

The Wrong Way

Series: Not About Me #2

1 Corinthians 1: 10-18

Dr. Matt Cassidy --- January 6, 2019

Good morning! Happy New Year! Again, we're looking a little bit in the book of 1 Corinthians. If you want to turn in your Bibles there, we'll be looking at the first two chapters again. Today we're going to talk about something that I know a lot about. I'm kind of an expert at this. It's called getting lost. It's about going the wrong way ... for a long time.

I hate, hate, hate getting lost and it's not just the humiliating part of it, like I'm ever going to ask Melinda for directions. But I hate the part where you just waste all this time and progress of where you could be versus where you are. And, yeah, the farther you drive the wrong way, the farther out of the way you go. And so, I have found as an expert that if you speed up, it's actually taking you the wrong direction faster.

But here's what's happening inside the head of a person that's lost. Okay, I don't like people that don't understand math and sometimes there's someone in your car that doesn't understand math and they'll say something that's consoling, but they don't understand math and so it's not really a help. They'll say, "Oh, we're only ten minutes out of the way." Well, see, that's not ---- no, no, we went the wrong direction for ten minutes and then it takes us another ten minutes to get back, assuming we're not speeding. So now we're twenty minutes the wrong direction just to get back to point zero where we made the bad decision and chose

to go the wrong way. That's why I really hate getting lost and going the wrong way.

The Church at Corinth

The reason I tell you about getting lost, the reason that's the subject of our conversation today, is when you look at the books of 1 and 2 Corinthians, especially the passage we're going to look at today, you need to understand that the Corinthian church was going the wrong way. They were headed in a completely opposite direction than where they were meant to go. And one of the problems with the Corinthians is that that town is a lot like Austin. It was a new town, it was a flashy place to live, the value of real estate was going up to the roof, there were very ambitious people there, intelligent people. And the vibe there was self-promotion. Get yourself out there, get your name out there, be known, be seen. People in that town --- they never met a promotion that they didn't love. Because the way to success is always up. It's always up and to the right. That's how you define success.

The Road to Honor

And the point of the letter to them and probably to us is that we're going the wrong way. The church in Corinth, this Roman city, loved status. They loved honor. They loved associating with people with status and honor. It was so a part of their culture that they actually had a phrase to encapsulate the whole value system. It was called "The Road to Honor." And everybody knew --- or sometimes they'd call it "The Path to Honor" --- the way of getting rewarded, the way of putting yourself out there. It was a phrase. People knew that. *Oh yeah, he's on the*

fast track to the road of honor, they'd say. And the idea was like branding yourself, getting known, putting yourself out there. And so you need to know this going into reading these books, especially the passage that we're going to look at today.

This is a primary way of keeping score on "The Road to Honor" --- power and wisdom. Those attributes --- those are certainly the primary attributes, acquiring power, acquiring wisdom. Power: the ability to be in charge of your life, to be in control of all things around you. And if you could control other people, good for you. You're on that road and you're going up and to the right.

And then the idea of wisdom there --- we'll spend more time on this next week, because it's certainly part of their culture to be sophisticated, particularly and especially the idea of public speaking. If you were the rock star of the day, you'd be the captain of the debate team. If you were the king of rhetoric, you got money for nothing. You were there, you'd arrived. And so, just to make sure that you understand the culture, if you were born in the right family, went to the right schools, lived in the right zip code, could talk circles around people, you were there.

You had at least two things happen to you if you could score those. One, you had a following. You had people say, "Oh, I'm with that guy. I'm friends with him. I hope he uses my name in an illustration." You had followers; you had a following. And the other thing is that you probably, just in light of the archaeology of this town, you probably had some statue of someone, but your name was on it, because, boy, people loved that. They loved that status.

And so the idea of climbing the ladder of success, ascending this road of honor, is pervasive in the culture of Corinth. It is so because it is in the soul of all hearts. It is our bent. This is not the way we were designed, but this is the way

we're made. And this was causing a dangerous division in the church of Corinth. They brought that attitude into the Corinthian church, and Paul knows this, first, because this is the way so many churches are; this is the way people are.

Paul knows this: they were first Corinthians, and then they were followers of Jesus. You see? What was rattling around in their head, their worldview, keeping score, who's winning, was the Corinthian value system, and they just happened to be followers of Jesus Christ. So if that's the order of your value system, yeah, there's going to be a lot of trouble.

The Corinthian Church's Attitude Toward Paul

And you can tell there's a problem there because Paul, when he writes this letter, he understands the way they're thinking about him. And so there's a group of people there that are saying, *Oh, we're friends of Paul. Paul likes us. We're followers of Paul, we like his teaching. We're with him.*

And then there were enemies of Paul. There were people saying, *Why do you even listen to him? He's not very wise, he's not exactly the smartest guy around, he doesn't have a lot of power. You know, he works with hands --- you know that, right? He's a tentmaker. He's not even sponsored --- he doesn't have a sponsor. And he's a terrible public speaker.* That's the people against Paul.

So the people that are for Paul are telling Paul, *Paul, you could help us out a lot if you could put yourself out there a little bit. If you could just try a little harder, maybe, for example in public speaking. Maybe you could work on your timing or your delivery. Tell a couple of jokes here and there --- that would be good. If you'd quit making tents, that would be good too. We could sponsor you. You could live at one of our houses and we could sponsor you.*

Paul's Response

These are real things happening. And when you read through 1 Corinthians especially, you're going to see Paul bragging about making tents and stuff, because he knows that culture. He's poking them where it hurts.

So look, just for the record, Paul could have played their stupid games and won stupid prizes. Paul had gone in the wrong direction for ... well, decades. He could have written this letter and said, *Fine. You want me to show you the "road to honor"? I know that road. Make way for me, I'm coming in the passing lane. Pharisee of Pharisees, I'm a Roman citizen, I was personally disciplined by some of the greatest minds in the Middle East. Oh, yeah, that debate I had at Mars Hill? – legendary.*

He doesn't. Not to this church, because this church has a big problem. They're Corinthians first, they're followers of Christ second. And Paul has to dismantle this value system. He's got to get inside and explode it from the inside out and show them in his life and in the life of Christ, there is no room for this hierarchy in following Jesus Christ.

So what he does is he says, *You've got it wrong, you've got it absolutely going the wrong way and you're kind of racing to see how far off you can get.*

1 Corinthians 2:1-5

And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. ² For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. ³ And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, ⁴ and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, ⁵ so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

Watch --- let me show you this. Ladies and gentleman, this is the introduction of Paul the apostle, and watch how he introduces Jesus Christ. 1 Corinthians 2: 1-5, he says: “Look, when I came to you, brothers, I didn’t come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or with wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, and my speech and my message --- they were not in plausible words of wisdom, but this was to be demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.”

Look at all the descriptive terms about Paul in this passage. Look what he’s saying. He’s saying, *Look, it’s not about me. I don’t want to be on your dumb “road to honor.” I don’t want followers. It’s not about me, it’s about Jesus.* And look what it says: not just Jesus, but Jesus, Him crucified. In this book, Paul is going to bring up Jesus being crucified more than any other book that he’s written. He’s captivated by the cross. This is the center of Paul’s life --- the cross. This is how he’s keeping score. This is his --- not a “road to honor” that’s constantly going up and to the right --- this is a road to glory that’s descending into greatness. That’s what Paul’s exemplifying here. This is what Paul’s all about.

This Corinthian church, this Corinthian value system, right, where it's this Autobahn to see who can get to the top fastest --- he's saying, *Oh, no, I'm going to show you the way real life works in my life and the life of Jesus Christ. The cross is not like a ticket to heaven, he's saying. It is everything that Jesus taught, it's everything that Jesus lived, it is all that is expressed in the kingdom of God in the world right now. The cross is the embodiment of guilt and evil and death and shame. That's what is in the cross. And, in that, Jesus embodies that same cross by bringing His attributes of goodness and love and life and honor. It is the cross that was thought to be the means of killing God. And it is the cross that, through the death of Christ, death was killed.*

And so Paul is just going to keep pushing out. He's going to keep mentioning Jesus, the crucified Jesus. The entire expression of the kingdom of God is contained in this one, small, cruel icon. It's become an icon. It has become a famous expression of the life of Christ --- the cross.

And so there is a road to glory. It's the road of the cross. And Paul is going to show that in himself and he's going to show that in his description of who Jesus is. I want you to see that. I want you to see how he's constantly throwing it in the face of the value system that says more is better, getting is better, power is better. Paul's going to say, *No, that's not it at all. You're going the wrong way. You're going the completely wrong direction.*

Paul Presents Himself

1 Corinthians 2:1-3

And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come ... with LOFTY SPEECH or WISDOM. ² For I decided to KNOW NOTHING among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. ³ And I was with you in WEAKNESS and in FEAR and much TREMBLING.

And so I want you to listen how Paul's projecting himself and Jesus Himself for this value. Chapter 2, verse 1 --- I'm going to look at it again. He said, "And I, when I came to you, brothers, I didn't come with lofty speech or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and fear and trembling ..."

Pop quiz --- what's the "road to honor"? What does it entail? What are the attributes? Power, wisdom. And look what he's promoting. "I didn't come to you with lofty speech. I didn't come to you with lofty wisdom." No, uh-uh. And power? Are you kidding? Look what he says: "I came to you in weakness, in fear, and trembling."

Paul is bragging about the very attributes that he is weak in that drives the Corinthians crazy. And he's saying, *Look, I'm not going to get on your road to nowhere. The things that you look down on people for, I'm going to tell you that I'm worse than that. You think I'm this bad? No, no, you make fun of my teaching? It's terrible, I know. I'm not a very good speaker --- fine.*

Paul Presents Jesus

1 Corinthians 2:2

For I decided to KNOW NOTHING among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

Now look how he presents Jesus. This is subtler because I think we've been reading our Bibles too long, if that's possible. But look what he says in verse 2: "For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified." Jesus Christ and Him crucified --- let's spend the rest of our time analyzing that. Because Paul will not separate Jesus from His crucifixion. Because this crucifixion --- that's where power is. That's where wisdom lies. But not to the "road of honor" up-and-right type people.

Crucifixion

Paul is going to see his audience --- his audience understands. You put crucifixion on your résumé, it does not boost your career. You're not going to become famous or have followers with that on there. The Greeks, the Romans, they were quite experienced in their methods of execution. They had gotten good at it. And they had several methods for different purposes. You want quick, fast, clean? A sharp blade to the neck and they're done. You want something quiet, peaceful, out of the way, not cause a commotion? --- there's hemlock --- Socrates.

But crucifixion --- Christ and Him crucified --- that from a governing standpoint --- it was work. It was inconvenient. It took a lot of time and it took a

lot of money. And so Rome used it sparingly because of the expense. Why would they use it? It would maximize the humiliation of the person being crucified. It maximized the pain that the person would have to endure. Sometimes it would take days for a person that was being crucified to die. It was saved for the people that Rome especially hated. It would drag out without mercy the suffering.

But one of the main reasons they did it was for the humiliation. It wasn't necessary for the crucifixion itself, but it started with stripping the person naked. It showed that they had no power, no control, even to be modest in the least.

And after the beatings they would take them from the place of the beating to the place of the crucifixion --- not the shortest way. They would make a parade out of this, again, for shame, for humiliation. They would take them through the busiest streets, the longest way possible. All the while there's someone involved telling their crimes to the people or sometimes, and/or, they'd carry a placard around their neck of what they were being accused of --- for the sake of shame, for the sake of humiliation.

All that to lead to this death upon a cross. Seneca was a writer during these years and he said that no self-respecting man would allow himself to be crucified. He'd take his own life first.

Crucifixion was called the slave's death, because that's who they'd want to use it for. And not just slaves, but they would use it for people who cause a conspiracy to rebel against Rome and they would make a statement with crucifixion. That's why people were crucified --- to make a statement. Think Spartacus.

So this idea that the way Rome was able to keep control of the people that they had conquered that were still their enemies would be to always have this

threat of crucifixion, this excruciatingly painful long death process that leaves you in humiliation until your last breath. And Paul says, “Christ and Him crucified.” Christ and Him crucified. The “road to honor” --- remember? Power and wisdom. Christ crucified? That’s not on that map. You can’t find that on that map.

The Road to Honor: Power and Wisdom

The road to glory? That’s a different map. Going down is a way. Being meek --- what? I don’t even know what that means. Look how he takes this “road to honor” head on. Looks how he attacks those two things --- power and wisdom, right up front. He punches them right in the nose.

1 Corinthians 1:22-24

For Jews demand signs and Greeks see wisdom,²³ but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles,²⁴ but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

Verse 22 or chapter 1 says, “For Jews demand signs” --- that’s power --- “and the Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified. It’s a stumbling block to the Jews, it is folly to the Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.”

Jews: Wanted Power

See how he’s coming straight at them? The things that they exalt, he condemns. The Jews, they need power. What does that mean? Well, you can see it in the gospels. They’re always saying, “Jesus, show us a sign. Show us you’re the one. You say you’re the Messiah.” And what they’re thinking is, *Look, we can’t*

*follow you unless we can be assured that you can set us free from this Roman enslavement. That's what their definition of Messiah was. They'd thought he'd be a coming king like King David, if you know what that means, in the Old Testament. And so they were saying, "Show us what you can do. Show us all this power you're supposed to have. Let me see you do stuff." And so, personally, the bent side of me --- not the way I was designed but the way I was made --- oh, I love the idea of more power, more strength, more dominance, more control. I know that. And Paul is saying, *That's not Jesus' road. That's the road to honor. That's not the Jesus road. The Jesus road has Jesus with power choosing not to use it and Rome crucifies Him.**

Greeks: Wanted Wisdom

The Greeks say, *What about wisdom? Where's our wisdom in this Jesus? Because wisdom is defined by the person who knows the shortest distance between point A and point B ... that is, how do I get on top fastest.* And I get that. I find somebody who knows the distance to the top with limited hassle and I want to know that secret, right?

And Paul says, *That's not wisdom. That's not on the road. That's not the Jesus road. That might be your road to honor, but the wisdom of the road to glory is this --- the servant is sometimes greater than the master. The first are last; many of the last are first. It is better to give than to receive. If you seek to save your life, you'll lose your life. If you lose your life for Christ's sake, you'll gain it.*

Why Paul Presents Himself and Jesus the Way He Does

That's not Corinthian wisdom. That's not soul-bent wisdom. That seems like foolishness, and that's what Paul is saying. He's saying, "Christ crucified." He keeps saying it together because they're contradictions. You see, he's trying to show you, this over here, this is all about me, it is all about self-preservation. This road to glory leads to self-forgetfulness.

The fact that he's so repetitive in "Christ crucified" is showing --- I know it's easy for us because we're missing that Christ is not Jesus' last name. So it's not like Jesus Christ, like Matt Cassidy --- Jesus is His name and Christ is a title. It means the anointed one, the promised one, the one that's going to come. He was chosen by God --- okay, I get that. That's high and exalted and up here. But crucified --- what? The chosen one is not supposed to be down here because crucified means defeated in humiliation. And so you can't have both. You can have Christ and you have crucified, but he keeps saying "Christ crucified." And because it doesn't fit in their paradigm.

Paul is rubbing their noses in their value system, do you see? He's saying, *You guys are going the wrong way. And you can't understand the gospel because you're trying to filter it through a world view, a value system, a way of keeping score, that is completely different than who you were meant to be and different than the God who made you and the Jesus who saved you. We preach Christ crucified, the Messiah that was killed. He died in a suffering, failed, crushed, shameful way. He had power to stop it and He didn't. He had the wisdom to argue His way out of these accusations and He chose to remain silent.*

From their point of view, they don't understand. Their merit system is based on values and this road to glory continues to descend. And it finds itself at the most public expression of soulish shame and humiliation that the ingenuity of a demented mankind could come up with. That's on that road, that road of crucifixion.

And so here's why he's doing this. Paul is just constantly pushing it out there because he's forcing us to choose definitions of words. And I think that's the reality we live in, words and their definitions. And he's saying, *Look, we have to choose. Either Jesus was not great or we have to redefine what the word "great" means.* Do you see? Either Jesus didn't do the road to honor thing and He lost --- or, we have to redefine the meaning of life, the purpose of life, the redefinition of who I am, who you're supposed to be.

If you know the figure of speech from Chesterton. It's like when he says, "You have to choose with Jesus whether He was the Lord, a liar, or a lunatic." He doesn't let you get all three. You have to choose one of those. And Paul is doing that here. He's saying, *You can choose: He can be the Messiah, He can be crucified --- the crucified Messiah? The only way that works is if you redefine how you keep score, the purpose of life.*

Jesus says, "I came that you might have life, and have it abundantly." Jesus said, *The abundant life is on this road, not on that path to honor.* Romans 12: "You must be transformed by the renewing of your mind." This is what he's talking about --- the renewing of your value system. Wisdom means descending, it means stooping, it means washing the feet of your enemy, it means the crucified carpenter. That's what wisdom is. And power? Power is the expression of suffering love over evil. That's wisdom, that's power. You define it that way and it makes sense.

Paul is saying this. Paul is an apostle, but he's a prophet. Paul is saying this: *You and your pathway to honor --- I can see into the future from here and I'll tell you about Corinth and Rome. In just a few short years the whole place is going to come crumbling down. All it's going to take is a frozen river in the north and you'll be invaded by barbarians and it's gone. In just a couple of years from now people will name their dogs "Caesar."* And we'll be talking about this cross for 2,000 years. It will become the emblem, the icon, the logo, of what it means to succeed. It will be on tombstones all over the world. It will be the hope of the future of many men and women. It will represent forever power and wisdom. And you guys are running the wrong way. That's what Paul is saying.

Jesus Is More and Better

It's a paradigm shift. It's a whole different way of looking at life. It is a road less traveled and Jesus walked it first. We are to walk behind Him. We are to understand that our glory comes with humility and, quite often, humiliation. Glory is the way of the cross. And the way of the cross --- here Paul's doing it again --- the way of the cross is better, deeper, more profound and transcendent.

1 Corinthians 1:25

For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

Look how he picks on our attributes again. Look what he says in the next verse that we're reading from. This is the very next sentence: "For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men." You're not settling for this road to glory. It's better, greater.

Just think about this, okay? Just think, for a second, about the depth of the sovereignty of God. God the Father sovereignly chose crucifixion as the method of destruction of His own begotten Son. He did. Hemlock was available. Jesus was a philosophy teacher. They get rid of those guys quietly and off to the side. *Grab your guys, bring their notebooks, take the hemlock, write about it ... good for you.* That wouldn't be the way Jesus would go. He needed to go this way. You know why? Because it was through this humiliation, it was through this method, that the Christ could be crucified that expressed the nature of God in a way that we could not imagine without. We can't dream this up, that God would be good, that He would be humble.

1. It Is the Nature of God

The world's religions have certain traits in common, but until the gospel of Jesus Christ burst upon the Mediterranean world, no one in the history of human imagination had conceived of such a thing as the worship of a crucified man.

---- Fleming Rutledge

Here's a history scholar saying the same thing: "The world's religions have certain traits in common, but until the gospel of Jesus Christ burst upon the Mediterranean world, no one in the history of human imagination had conceived of such a thing as the worship of a crucified man." Because crucifixion is for losers, for the powerless, for the stupid! And Jesus shows up and says, *This is for the powerful. It is for the ultimate wise. It is an expression of a deep wisdom and a superpower.* It's about the immeasurable love that's expressed in God allowing His Son to do this.

2. It Is the Way God Made Man

The cross was chosen on purpose in the sovereignty of God to show us what God is like, to show us what we were meant to be like. This is how we're designed. This is how we were meant to be. This road to glory, this side, this is our road to victory. This is our way to be. We are people of the cross. We're not people of the path to honor, we're people of the cross. And this pathway to the cross, to become people of the cross --- it is noble, it is glorious, it is painful, it is filled with suffering. It's scary. It is an adventure. *I came that you might have life and that life would be an adventure. It's down this road. You're going the wrong way!* That's what this book's about. That's the abundant life. It's not more status and more stuff and more power. It's at the cross, right? It's at the cross where we find ourselves surrendered.

How many times have you seen pictures, or have you come to the cross, put your face down, maybe literally in the dirt, because that's where you give your life to Him? It's at the foot of this cross, the people of the cross, that you give Him your life, you give Him your ego, you give Him your possessions, you give Him your time, you give Him you. And then you stand up free. That's the way of the cross and we are the people of the cross.

The old way is wrong --- it's bent, it's demented. It's natural to us, but only in our unnatural state of being, drunk on pride. And Jesus didn't say that the way of the cross was just for Him. He said it was for all of the people that were followers of His. "Deny yourself, pick up your cross daily, and follow me. I'll start this path --- you follow this path." He wasn't hiding that from us. The way of glory? The way of honor, or the way of becoming like Christ in all of life? Deny yourself, pick up your cross daily, and follow me.

How?

How do you do that? I think we have to be transformed by the renewing of our minds, and this is the thing we have to renew. Personally, I have to keep this in front of me or I just go back to the default programming that showed up later, not the original programming. And you do whatever you can to remind yourself of the way of the glory versus the way of the cross. The wrong way is intuitive. The right way --- it comes from our memory --- Christ crucified.

I do this --- I've done this four times, I think, in my life. I carry a cross in my pocket. I got one when I was in Israel and this is from an olive tree. And it will stay in my pocket until I lose it like I did the other three. So I'm not good at this, I'm just saying that it work for a while. And it just helps me. Some of you have tokens, right? Six months, six years --- to remind you that there's the power of God's Spirit in your life. That's what needs to rule your life.

So as a person of the cross you go to your office, you go to your school, you go to that place where you volunteer, and you say, *I am not going to take the road to honor. I'm going to take this other one.* Go there this week. Don't promote yourself. Don't start building a statue in your name. Work hard. Work diligently. Work cheerfully as a person of the cross. Go there looking for ways, and pray that God's Spirit would cause you to be creative, that He would cause you to be diligent, that He would cause you to endure suffering. Be a person of the cross.

As a person of the cross, when you go into a meeting this week, go in there and think, Lord, I want someone else to come up with an incredible idea or to be the star of the meeting, not me. If I say something remotely good or effective, may it be forgotten who it came from. May it be an idea that "we" came up with.

You could pray --- I don't know, do you have some masochism in you? --- pray that the person that you least like wins that meeting. And you slap him or her on the back and say, "Great job."

When you're taking a test --- I think school starts soon --- sorry --- but what if you were to take a test as a person of the cross? Then you could see that your identity, whether you're a success or failure, is not determined by this test, and so you are free to do your absolute best, to be diligent in your studying, to take the test without a sense of all of life is hanging on this. And you could present that test under the cross, to the King and Savior of your life, and say, "This is what I'm giving back. Not because I'm not climbing. This is not a way of ascending to some kind of road of honor. This is an expression of Your gifts given to me, giving back to You. I'm not even going to compare myself to other people. I'm only going to give You what You've given to me.

A person of the cross means that you show up to places and you get to be the servant --- of your mate, of your roommate or suitemate, of your child, of your sibling. Try to serve your little brother, your younger brother, your younger sister. See what happens. You're going to freak out your parents! That'll be fun all by itself. See what happens when you take this other path, this path to glory.

Here's why I'm throwing this out there. You just give this a run, this original design, the way God is, the way Jesus is, the way we were designed to be. You'll know you're on the right road going the right direction, feeling a sense of power that is inexplicable and unable to be understood by those on the road to honor. You're going to find a wisdom that transcends, that is mystical, that is from heaven, that the last are first, the meek are strong, the godly, like God, stoop to serve. Let's try that this week. Okay? Will you join me in prayer?

Lord Jesus, wow ... that the cross was chosen for You, this miserable expression of evil men, so that in our attempt to humiliate You, we exalt You in the fullness of who You are and what You are like. We worship You for who You are and what You're like and what You do. And now we see all of what it was meant for.

Lord, I would ask that You would help us take every thought captive, this idea of up and to the right, it is so part of our nature and so part of our culture that it's difficult for us to think outside of that. Would You destroy that in our thoughts? Would You punch that in the nose like Paul does? Would You cause us to stop and ask, Is that the right way? Help us keep from running in that direction.

Lord, I'd ask that we could turn around, face down, become like Christ, the way we were meant to be, and in that, we would show glory to You and show angels and demons, all around, that at least in this soul, things are done on earth as they are in heaven. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.