where it's not about righteous anger any more. It becomes prolonged anger. It becomes a deep-seeded bitterness. And the root of that

--- in this petri dish, what was put in that --- was pride. Because there's a part of bitterness that says this. There are kind of two ways to get there. The part of bitterness goes like this: *If I were in charge, this injustice would have been taken care of.* You see? It's saying, *I'm growing weary waiting on God. The patience of God is making me want to move Him over to the side (insanity) and take center stage and let loose some lightning bolts.*

There's another reason that people become bitter and have to be proud to hold onto bitterness. You see this in the symptoms. It's because you can't stay bitter or angry at someone unless you are looking down at them. There's something within you that says, *I would never do that to someone else.* See, if you can appreciate a person's sin against you --- like I've done that to three other people -- - that would cause you to have compassion for them. *Wow, this is what's it's like to be on the receiving end.* No, no, no. Long-held bitterness says, *I'd never do that. That's beneath me and that's how I'm able to hold on to this anger for so long.*

Sin will bend you. **It causes people to be in fear.** Not all fear is this way, but a lot of fear is based on this expression of pride that I know how things will work. Whether it's the right way --- at least, your definition of the right way --- or at least for me. And so I'm afraid that if someone else is in charge, or I'm just afraid that if life takes on its own randomness, I don't know its outcome. And people live in fear because they know what's best for the world. And so they live in fear because there's no guarantee for that. And then they work towards as much control as possible.

Another expression of fear bending us in a strange way is worry and indecision. Some people --- not all worry and indecision is that way --- some people are slower at making quick decisions than others --- that's just another conversation. But this is the ethical part of this. There are some people that in the insecure part of pride, when the person's self-loathing, that part, a lot of people that have indecision

issues are really just proud people that don't want people not to like them. *If I choose A, some people won't like me, but if I choose B, some people won't like me. So I don't know how to choose.* So you can see that sometimes a person of insecurity can be confused with a person that's extremely proud. It's hard to distinguish these two.

### **Pride Makes You Foolish**

Pride will bend you. It will make you foolish. Pride will make you foolish. How does that happen? Why does that happen? Because proud people don't learn from mistakes. They're repeat offenders. Because every time they have an event in their lives that could be a teachable moment, they're doing the ego calculations and they end up self-justifying the story. I think it's called gaslighting, where they reinvent the story so that, whatever it might be, the fallout or the breakup or the job didn't work out again --- it was his fault, it was her fault, it was the circumstances' fault, it was the wrong fit. And so they don't learn from an opportunity that's right in front of them.

A humble person is looking for opportunities to learn. They can learn from things where 95% of it was out of their control. But the 5% that was in their control and they made a decision that might have been wrong, they say, *Hey, you know what? I can find that decision, I can find why I made that decision, I can learn from that decision.*

A proud person can't learn from the experience in general. A proud person can't learn from direct criticism. If you confront a person that is the superiority type of proud person, they're going to make you pay. They're going to come back after you. They're going to attack you or they'll dismiss it all together. And then you'll think, *Nevermind.* And you were just taught a lesson.

Here's a question. This year has someone talked to you about something you've done that you need to take responsibility for and you made them regret it? You made them pay. You made them feel very threatened, maybe, and you hope they walked away with, *Wow, that wasn't worth it.*

Even the inferiority pride has a game to play. They can't learn from their mistakes either when they're confronted because it will devastate them. And you'll think, *Oh, if I just say this one more thing, this could be the tipping point.* No, they're sulking already, they'll be weeping and crying. And so people learn ... *Umm.... Nevermind. I don't know if that's going to be worth it. Why don't I hold off on this, why don't I let this one go ... again.*

Let me ask you a question. This year, 2018, confronted you in a way so that your response was not aggression, it was passive aggression? That you might have done things you could do so that they might feel guilty or regretful? Or maybe you taught them that it probably won't be worth it to do this in the future? That's pride. That's how it divides. That's why it divides in relationships.

### **Pride Is Invisible**

I think this is the worst attribute of pride, is that it is invisible to the person. It is invisible to the person in the mirror. It is a silent killer. It hides itself. It's carbon monoxide. It is without any kind of smell. It's odorless. And by the time that a person figures out that they might have this problem, the damage is long done.

The irony here is that the prouder you are, the less proud you think you are. You take spiritual tests and you say, *I'm doing it. I'm doing this great.* It blinds you from your illness. And so here's what happens --- pride divides. That friend of yours that's telling you that you're wrong and that you need to take responsibility, that

you're now denying --- that's not your next ex-friend. That's the person that's actually trying to help you. And pride will try to make you deaf to what they're saying or figure out a way to move this person from a friend to an ex-friend. Do you understand? If not this event, something will come up in the next few weeks or months where you say, *You know what? It's not you, it's me. We're going to have to break up. We can't be friends anymore.* And it goes back to this thing where someone says, "You made a problem and your denial of the problem is part of the problem. And I'm not going to do this anymore." And then, there you go.

### Application

Let me show you some diagnostic questions on how to shine the light on this invisible illness. How hard is it to ask for forgiveness? And a kind of corollary to that, the forgiveness word --- the depth of forgiveness. How hard is it to understand the injured person's bruise? Can you empathize with them? How hard is it to ask for forgiveness? That's just fundamentals.

Now let's go up the ladder to the JV level. How hard is it to confess and ask for forgiveness if and only if the other person is going to bring in their part of it as well? *I'll go if you go.* How do you feel if they don't go? It's a one-way confessional and you thought it was two way.

How about this one? This is varsity level. Okay, everybody outside. Let's just say that there's some kind of meter on a wall that judges stuff, and it's true and you can't argue with it. Ninety-five percent of this thing is on the other person. How hard is it to confess the 5%? Why would you confess the 5%? Why would you ask for forgiveness for the 5%? Because it's the right thing to do. Why wouldn't you? Because of pride. That's how it shows itself. That's how it becomes visible to you -

-- usually in the context of admitting wrong, taking responsibility, confession of sins, independent of how anyone else is doing anything.

But let me ask you, how much has pride cost you so far? Another friend, another position of influence? A family member? I've seen small groups explode over this. It divides. It divides churches. And here's the thing --- it makes you absolutely, completely tone deaf to the Holy Spirit's prompting. That is the most expensive aspect and cost of pride.

### **Case in Point: The Corinthian Church**

Now all of that is an introduction to an introduction. This is Paul's letter to the proudest church in the New Testament times, the church in Corinth. And this is a book that's written with particular insight and strategy because 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians are written to this church because of who they are and where they are. I would love you to just read chapters 1 and 2 of 1 Corinthians for the next two weeks as we look at this. And I want you to see --- keep in mind that this introduction --- I'll do some more introductions next week --- but you must understand this city and this culture to understand these two books.

Let me tell you a little bit about Corinth. It's a city, one of the Greek cities. And if you can think of it geographically, think of an hourglass figure with a land mass here and a thin waistline and another land mass down here. The thin waistline --- that's Corinth. It has harbors on both sides. In the north it's to Europe, in the south, it's to Asia. What does that tell you? Oh, yeah. This is prime real estate. And one of the better parts is that it's so strategic for commerce. And one of the best parts about it is that in 150 BC, Rome destroyed it. And then Julius Caesar realized how strategic it was --- the unprecedented potential for great wealth, this town with two

harbors entering two major parts of the world. And so he rebuilds the city. So it's a new town. Everything is flashy and new.

And then when you consider the population, there is no aristocracy there. He doesn't allow it. So he, Caesar, he populates it with soldiers, ex-soldiers, and freemen, or ex-slaves. So there's no one that just comes in and says --- there are no bluebloods that take all the money and the power. It's just a mob of hungry and ambitious, scrappy, highly motivated people who want to get ahead. Wow. It sounds like a town I know. And people that didn't have to go by the old ways. It's the new boomtown, it's the new place to be, it's the capital of potential. Wow.

The culture itself, because of so much tourism, because of so many people coming and going, the culture itself was that you must tolerate everything --- almost everything. Honestly --- sorry, you Navy guys --- but because there are so many sailors in this town and because there are so many people from all over the world and because these people are fairly transient --- they had no sexual ethics. Promiscuity was encouraged. And their attitude towards sexuality was anything goes ... well, except modesty. I mean, there is a scarlet letter, it's the "V" for virgin.

As a matter of fact, Aphrodite --- where we get the word "aphrodesiac" --- was the goddess of love and passion and pleasure and beauty. She had a major temple in Corinth. One author said there were a thousand temple prostitutes dedicated to running this shrine. If you were called a woman from Corinth, you were just called a prostitute.

Their values in belief --- I guess you'd call it religion --- were that you can believe anything. Well, not anything. You can't believe in this one thing. Because people were from all over the world, they had hundreds of different gods to worship. And you can worship any or all of them. You just couldn't say that there was only one God. Jews and Christians were persecuted regularly.

The point is that the climate, the attitude of the culture was no-holds-barred, free competition. It's all about a fight for wealth and status and power. That's what's going on. And the way you got wealth and status and power most of the time was to put your name out front so that everybody knew how much wealth, status, and power you had. Yeah. It sounds a lot like our culture today. It's the Christmas letter you get. It's the Facebook page, it's the Twitter post, it's whatever things you do on the Internet. But you're constantly putting it out there, in a culture of shame and power and honor, it's "I'm better than you" obsession that's taking place everywhere.

Look, this is a quote from a historian: "Corinth was a city where public boasting and self-promotion had become an art form." He means that literally. It became an art form. There was so much construction going on, that every time a building was built, a guy slapped his name on it. One of the city councilmen there in Corinth built a giant fountain in a pretty major part of the town and he put in a giant, etched-in stone that said --- his name was Baibius --- "Baibius paid for this monument out of his own wealth and approved it by his own authority as a city magistrate." *I paid for this and I approved it because I could.* He put that plaque on two different sides of the fountain so that everybody could see it.

This is true. They couldn't keep up with the statue production. And so they have pictures of statues of people, but it had a different name on it, because that's how you could self-promote. It would be like, I don't know, a statue of Thomas Jefferson, and I could come in and say, *You know what? I'll pay X amount of money to put my name on that.* And so the statue is of Jefferson but it says "Matt Cassidy" on it. Is that self-promotion or what?

Man, wouldn't that be great if we could get somebody to put their name on that stinking parking lot across the street and say, "Yeah, Bob Johnson paid for this and pushed it through the city." I'd pay for that. I'll do it.

Now if you can imagine the culture here, it produced personality cults --- people putting their name out there, constantly saying, *Oh, I'm better than you, I'm bigger than you, I'm fancier* ... whatever it might be. And if you couldn't be that person --- that happens, right? --- you could be a follower of that person and get swept up in his backdraft or in his wake. You'd get caught up in the wake of this person who was famous or powerful or a great public speaker. Sound familiar? Yeah. Sounds a lot like today.

So all this culture of pride, all this wrestling for position. All of this one-upmanship, all this putting yourself out there as a someone important. Do you think it made its way into the church? Oh, yeah. Of course it did. The culture always makes its way into the church, but the church doesn't know it's in there because they're part of the culture. You can't ask a fish about water.

#### **1 Corinthians 1:10**

**I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment.**

And so Paul is from outside of that and he's realizing that pride divides and this is the proudest church in all of the churches that he has, and it's dividing the church. Look what it says in 1 Corinthians 1:10: "I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, can you guys all just agree? Can there be no divisions among you, that you'd be united in the same mind, in the same judgment?"

## **1 Corinthians 1:11-12**

**For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is quarreling among you, my brothers. <sup>12</sup> What I mean is that each one of you says, "I follow Paul," or "I follow Apollos," or "I follow Cephas," or "I follow Christ."**

Humility unites. Pride divides. Look at all the divisive phrases in that. Why was there so much division? Because there was so much pride. Look at the next sentence. "For it has been told to me by Chloe's people that there is quarreling among you about stupid stuff." He says, "What I mean by this is that each one of you says, 'Oh, I follow Paul.' 'Oh, I follow Apollos.' 'I follow Cephas.' 'I follow Jesus.'"

I mean, isn't that like our church today? I don't know if you know this --- I'm just in this business --- but there's a celebration and celebrity-zation or whatever of pastors. And it's like, "Oh, I follow this guy." "Well, I podcast this guy." It's fine if you listen to other people preaching, but there are followers? Are you dressing like him, are you acting like him? It's kind of strange. It's a strange thing. Some things never change.

There's the C. S. Lewis quote. Lewis said, "If you think the Bible doesn't apply to your life" --- if you hear a person say they don't think the Bible applies to his or her life --- "you should tell that person to keep reading comic books." This is a grown-up book. This Bible is very applicable. If you don't see Austin in Corinth, then I need to spend more time on it. We'll look at that next week, as a matter of fact.

### **What Does Paul Do? What Do You Do?**

But let me get on to application. What do you do? How do you kill the killer inside of your soul? How do you play a game where nobody can win? That's what

Paul is addressing in these two books written to the Corinthians. How do you do that? Here's what Paul said: Don't play stupid games. The message that Paul writes and the style of writing in these two books is fascinating, because he just assaults the culture in almost every sentence. He turns the whole thing on its ear, upside-down. He says, *Don't play. This is so far from who God is, what He's like, and what He's done. You guys are just missing this.*

And so he says, *I won't play the authority game. I won't play the smarter game, I won't play "I'm more influential than other people."* And basically, the theme of the two books is "Look, it's not about me." And this is how it kills pride. This is his solution to pride. He actually uses his own writing and his own values that come out through his writing as an example on how to kill pride.

So instead of exalting himself, he just says, *I'm just kind of a lowly person.* He mentions I don't how many times --- *See, I'm a tentmaker.*

*A tentmaker? Those are the poor people. He has to work with his hands.*

And then he comes in and he says, *I'm not just a tentmaker, I'm promoting the man that I follow, and he's a criminal who was crucified, who was cast out by the religious authorities and the political authorities. So yeah, that's who I hang around with.*

### **1 Corinthians 1:1-3**

**Paul, called by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, <sup>2</sup> to the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours: <sup>3</sup> Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

Everything he's pushing is contrary to what these people admire. Look at the first few verses here. This is how he solves the problem of pride. "Paul, called by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus to the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

Look at it. Study it. Something will hopefully jump out and in just three sentences. Anybody see it? Eleven times in three sentences he says "Lord", "Jesus", or "Christ." Paul starts out of the blocks like a shotgun coming out, saying, *It's not about me*. Eleven times --- there's another sixteen times he says, "God", "Lord", "Jesus", or "Christ" in the next short paragraph. He's enamored with Jesus Christ. He's all he wants to talk about. He's preoccupied. This is so counterculture. It's not about Paul --- are you kidding? Paul is saying, *I'm with Jesus --- Jesus, the one who died that shameful death. He was a carpenter. He had to use His hands, too. He was rejected by everyone. Paul says, Don't play stupid cultural games, because they're keeping you from knowing God. They're keeping you from enjoying God.*

Even when he says he's an apostle --- he has to launch with that, he has to roll that out --- *I, Paul, am an apostle*. But he could have said, *I'm a great apostle*. He could have said that he's the greatest apostle. He wrote more books in the New Testament than anyone else. Most of our theology is from his pen. He doesn't say that. As a matter of fact, in Chapter 15 he says, "I am the least of the apostles." Do you know why he says that in Corinthians? Because he's sticking the knife in them. He's saying, *I'm not playing your stupid games. I'm the least of the apostles.*

Then he says, "You know what, I shouldn't even be an apostle. But I am what I am. By the grace of God I was given this title." Do you see why he says it there? Because he's throwing salt in this wound --- it's killing them.

## **1 Corinthians 1:2**

**To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours.**

He doesn't flatter them either. You're supposed to flatter your audience so that they'll like you. Look what he says to the Corinthians. This is this great city. It's the place to be. "To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours." *Hey, Corinth, you're not so special. You're like a grain of sand on the beach. You're another drop in the ocean. You're just like all the rest of us.*

## **New Center of the Universe**

What if it's not about me? What if I'm not the center of the universe? What if the world doesn't make sense when I'm in the center of the universe and the world doesn't work when I'm in the center of the universe? What if it just causes all things to divide? What's if it's a form of insanity? Who gets to be in the center?

Paul says this: Jesus Christ. He is single-minded in this one idea, eleven times in three sentences, sixteen times in the next paragraph, he's going to say that the divine love of Jesus Christ is the only thing that deserves to be there and has the power to be there. It is mysterious, it is powerful, it has the force to kill even Corinthian pride. That's how you kill pride. It is a reckless love that wrecks pride. It transforms individuals, it transforms marriages. It transforms families, it transforms churches, it transforms cultures. It breaks pride, turns it into humility, and brings people together.

Paul is saying that Jesus Christ --- and you read his résumé, it doesn't read well --- we'll talk about that in the weeks to come. Paul says this: that is the very nature of God. You want to know what's God like, then you look at Jesus. And he's saying this: that is the very nature of the human soul. Jesus is God and man. Humanly speaking, that's how we flourish. That's how we live. Humble is what we run on. Pride, it will get you there fast and you'll blow an engine. That's what he's saying.

It's all throughout the Bible. The humble will be exalted. It says that, and do you know why it says that? Because that's the nature of God. And that's the nature of God creating everything as an expression of His image. His fingerprints are everywhere and His fingerprints are humble.

## Conclusion

Now think about this for the next ... decade. The problem with pride is not what you seek. Because what we seek is love and value and a sense of significance. It is where we seek it. That's the problem. And it's not just to be loved, it's not just to be significant to some person --- I want to be loved by the right person.

Here's a great quote: "The praise of the praiseworthy is the greatest of all honors or rewards." And what we're doing is we're trying to find that everywhere but the right place. It's not what we're seeking, it's where we're seeking it. We're thirsty, we're dying of thirst, and we're looking at ocean water, we're looking at broken cisterns, we're looking at dry wells. And it's not love in general. It's love in specific. I want ultimate assurance of who I am. I want ultimate assurance of my significance and to know I matter. I want ultimate assurance that I'm loved. And you can only find that in one place, and there's plenty of evidence for it. "For God so loved the world ..." He thought it was that significant that He sent His only Son.

It's there. Pride is so needy. And the answer to that need is right in front of us.

Let's talk more about that. What do you do now with your condition, with your selfish, stubborn ego, your inability to confess or take responsibility, the bitterness, the anger, all those sorts of things. What do you do with that? You come next week and we'll talk.

But today we talked about where we find what can kill the thing that kills us. Look at it. Read Paul. Understand why he wrote to these people the way he did.

Let's pray and then we'll look forward to next week.

*Lord Jesus, we stumble around in the dark and it's because we keep our eyes closed. We are so foolish. Lord, I'd ask that You would cause us to be wise, that You would open our eyes to how many different ways this sin of pride bears so much fruit in our lives. And I'd ask, Lord, that You would help us see how the antidote to that is to stop being fixated on ourselves, but to be enamored with You, who You are and what You've done.*

*Lord Jesus, I'd ask that Your Spirit would make a fresh, a new, longing for us to enjoy You. I'd ask that You would bless us with a new insight in the power of Your love. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*