

Hillside Fellowship Church
February 21, 2021

Pastor Dave Tooker
Friendship with Folly
Proverbs 8:1-11

[Worship]

Pastor Dave: And Father, we believe those words, that you've written the beginning and the end of the story, and that you have provided an incredible way for hope, for life, for joy, for goodness through your Son, Jesus Christ. And so we want to come and say, thank you for the difficulties, the trials, the struggles in this world, because they remind me, this isn't my home.

I really do look forward, one day to be with you, when we don't face death and devastation and pain and hurt anymore. But until then, I know you've got a mission for us, you've got a path for us to walk. And I know that you've called me and called us to be a wise people in a foolish world.

And so I ask today, as I open up your word and as we read through Proverbs 8, would you give us wisdom? I have none to offer. And so as I humbly empty myself, would you fill me with your wisdom and truth to give to Your people, that we might be transformed to look more like your Son? And so I pray that you would use this morning to strengthen lives. For those with hard hearts, would you give the grace that their hearts might be soft to hear truth, to listen to truth, and to take it, that we might admit where we're wrong, adjust our path and follow after you.

Would you do a work this morning that is beyond anything that I could do? Would you be glorified as we simply open your word and say, we believe you? In a world of darkness and lies, we believe you've given us life and truth. So I pray you'd be pleased even as we open your word, spend time together around you, our good God. It's in Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Welcome. Welcome. Let me grab a couple of things before we get started. As I'm grabbing stuff, let me just say, welcome to the newcomers. I've met a number of you. It's your first time. So glad our here. This is Hillside Fellowship. My name's Dave. I'm not gonna hoola-hoop but I'm going to stay in this hoola-hoop today. I'm going to stay seated. It's just something I'm learning.

[Laughter]

So glad you're here. You found yourself at Hillside. We believe Jesus changes everything. He begins by changing us individually. Not just to make us moral people. This book doesn't tell us just to be good. It tells us we need new life. And so, we believe Jesus changes us from the inside out so that we might be a people who stand out in this world that's just crazy.

And so, so glad you're here. Again, my name's Dave. I'm a new creature in Christ. I'm a recovering addict and alcoholic and it's my honor and privilege just to preach and share the scriptures with you. Before I jump in, I really want to encourage you to download the Hillside app. There's a number of resources and classes coming up for the equipping that I think you'd deeply profit from.

One is teacher training coming up. It doesn't matter if you plan to teach here or teach at home. It's just a great equipping class Belinda's put together. Another leadership class is coming up February 28. Belinda has done a great, great job putting that content together. I'm signed up. I just love learning from her and growing in what it means to lead.

Leadership is hard if you're a husband, a dad, a father, if you lead at home, at work, if you've got kids. Leadership is hard and Belinda has done a great job. There's kids ministry training coming up March 6 or 7. If you really want to change the nation, . . .

[Chuckling]

Listen. Vote. You've got a voice. You should vote and do all of that. But if you really want to change the nation, plug into kids ministry.

Show kids Jesus. Teach kids about Jesus. Won't change the next generation. 50 years from now, it'll be amazing. But elections aren't going to change that. I wish it would, but it's not that easy. We gotta train up the next generation.

So with that, we're in Proverbs. We haven't been together for a little bit, so let me do this. We've been looking at Proverbs because Jesus said, I'm going to send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. That's no surprise. Things are going to proceed from bad to worse. It's not going to be popular to be a Christian in the coming years. So Jesus said, I send you out in the midst -- like sheep in the midst of wolves.

Therefore, be shrewd and innocent. At that intersection of shrewdness and innocence is wisdom where you learn to function with wisdom. So many people say, Dave, how do you raise kids in this world? It's crazy. We're being bombarded. I don't know what to do. The answer is wisdom. Where we become competent and proficient at aligning our lives with reality as reality really is.

We live in the kingdom of darkness, bombarded by lies and deception. It makes a huge difference when we'll simply, by the grace of God, align our lives with reality. Becoming competent at doing that.

So today I'm going to show you. Wisdom calls out everywhere. Wisdom calls out everywhere. If you miss it, it's your own fault and I can't help you. Literally. If you miss it, it's because your heart is hard and you don't want to hear it. Watch. I'll read it to you.

Proverbs chapter 8. I'll go verses 1 through 11. God says, Solomon writes, -- he starts out with a question. 1 "Does not wisdom call, and understanding lift up her voice?" There's the question you've got to answer. Now here's his answer.

2 "on top of the heights beside the way, where the paths meet, she takes her stand; 3 beside the gates, at the opening to the city, at the entrance of the Diodorus, she cries out: 4 'To you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the sons of men.'"

That is wisdom calls out to all y'all everywhere every day. Now watch this. Here's the only way we're going to receive it. 5 "Oh, naive ones, understand prudence; and, O fools, understand wisdom. 6 Listen, for I will speak noble things; and the opening of my lips will reveal right things. 7 For my mouth will utter truth; and wickedness is an abomination to my lips.

8 All the utterances in my mouth are in righteousness; there is nothing crooked or perverted in them. 9 They are all straightforward to him who understands, and right to those who find knowledge. 10 Take my instruction and not silver, and knowledge rather than choicest gold. 11 For wisdom is better than jewels; and all desirable things cannot compare with her."

So what we're going to see today is wisdom calls out and wisdom holds court. Dependent on what you do with Wisdom's call is going to show you how you do in Wisdom's court. And so those are the two things I'm going to walk through.

Let me give you a big theological picture before we jump in so you know where we're going. If you read straight through, 782,000 words, Genesis to Revelation, one of the big truths that most of us don't like, but it's true, the Bible holds it forth, is this. God is the ultimate judge. He created reality. He aligns with reality. Therefore, he judges all things according to reality.

Psalm 75:7 says that God is judge. You can just write it down there. If you also read through 782,615 words of the Bible, you would realize this truth. Because of sins entrance into the world, we don't want God to be our judge. We want to be judges. And we do a pretty good job, don't we? Like, we are a whole bunch of Judge Judys and Judge Wopners. We'll judge everyone everywhere for just about everything. Right?

You give me a catastrophe, I'll open up the newspaper and it will be judging, blaming and shaming someone. We can have a freeze in Texas. It's like, well, let's judge and blame W and then Perry and then ERCOT. We'll blame everybody. We'll blame democrats,

republicans. We judge because we want to be the judge. Don't judge me. I'll judge you.

Here comes the twist in the story. This book tells of the ultimate judge, God, who humbled himself, emptied himself, came to earth and was judged so that those who deserve to be judged would get grace and not be declared guilty. That's the good news of the Bible. If you're here for the first time, I want you to know Christ Jesus. I want you to follow him, love him, serve him, surrender your life to him, because there is no one as good as he is.

He left glory to become guilty so that you might receive grace. He loves you. He's for you. Now, we saw in Proverbs as we walked through, that Proverbs is not about life hacks, it's not about how to make your finance better. There's wisdom in there about finances. But guess what? You can have great finances and still go to hell. And for me that's not a win.

It's like, well, man, at least I had good finances. My books were all in order. That's great, but if you miss Jesus, you've missed everything. The book of Proverbs is not about how to have a great marriage, but there's wisdom in there about that. It's not about how to have great relationships. The book of Proverbs is about aligning your life with reality as reality really is. Because then everything else will fall into place.

Now, before I jump into this, one of the things we saw two weeks ago, three weeks ago; there is a pattern to this life. If you're going to gain wisdom, it begins with admitting there is a pattern. There is a fabric. There is a way that this world functions. Wisdom begins admitting there is a way this world functions.

In the physical realm, take aerodynamics. You've got thrust, drag, lift, weight, gravity. If you function according to the principles of aerodynamics, guess what happens? You'll fly. And it's fun. If you choose to function apart from those principles of aerodynamics, guess what happens? You crash. And it's not fun.

Here's the truth. God has given us a pattern. He says, this is the

way the world works. It's not just a physical pattern. There's a moral pattern. There's a relational pattern. There's an emotional pattern. He says, if you choose to align yourself with reality, life will work. It doesn't mean it will be easy. The world's still fallen. But it will work.

Now, he's going to go through, and today, I'll show you. If you miss wisdom, it's your own fault. It's hard. Don't get me wrong. It's hard. Because there are so many streams of information coming in. It's not just, hey, here's reality. There are multiple voices trying to define what reality is. So watch. Let's walk through. Start out with Wisdom's call.

Start out with verses 1 through 4. Here's what he says. 1 "Does not wisdom call, and understanding lift up her voice?" Watch his answer. I want you to see. 2 "On top of the heights . . . "

That means from the highest place, wisdom is calling.

" . . . beside the way . . . "

That is as you're walking, Wisdom's calling out.

" . . . where the paths meet, . . . "

Where everybody comes together, wisdom is calling out.

" . . . she takes her stand; 3 beside the gates, at the opening of the city, . . . "

Everywhere that people come into the city, he's trying to say, wisdom is calling out. There is order. There is a way that things work. And wisdom is calling out.

" . . . At the entrance of the doors, she cries out: 'To you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the sons of men!'"

Let me break down 1 through 4. God has put wisdom everywhere. You have to choose to close your eyes. You have to choose not to see it. Let me walk you through just very quickly. I went long first

service. I'm trying to wrap this up.

Just take creation. The heavens declare the glory of the Lord. Wisdom is crying out from all of creation that there is order, there is a creator. He has put a pattern and a fabric to this world that you can't deny. Here's the problem. Have you read through Romans 1? See? The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of those who suppress the truth in unrighteousness.

The problem with creation is, you can suppress the truth. You can say, you know what? I think creation was a huge accident and all the order, all of the order, I think it was an accident. I can't get there and I've wanted to for most of my life. Problem is, I used to build bombs for fun. Genuinely. I was bored on the weekend, I'd look at my brother and say, we should build a bomb. He'd be like, that's brilliant.

So we would go down to the library -- true story -- and ask the librarian, do you have any books on how to build bombs? She was like, absolutely.

[Laughter]

And I checked it out. This was pre-internet. I checked out the book and they're like, you need black powder. I was like, let's go down to the gun store. 12 years old. They sold me a -- anyway.

[Laughter]

We blew stuff up. But nothing orderly ever came out of that. So, you can suppress the truth to your own harm. So, God hasn't just put wisdom all around us in the universe. Guess what else he did. He put wisdom within us. He gave us a conscience. All of us have a conscience. We struggle with that in modernity. It's like, well, you have to decide what's right and wrong for you. Really? If I punch you in the throat, is that right or wrong?

Like, we know. We know. We know right and wrong. The problem with a conscience is, Romans 1 says, you can sear it. You can make

the wrong choice so often that you begin to call good, evil and evil, good. So God didn't just put wisdom above us and put wisdom in us, he put wisdom around us. Community. One another to speak truth into our lives.

The problem with community is we can separate from one another. It's like, if Kevin speaks truth in my life, I'm like, I'm done with you. You're voted off my island. And we become very lonely which is where America is right now. He's given us the canon of scripture. Wisdom right before us. Most of us just leave that on the counter. We don't read it.

So here's the question. If God has put wisdom all around us, within us, among us, before us, really, why do we miss it? That's a genuine question. Anybody done anything foolish that made your life a mess? Why do we miss it? If it's around us, within us, before us. I know why. The answer is the same reason why America can't fix America's problem politically.

You see, in order to receive wisdom, you have to at last admit that you're wrong. How many people like to admit they're wrong? See, to admit you're wrong, you have to have a safe environment where you can open up and be like, that was dumb. I was wrong. Is America a safe environment for our politicians to say, I was wrong? No, we'll eat them alive. Literally.

So instead of admitting it, we continue in foolishness and folly. Because after you admit you're wrong, then you have to adjust your path. You have to say, here's where I was wrong and I'm going to adjust my trajectory and I'm going to advance in a different way. We don't do that. And in fact, in marriage, most of us don't do that. We don't open up. We armor up. We build our bunkers and we start doing war. Therefore, we remain in foolishness.

Let me show you this. I brought a hoola-hoop and I've really done well so far and I'm really proud of me. Now if you take this hoola-hoop you can figure out how much, you know, πr^2 . Figure out how much room is here. I want to show you how we miss wisdom. But

pastors are the worst at this. I can take the truth and apply it to you. And it feels very good taking the truth and applying it to others. It's typically what we do as husbands and dads. I'll take the truth and apply it to you and feel like I'm walking in the light.

What I want to do this morning is different. I just want to deal with what's inside this hoola-hoop. Instead of trying to apply it to you, I want to show you my biggest areas of foolishness and folly. I want to expose and look at why they're there, what the Bible says about them and how I can heal from them. Because ultimately, here's the truth. This is fun. I'm responsible before God for what's inside this hoola-hoop. Do you know that?

When I stand before him, I may love to talk about Steve's issues before God. He's going to say, Dave, let's talk about you. You see, once you realize you're in charge of what's inside the hoola-hoop, I'm in charge of either beautifying it, building it, making it better. But here's the problem. How many of us have messes inside our hoola-hoop? I mean, it's an epic mess.

When I begin to look at it, I'm like, man, this is awful. And then I realize, as a recovering addict and alcoholic, I can't change much of what's in here. And then I realize, I don't even have much self-control. Has anybody really realized that yet? Well, let me help you.

[Chuckling]

If you take just the statistics of our cohort in America; those surviving 350 some million people in America, do you know that we are the most stressed, anxious, obese, in debt, medicated, and lonely cohort that has ever existed in the history of the world, since we've been measuring this. Well done on the pursuit of happiness, y'all.

[Chuckling.]

And once you realize, I don't have control even of what's going on inside or -- see? Galatians chapter 5, verses 22, 23, 24, the fruit of the spirit that Jesus grows in me is love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, kindness, gentleness, faithfulness, and . . . ?

Aw, you know it. It's the last one on the list so typically we just jettison that one.

[Chuckling]

Once we realize that we don't have self-control, guess what we do. Seek to control others. This is why we jump out of our hoola-hoop and start bringing up other people's junk. Look at your junk. Look at your junk. Look at your junk. Because we don't want to look at our own junk. Therefore, we miss wisdom. We miss Wisdom's voice. We become hardened.

Grab a hoola-hoop. When you get home, stand in it and say, Lord, would you help me deal with my own junk, within here? It's amazing. I'll have people come to me and be like, Dave, I need to advise you on how to run the church.

[Chuckling]

And I say, how are you your finances?

I'm in bankruptcy. But this is not about me. This is about you.

Well, how's your marriage?

Well, which one? First, second or third? But this is not about me. It's about you, Dave. I want to help you.

It's very clear they've lost all self-control, but foolishness and folly will blind you. You'll jump into other people's hoola-hoops that they're responsible for and start telling them what to do. What I want to do today is I want to take you to Wisdom's court. Court's in session and wisdom is calling out. The question is, what will you do with wisdom? The wisdom that even does and gives to you today from this message?

You want to know how we miss it? Go ahead and pull up -- I don't have time -- pull up verse 5. I'll show you how I miss it. Again, I'm

just going to deal with my own hoola-hoop. How do we miss wisdom. If God has put wisdom around us, above us, within us, before us, watch this. Verse 5.

5 "O naive ones, understand prudence; and, O fools, understand wisdom."

What do you need in order to grow in wisdom? The humility to say, I'm naive and a fool. You see, the proud man would say, no, I'm a wise man. Therefore, the proud man can't learn anything and even as the dog returns to its vomit, so does the fool return to his folly. That's just a Bible verse. Terrible picture, but it's a Bible verse.

The fool keeps doing the same thing over and over because he won't admit he's a fool. Therefore, he will always stay the fool. Now, what he does here is brilliant. Because he says, if you really want to grow in wisdom, you have to start out with your blue dot on your GPS. Who are you? Who are you?

Proverbs will give you four types of people. And you're one of those or sometimes all of those. One, Proverbs says, are you naive? Are you a simpleton? If you take all 915 verses in Proverbs, blend it up, one of the type of people is a simpleton or a naive person. A simpleton is just somebody who doesn't know they haven't been educated. My children are not fools. They're simple. They just need to be patiently spoken to. They need to be instructed.

Well then Proverbs will say, not only is there the naive one, but there are fools. Now, you'll know a fool because when the truth comes to a fool, the fool will always try and change the truth to fit himself. Whenever the light comes, the fool tries to adjust the light. He's got a dimmer switch. Truth comes, he just dims it down. He's like, I don't like that. I'm going to change that. That's a fool.

How many of you have ever lied? Tried to change the truth to fit yourself? That's what fools do. Proverbs would also say that there's a wise man and when the truth comes to a wise man, the wise man humbly repents and adjusts himself. Proverbs also says there's an evil man. He's got destruction in his heart.

Proverbs 29:11. These are bad people. They can't rest unless they're tearing other people down. So to a naive one, you just speak patiently. You a wise man, you just speak openly. To a fool, you quit speaking because they don't listen. To an evil man, you speak to the police. You call 9-1-1 because they're bad.

[Laughter]

Genuinely. I mean that. That's the evil person. Now that you've seen that, there are two verbs I need you to see in the last six minutes where I'm going to outline this. How do we gain, gather, and grow in wisdom? Pull up, if you can, verse 6. Here's your first verb.

6 "Listen . . . "

How well do you think Americans listen? We haven't been trained in that, even though we got two ears, one mouth, we should listen twice as much. All we want to do is speak. We've got our Facebook posts, we've got our articles. We already know what we believe. Everybody else should believe like I believe. So we just speak.

The fool speaks incessantly and his sin is compounded by his words. It starts out, "Listen." Now pull up verse 10. Here's your second verb. 10 "Listen and take . . . " So we're to listen, God what are you saying? And then we're to take the truth. Now why don't I do it? Why don't I do it? It seems so simple. Why don't I do it?

Let me be very honest with you and then let me walk through. I got my top 10 failures. I've only got time for my top 2. Why don't I grow in wisdom? Why don't I take wisdom, apply wisdom, listen to wisdom and allow wisdom to transform me? Quite frankly, it's not fun to look at me. I don't like looking at me. It's a lot more fun to look at you and to judge you and to say, here's what YOU need to know and to blame you and to shame you and to guilt you. Because then I don't have to look at my own mess.

I'll show you. This isn't going to be comfortable but it's true. As your pastor and because I'm in the hoola-hoop, you want to know my

biggest failures in the last month? I'll just go back a month and I'll walk you through what I need to learn, where I need to grow, and I'll share with you why it's there. I've taken a month just to process through it.

Here's the truth. Again, the fool will either let everybody speak into his hoola-hoop or nobody. You've got to know who gets to speak into your hoola-hoop. When I was on vacation, my family and I went up to Angel Fire. And when we were there, Brooke was trying to be helpful and she was instructing me on driving.

[Laughter]

I lost it. I literally lost it and began compiling all of the evidence that I have that justifies me in Wisdom's court. I pay for . . . I do . . . I came up with a list of evidence. I destroyed Brooke. I had to pull the car over, apologize, ask Brooke to forgive me, ask the kids to forgive me because I lost it.

Took about another two hours. I said, Brooke, can you help me and speak into my life, what do you see in my life? She said, Dave, you hate correction. Now, I've gotta ask. Where did the information come from? Again, some people let everybody, some people let nobody. Brooke, is she in my hoola-hoop? Yeah. It's my wife. Absolutely she is.

So when she says, Dave, you hate correction, that info comes from my wife. It counts. Whether you like it or not. It counts. So I got to sit in that. Then I gotta ask myself, what does the Bible say about somebody who hates correction? I happen to have memorized it.

[Laughter]

I wish I didn't. Because then I could just let it go. Proverbs 12:1. "He who hates correction is stupid." That's the Bible. That's in the NASB. Senseless. The Bible uses the word "stupid." What do you do when the Bible calls you stupid?

[Chuckling]

And you're in a car dealing with the fact that God, the all wise one just called me stupid in my hoola-hoop. Well, then I have to ask, why is it there? Why do I hate being corrected? And this is where it gets deep. When you begin to ask yourself why? Because I'm missing wisdom and walking in foolishness and folly. Why do I hate correction?

I'm not going to take you clear back, being third born and all of that. The truth is, my identity is based on my performance. That is, every day I'm in court and I'm on trial, so I want to perform very well so I can gather all of my evidence to say, look, I'm justified. I paid for the house. I'm justified. I paid for the vacation. I'm justified. I rented this car. I'm justified. I fed you. I'm justified.

And when Brooke lovingly points out, you turned the wrong way, I lose it. Why? Because she's pointing at my evidence saying, you're not justified. You're not justified. You're wrong. And I lose it because God's using her to say, it doesn't matter how good your performance is, it doesn't measure up.

If your identity is based on your performance, you will always judge and condemn other people because you need to tear them down. That's what was in my heart. What do you do when God calls you stupid? We'll look at that in just a minute.

Let me give you my second biggest failure. So then we get out, we're still on vacation, all of this happened on vacation. Happy vacation. [sarcasm.]

[Laughter]

Well, I parked where I wasn't supposed to park because I was trying to get my kids and their ski boots out to the ski mountain and back into the car. From the ski mountain, there's a big sign that says, "Do Not Park Here." But it's so close to the lift. So I parked there. Well, my kids don't know there's a guard who's coming towards me. So I'm telling the kids, load up, load up, load up.

Have you ever seen a 22 pound, little girl in ski boots; how fast she moves? Not fast. Well, they're not moving as fast as I want them to move. Because the guard is coming because I parked in the wrong spot. So I started throwing kids into the car. Literally. Boof. Boof. My oldest daughter is looking at me in horror and she speaks truth into my life and says, daddy, you're angry.

Now I don't consider myself an angry person. I haven't been arrested for violent or tumultuous behavior in at least a decade.

[Chuckling.]

That's good! And I'm like, you know what? I've dealt with anger. God's dealt with me. I'm good there. Angry? Me? No. Until my daughter looks at me in the face and says, you're angry and it's scaring me daddy. Where did the information come from? My daughter. Is she within the hoola-hoop? Yeah. Do I want to open up? No, I want to armor up and tell her, you're only 10. You don't know. Here are all the things you've done wrong.

But the truth is, she caught me, dead rights. Daddy, your face is angry and you're angry and you're throwing kids. So there's that.

[Laughter]

The information came from my daughter and she has the right to speak into my life. And I've got to ask, what does the Bible say about the angry man? You ever read through Proverbs? It just so happens, I'm studying through Proverbs. [Chuckling.] Proverbs 29, verse 11 says, "The fool let's his temper be known to all. He lets his anger out so all can see."

I'm dead to rights. There I am. I'm a stupid fool. And that's what the Bible has called me. I mean, it's just not good. Now, I have to ask myself. Why is that anger there? Just like I asked why the other issues are there. Why is anger there? Anger is complicated, y'all. It's taken me a month and a half to just unwind it.

Because if you're here and you have no anger, I would tell you, you're

sinning. Ephesians 4:26, the Bible says, "Be angry and sin not. Don't let the sun go down on your anger and let the devil have a foothold." So there are things to be angry about, amen? This world's jacked up. But the Bible also says, don't blow your anger. That's a fool. A fool does that.

So we're not supposed to have NO anger and we're not supposed to have blowing up anger. Does God have anger? Yeah. He's compassionate, filled with loving kindness, but he is slow to anger. His anger is contained in this nuclear containment unit. When his anger comes out, it is a surgical strike on sin that absolutely deals with sin. My anger is not slow anger. It's scorched earth. It's sloppy. It's horrific.

So why is it there. Well, as I began to take it apart -- this is complex -- do you know love and anger are actually roommates? They hang out together. They actually need each other. Most of us don't know that. Love is intimately connected to anger. I'll make it clear to you.

I was on a walk with my family just in our neighborhood. Four kids, Brooke and I. My littlests, little 22 pound and 30 pound, they walk up ahead. I watched it. Out of nowhere this huge dog comes running out of a house, not on a leash, sets eyes on my little 22 pound girl and starts running for her. I'll tell you, my love for my daughter quickly communicated to my anger and said, you love your girl. That dog is about to harm your girl.

And so my love quickly aroused my anger and I was enraged and I ran up and grabbed my girl with my left hand and with my right hand I was ready to kill the dog. I was going to take him out for the glory of God and the good of my family.

[Laughter.]

Now, I know. That's offensive in America. Like, you were going to kill somebody's baby? It's not a baby! It's a dog! Canine! Look it up! I'm just speaking biology. And I know we're all jacked up in America because 82.4 million have pets and only 36.4 million have children and now pets are children. So we can take our pets into Starbucks.

I'm telling you, they're not the same though. And I would gladly kill a dog -- and I know that's offensive to some -- but listen. America is wonky. We've gotten wonky on this.

Your dog can leave treasures in the middle of Starbucks and everybody's okay with it. They can poop right there. Foofoo can go poopoo anywhere foofoo wants to poopoo.

[Chuckling.]

My kid leaves a treasure in Starbucks? I get CPS called on me. That's how wonky this whole thing has gotten. But do you see how anger and love are interrelated. Love will always communicate to anger to protect that which love delights in. Why did I tell you that? What does it tell me when my anger is directed at my wife and kids? What does that mean when my anger and your anger are directed at the ones we're supposed to love and die for?

What does it mean when my anger flows out, scorched earth, on my wife and kids? Who do I love? I love me, me. And if they get too close to exposing my evidence as fraudulent, my evidence is precious to me. My performance. What I love is me. And in this courtroom, I present my evidence every day. That's why Sunday's are so hard.

I'm saying, Lord, don't let this sermon be evidence to my greatness. Let it be to your greatness. Because we're all collecting evidence every day to justify ourselves in court. So the question, then, what do you do when the Bible calls you a stupid fool? Because I'm dead to rights. The Bible? I've just been honest with you in my own hoola-hoop. The Bible has called me a stupid fool.

So what do you do with that? How do you heal from that? How do you grow from that? How do I gain wisdom when the Bible's like, Dave, you're being a stupid fool? Can I share with you the only thing that's set me free? Please make no mistake. Court is in session and it is in session every day.

We live in a country, it's like, don't judge me, bro. You don't judge me,

I won't judge you. There's judgments going on non-stop about how you dress, where you live, how you vote. We're judging each other incessantly. Do you know why that is? Because court really is in session. And I'm being judged every day for what is in this hoola-hoop.

The problem is our hoola-hoops get so filled with trash. We're overwhelmed. We have an accuser. The prosecuting attorney. The accessor of the brethren who accuses us before the Father day and night. I'm desperately afraid that the gavel is going to fall and the verdict will be, Dave, you're guilty. You're worthless. You're useless. You are stupid. You are unwanted.

So when my identity is built up in performance, we keep trying to gather evidence to prove to everybody else, I'm not worthless. I'm not useless. I'm not stupid. I have made it. I am worthy. But the accuser says, but you've done this and you've done this. Remember that time, Mark. Remember that time, Kevin. Remember that time, Bob. Court's in session every day for all of us.

But what has set me free? What's set me free from my addictions? What's set me free from my alcoholism? Because that was very performance driven. What set me free was this. In that courtroom, in my hoola-hoop courtroom, Jesus walks in. And he walks in calmly. He walks in and it's not like he busts open the doors. He just walks in and whispers in my ear and says, Dave, can I be your defense attorney? I want to be your advocate. Will you let me?

You see, as soon as I say, yes, he sits down and allows the accuser to throw out all of the accessor's, the persecuting attorney's case. And it's bad. My sin is great. My debt before God is great. My guilt is great. And Jesus just puts his hand on my shoulder and says, let him speak.

The enemy gets done with his case and it's a profound case. And then it's Jesus' turn and Jesus stands up. But it doesn't go like I thought it would go. I thought Jesus would get up and say, Father, we're pleading for mercy. We're pleading for grace. We're pleading for forgiveness. Please, give Dave another chance? I promise you

he won't do it again. That's not how the defense goes.

In fact, Jesus gets up and says, Father, I don't deny anything the prosecuting attorney says. Oftentimes, he spoke truth. Dave's sin is great and Dave's guilt is great and Dave's debt is immeasurable. There's no way Dave can pay it off. I'm like, Jesus, what are you doing? You're agreeing with the prosecutions case? Jesus just puts his hand on my shoulder and says, wait. Wait for it.

And he says, but, Father, we're not asking for mercy, we're not asking for grace, we're not asking for forgiveness. I know this court is too holy, too righteous, too just, just to sweep sin under the carpet. No, we would never, never ask the court to forgive what Dave has done. It has to be paid for. Justice must be done.

And then Jesus does something that heals me, that transforms me, that gives me all that I need to stand in this trial. He says, but, Father, this court is so righteous and so holy, this court would be unjust to take two payments for Dave's sin. And then Jesus simply holds up his hands and says, Dave's debt has already been paid. So if you demand any payment from him, this court would be unjust and his argument is airtight.

[applause]

It's an airtight case that can't be overturned. You see, other than that, you will be collecting evidence to justify yourself your whole life. You will never open up to anyone. You will armor up and fight everyone. You will collect your evidence and you will argue with your wife and say, what do you mean we're not connected, sweetie? Have I not paid the mortgage? Have I not provided food? Have I not provided your house? That's not what she's talking about. Quit giving your evidence.

Quit trying to justify yourself. Open up and say, Jesus, I'm so sorry. I've been trying to prove how worthy I am. I've come to realize, worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive all glory, all majesty, all dominion and all authority. Only that has set me free from collecting evidence to prove how worthy I am.

Friends, none of us here are worthy. We're all guilty. We've all fallen short and in that court, we are guilty. Is Jesus your defense attorney? Is Jesus your advocate? If he is, you've got an airtight case and you can put the performance down. You can lay your good deeds down. You can quit trying to prove how great you are, because you're not. And you trying to prove how great you are is destroying relationships.

Jesus is great and he wants to give his greatness to you freely by grace, through faith. Today, would you invite him to be your defense attorney, your advocate, your Savior? It's what we talk about in Christianity. He'll gladly sit down. He'll gladly take all of your sin. He'll gladly give you all of his righteousness and allow you to spend all eternity with him. Let's pray.

Father, God, thank you for the Good News that you've given us through your Son, Jesus Christ. News that's so good that it's able to save a wretch like me. And Father, I'm so sorry for how I try and perform and gather evidence and prove how worthy I am. I'm not worthy, but you are worthy.

Jesus, thank you for giving love to unworthy people. That's what you do. You're so good. That's why I pray that you would set us free that we might be a people who walk in wisdom and stop trying to justify ourself, but receive that justification from you freely, by grace. We love you and we're grateful for your goodness to us. In Jesus' name. Amen.



[End]