Jew/Gentile

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[0:00] This is going to be... Hello, you can hear me kind of, it's going to be very limiting! on my ability to wander around, admittedly. Does that got any length on it? A tiny bit. Good.

Hello, that was fun. Good morning, my name's Tim, part of the team here. If you could grab your Bible and turn to Acts chapter 15, we're going to be continuing our preaching series. We've picked up again from last week, something that we were doing for most of the rest of the year that we paused over the summer. What we've seen last week was Paul and Barnabas go on their first missionary journey all around what is these days Turkey to lots of different places, telling people about Jesus or Paul stoned pretty much to death and raised up again. And we meet them this week back in the place called Antioch, where they'd gone from, but facing a very particular problem that's come up again and again and again through our Acts, which is this new church has Jewish people in it and Gentiles, that's the word the Bible uses for non-Jewish people, so probably most of us in the room, and they're finding that difficult. They're finding a cultural clash. They're finding confusion about whether or not Jesus was Jewish, and this seems to be salvation come to the Jewish people. Do we all have to be Jewish or not? They're finding that complicated. And we're going to read about something called the Jerusalem Council, where essentially they got together to figure it out. So let me read to you. I'm going to read from Acts chapter 15, and sort of pause several times and explain what's going on while I keep reading. So it might, I mean, I know the words are on the screen, but it might help you if you've got a Bible with you to have it open, so you know what is the Lord's words and what is just my words. So Acts chapter 15, starting at verse 1.

But some men came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers, unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved. So they found this, this is about AD 48, they've got a group who've come into them in Antioch from elsewhere, from probably from Jerusalem, who are telling them, oh, hang on, some of you here are Jews, some of you are Gentiles, but you guys, you don't seem to have become Jewish. You certainly haven't had the operation you need to have, but you don't appear to be following the law either, and we're concerned about that. And actually, did you realize that you need to be circumcised and you need to follow Moses' law to be saved through Jesus? That's what they're coming to say. And after Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and debate with them, Paul and Barnabas and somebody else were appointed to go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders about this question. So they come to the point, they have some argument, and it's, I like the way that Luke puts it here, some small dissension and debate with them.

You can read what it sounds like in Paul's letter to the Galatians when he writes to a different church at about the same time to address the same problem, when he says to men who are saying, you need to be circumcised, he essentially turns to him in his letter and says, why don't you just chop the whole thing off? Which gives you some measure of the tenor of the debate. So yeah, small dissension and debate with them. Paul is apoplectic with rage about this, but they say, well, what we need to do is we need to figure this out. So they go down to Jerusalem to meet with all of the apostles to figure out what are we going to say? We need agreement on this. We need to figure this thing out.

Well, let's go and debate it. So being sent on their way by the church, they passed through both Phoenicia and Samaria, describing in detail the conversion of the Gentiles and brought great joy to all the brothers. So Paul and Barnabas and the others, as they go down to Jerusalem, essentially everywhere that they go, they stop and say, by the way, did you realize we've just gone all the way through quite a bit of the Roman Empire and we've told people about Jesus, and guess what? [4:02] They met him. They got saved. They got filled with the Spirit. Yeah, they're Gentiles, but it turns out God is for them too. They go and tell this story everywhere that they go because they're

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very excited about it. And then when they came to Jerusalem, they're welcomed by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they declared all that God had done with them. They tell the story again. But some believers who belong to the party of the Pharisees rose up and said, it is necessary to circumcise them and to order them to keep the law of Moses. So that's the problem.

Should they be circumcised or not? Do they have to keep the law of Moses or not? What on earth are they going to do? The apostles and the elders were gathered together to consider this matter. And after there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said, brothers, you know that in my early, sorry, in the early days, God made a choice among you that by my mouth, the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. And God, who knows the heart, bore witness to them by giving them the Holy Spirit just as he did to us. And he made no distinction between us and them, having cleansed their hearts by faith. Now, therefore, why are you putting God to the test by placing a yoke on the neck of the disciples that neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? But we believe that we will be say to the grace of the Lord Jesus just as they will. So Peter, first off, he reminds them of an account that you might remember from a few months back in Acts of a man called Cornelius, who he finds himself called by God to go and encounter and has this, Cornelius is a Gentile, and Peter's like, I'm not quite sure what I should do here. Should I tell them the gospel or not? Which to us sounds like a silly question. But he's like, no one's ever preached the gospel to Gentiles, at least he never has before. He's like, I don't know quite what to do. And he has this dream of lots of animals that he's not supposed to eat as a Jew, and God says to him, eat them. And it takes him a little while to get it, but eventually he gets the idea, oh, okay, what you're saying is, yes, tell them the gospel.

He tells Cornelius the gospel, and immediately, without Peter doing anything, the Holy Spirit falls on them, just like it did on Peter and his friends at Pentecost. And he goes, oh, oh, I get it. It turns out you are actually the God of the whole world, like you'd said you were, which again, feels obvious to us, not actually obvious to him. And so he reminds them, he's like, do you remember that? We knew, we knew that they were part of us because God just gifted himself to them. And it turns out that we're not saved by keeping the law anyway. I'll come back to that. I'll keep reading. And then all the assembly fell silent, and they listened to Barnabas and Paul as they related what signs and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles. So Paul and Barnabas tell their story, they tell everyone responding, they tell all the miracles of the possible raising from the dead of Paul and Lystra, probably all of that. After they finished speaking, James replied, brothers, listen to me. So James, this is Jesus' younger brother, not one of the original disciples, but beloved of the conservative faction that are concerned here. So James is the one that these people used to be Pharisees, they like him. They're sort of hoping he might side with them.

Simeon, that's Peter, but he's deliberately using his Hebrew name. Simeon has related how God first visited the Gentiles to take from them a people for his name. And with this, the words of the prophet, it's agree, just as it's written. And he quotes from the book of Amos, after this, I will return, and I will rebuild the tent of David that is fallen. I will rebuild its ruins, and I will restore it. That's God talking in Amos's voice. That the remnant of mankind may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who are called by my name, says the Lord, who makes these things known from of old. So he argues from the Bible, and he says, in the Old Testament, it said this would happen. He said the Gentiles were going to come in. What you're looking at is what God promised us.

[8:08] Let's not get all upset about it. And then he helps them see, theologically, that actually they, the church, are going to be the new temple. I'm just going to slightly skate over this point, but they're going to be the new temple. The current temple is still standing. It's, what is it, 48 AD, so it's going to stand for another 22 years until it's crushed by the Romans. But he's saying, we're the new temple.

Therefore, this is James, therefore my judgment is that we should not trouble those of the Gentiles who turn to God. Phew! But we should write to them to abstain from the things polluted by idols, and from sexual immorality, and from what has been strangled, and from blood.

But, yeah, that's odd. We'll come back to that in a minute. For from ancient generations, Moses has had in every city those who proclaim him, for he has read every Sabbath in the synagogues. Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders with the whole church to choose men from among them and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas.

They sent Judas, called Bathabas, and Silas, leading men among the brothers, with the following letter. So they've made their decision. They say, Of course you don't have to be circumcised. They

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say, by grace. Of course you don't have to keep the law.
But we would like you to do these four things. We will come back to that. And then they get a group of guys to go back with Paul and Barnabas to help everyone see that it's not just Paul saying what he wants. It's like, this is our whole agreement.
[9:37] We've picked deliberate men representing lots of different groups within the new church to come back up to Antioch to tell them what the answer is. And they write them a letter. I'm not going to read it for you because it largely repeats what I just read, but you can read it.

So I'm going to jump down to verse 30, but the intervening section is the letter that they sent that tells them what they should do. So from verse 30. So when they had sent off, they went down, so when they were sent off, they went down to Antioch, and having gathered the congregation together, they delivered the letter. And when they'd read it, they rejoiced because of its encouragement. And Judas and Silas, who were themselves prophets, encouraged and strengthened the brothers with many words. And after they'd spent some time, they were sent off in peace by the brothers to those who had sent them. But Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord with many others also.
So what's the answer to the problem? Thank goodness you don't have to be circumcised. Now the thing is, I don't know that anyone in the room is asking that. What on earth has this got to do with us? Well, I think there were two questions that this passage answers for us.
One at the end, one earlier on. We're going to take the one at the end first, which is, how do you live with Christians who aren't like you? Or to put it differently, what on earth were those four things that they were told they can't do about?
Why those four problems particularly? Something about idols. We're like, I guess idols are bad. That's kind of straightforward, I suppose. Something about sexual immorality, which is a very broad term. The Greek word there, pornea, sounds like a lot like an English word, and it does include that. But it actually means any sexual activity outside of the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman is prohibited because it misunderstands what sex is.
[11:30] Okay? In fact, Jesus goes further than that. In the Sermon on the Mount, he says, even if you have lust as you look at a woman, then you've committed adultery in your heart.

So not just acts, but also the heart. Okay? So that's forbidden. Fair enough. But then, blood and strangling seem really esoteric to us. What does that mean? And also, these four things seem quite different. We seem to be in very different categories. Like, why did these Gentiles need telling, specifically not to engage in sexual immorality? What would they like? Sort of conjures up some strange ideas about what these new churches Paul was planting might have been like. Or if you read the letter to Corinth, he might be shocked. But what's going on? The thing is, these four things are found in the Old Testament in one place together.
And James is very deliberately referencing Leviticus chapter 17 and 18 in what he's writing to these Gentile Christians. Now, of course, I imagine we're all very familiar with that, but I won't turn and read it. But essentially, we find these four things together in a section that is requirements for non-Jews in the Old Testament era, and it is the Kingdom of Israel, for non-Jews living amongst Jews. So people who come to live in the lands, but they're not Jewish, the Old Testament law says you don't have to keep all the law, but you do have to do this list of very particular things. And that's sort of what James is repeating, which is interesting.
So it's kind of situational. It has something to do with Gentiles living amongst Jews. And that helps us understand what these things are. So when we're talking about idols, we're particularly talking about food that is sacrificed to idols, which is a thing that none of us ever think about and a topic that the New Testament is very concerned by, because it's a very live issue in their world. There's a lot, particularly in 1 Corinthians, quite nuanced argument Paul has about when and when you should and shouldn't eat food that's been sacrificed to idols. But essentially, lots of the meat you can buy has been killed in a temple in part of a worship to some evil demon masquerading as a god. And so as a Christian, should you go and eat it or not?
It's a genuine life problem for them. No, it's the answer. But, and then sexual immorality in that passage in Leviticus, there is a long list of who you can and can't marry, or who you can and can't sleep with. The problem probably, the commentators think that James is talking about here, is that the Jewish idea of who you can marry is much of which it's something called consanguinity. If anyone who used to be an Anglican, you might have seen the back of the Anglican prayer book, there's a page called consanguinity, which tells you who you're allowed to marry. It means same,

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like, who would it be considered incest or not, if I married them, is the question. Which again, is not a thing that most of us are thinking about very often. That's essentially the problem here. Because the Jewish idea of who you're related to, so who you can marry, is essentially the one that we have today, as a result of this passage, was much narrower than the general Gentile one. So lots of, can I marry my cousin? And the Jews are like, this is really odd, please don't do it. Whereas it was quite normal in lots of these cultures. So he's saying, don't do that. Blood and strangling is kind of the same thing. Essentially, animals with the blood in them are forbidden, which is an animal that's been killed by strangling, rather than by being killed with a knife that lets the blood come out of the meat. And again, this is a live issue for a Jewish audience, because blood is a symbol of life. [15:22] So there's some symbolic reasons why they're told not to eat it. But essentially, what we're being told is trying to answer a question, how can we eat together? And this becomes clearer in Paul's letter to the Galatians, where he addresses this, because the real problem is that these guys come in and say, you've got to be circumcised, I'm refusing to eat with people that aren't. And Christianity is practiced at the table. And so the question of who we eat with is actually a very important Christian question. And these four restrictions are saying to these Gentiles, if you want to eat with Jewish brothers and sisters, and please, you should want to, could you please refrain from doing these things?

Because it will massively offend them. Please don't do that. I want you all to eat together at the table. They need to accept you, even though you haven't been circumcised, even though you're not following the law. Would you be willing to do these four things to help them accept you? Because they find them particularly distasteful. That's essentially what James is doing. Which means that it's not, and a few, a few people in the room are breathing a sigh of relief, because that means this passage doesn't say you can't eat black pudding. But it does say you shouldn't eat it with people who it would offend if you did. And actually that principle carries on, in essence. The question is, who can we eat with?

Why is that important? Well, because what's the gospel? The gospel is God has made a table. Jesus has died on the cross to bear your sin and your shame, and essentially taken the wood of it and built it into a table and said, come and eat. That's why, like, the primary sign that we're given to worship together with is communion. It's a table to come and eat. He said, come and eat with me, all of you. That seems weird to us, because he also says he's the food, but again, we'll put that aside for today. But the gospel is God has made a table. Do you want to come and eat with him? He wants to eat with you, which is why who else we eat with really matters, because it's us putting into practice what the gospel is. Who comes into our homes to eat with us? Who invites us elsewhere to eat with them? This is Christian behavior. And when you do that, and you should, by the way, I'm going to sort of, again, to get to my other point, somewhat skate over this quickly. There's lots I could say. But when you have others in your home, or you go to other people's homes to eat with them, and we should be doing this. It should be what our life looks like as part of a church.

Much. Prefer them in what you serve. If they come from a culture where you know that actually they might find it quite difficult if you opened a bottle of wine, don't. But equally, if you're going into someone else's home, and they put things on the table that you're like, oh, I don't know if I like that, try your best to eat it. We should prefer one another, because that's what God does for us. [18:29] He invites all of us to his table. Maybe you even try and serve something you'll think they'll like, which means if you get invited to someone's house, and they've attempted to cut jollof rice, and I'm sure they've not done it right, your response is not to touch and go, oh, this is terrible.

It's to be like, how kind that they tried. We prefer one another in what we serve, because we should try to be eating with Christians who aren't like you, because we're all loved by God, and he wants all of us in his kingdom. So how to live with Christians who aren't like you. You could say lots more, but I'm going to move on to my second point, which is, how do you spot a Christian? Because in some ways, that's at the core of what Peter's talking about. Because these guys from Judea that we met in verse one are basically saying the way you spot a Christian is by pulling down their trousers. Right? Okay, it's a bit crudy, but right? That's what they're saying. And then obviously, the answer is no, that's not how you spot a Christian. But how do you then? How should you spot a Christian? So you don't need to be circumcised. You don't need to become a Jew.

What do you have to do? Do you have to do anything at all? What does Peter say? Verse 11.

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Well, I'll start with verse 10. Now, therefore, why are you putting God to the test by placing a yoke on the neck of the disciples that neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? So by that, he means, why are you making them obey the Lord? We can't do it.
[20:12] Fair enough. But we believe that we will be saved to the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will. How are you rescued? Is it by doing something? No.

We're saved by grace, which is, okay, somewhat religious word, but it just means gift. We're saved by gift. How are you rescued? Did you do something? No.
Jesus died in order to do everything for you so that you could get to the Father. You don't have to do anything.
It's already been done for you in Christ. Even, we read in Ephesians chapter 2, even your faith is a gift from God. Like, the whole thing is gift, top to bottom.
You didn't do a thing. You couldn't have rescued yourself if you wanted to. You were dead. But, gosh, when we think about what we were like before we were rescued, and if we're actually honest with ourselves in the way the Bible describes it, it becomes very clear, I was hopeless.
[21:18] Couldn't have done a thing. Had no power to rescue myself. Minimal desire to, because we're blind to our condition and our nature. And then Jesus, like a comet from the heavens, reaches into your life and grips you and says, I want you.

And then your heart blossoms and you go, oh my word. Okay. And you find yourself rescued. Dynamically. And you didn't do anything.
You couldn't save yourself if you tried. What do you have to do? Well, think about it like this. If he says, you're saved by gift.
Think about it like this. Imagine that I have a really big box that's wrapped up in nice shiny wrapping paper, and it's got a big old bow on the top. And it's got your name on it, on a nice little tag. And I'm holding it out to you.
What do you do in order to get it? Maybe you do this. By the way, it is why we stand like that in worship.
[22:24] You sort of wait to be given it. You put your hand out there to say, yes, please. And then you open it and it's way better than you thought it was and your heart blossoms with gratitude.

That's what salvation is like. What do you do? You kind of go, yes, please. And then you find that your life blooms with the love of God.
All you have to do is receive. Because Jesus loves you. Did you know that?
He loves you and he wants you and he's for you and he delights in you. Which means, so the Bible is full of things we should do. Even this passage I've read contains some things we should do.
The point is, they don't save you. What Jesus does is he doesn't say, do this to get in. He says, no, no, no, no, no. This is the best way to live and that's going to kill you.
[23:27] And what repentance is, because you might be like, I thought the Bible said you have to repent to be saved. Sure. So we receive the gift from Jesus and then we go, oh, yeah. That is going to kill me. Oh, that's the way of life.

And we walk this way. The word repent comes from a Greek word that means turn around. Literally, it's like, oh, that's going to kill me. Let's go this way. But after you've gone, oh, yes, I want the gift. And then you go, oh, then maybe I don't want to walk in a way that's going to kill me. And you walk towards life. That's salvation. And that's why they say, of course, they're saved the same way as us. How dare you put requirements on them? You're saved by grace. And then we say, come this way to live. Which means, friends, that if you know Jesus today, you can receive him.
You might be like, oh, what do you have? Yeah, you can receive him because he's here to love you and he wants you. And the gift that we offer every Sunday, which is basically why we preach the gospel every Sunday, is you can have Jesus and you still need him.
[24:30] And he's here to bless you and be with you and say, by the way, that kills you. Come this way. He's here for you. And if you don't know him, you can meet him today.

What do you have to do? You just have to say, yeah, okay. Yes, please. And then, yeah, that will require things of you. He will say, well, that means follow me.
But that's not how you get in. You just have to respond to the offer. And we'll create a way for you to do that a little bit later on, if you'd like to. If you're here and you don't know him, but I think there will be some people, then you can meet him today if you'd like to.

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He'd really like to meet you. He's literally bent heaven and earth to meet you. So that's one of the two ways. So there are more ways you can spot a Christian, but this passage gives us two.
So one of the two ways is grace. Essentially, you kind of can't. They just come in. But there's another way that we're told you can spot a Christian. In verse 8, what does Peter say when he's describing Cornelius and his friends?
[25:36] He says, and God, who knows the heart, but witness to them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as he did to us, and he made no distinction between us and them. How do you know someone's a Christian?

Because you can visibly see the Holy Spirit. We're given the Spirit for our own benefit, but one of the benefits to the church is it allows you to go, oh, they're a Christian.
It doesn't mean you're not if you haven't received the gift, but it does mean you can look at them and go, oh, I can see. I can see that they're a follower of Jesus. So what do we mean here by receive the Spirit?
Well, when you first come to faith, the Spirit has come into your life and given you faith. I don't mean that. But there is, the Bible describes something called receiving the Spirit or baptism in the Spirit, where there's a gift that God wants to give us.
Yes, to give us gifts for service, to follow him and do stuff, but also mostly so that you know you're loved, because it's like God comes to live in your bones. Right?
[26:41] That's what it means to receive the Spirit. God in your bones. You know all the time when I say, Jesus loves you, and you're thinking, yeah, I know, because it says so in here, wonderful.

Or you're thinking, yeah, I guess so, because I can see his action in my life, great. But there is a third way. You know he loves you because I'm like, oh, of course I know he loves me. I can feel it in my belly. Because God lives in my bones.
Of course I know he loves me. Why would I doubt it? Why would I doubt it? And ideally, that happens when you're first rescued by Jesus, when you first become a Christian.
That's the biblical way. You give your life to Jesus, and someone puts a hand on you, and then you fill with the Spirit, and off we go. That's perfect. That's how it should be. Sometimes it doesn't happen like that. But if you're here and you're like, I don't know if I know what you're talking about, but I'm curious, you can receive that today too.
We'll create an opportunity in a moment for you to receive the Spirit if you'd like to. There are some qualifications you have to meet to receive the Spirit.
[27:51] I'd like to read them to you. So this is Jesus in John chapter 7, in verse 37. He says, On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink.

Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.
Now this he said about the Spirit. So there were qualifications to receiving the Spirit.
Did you spot them? There are three. Three qualifications you have to meet if you want to receive the Spirit. For the first time, or to be honest again, because it's always there to fill you if you want.
What are the three qualifications? What did he say? Anyone, if anyone thirsts, so you have to be part of anyone. Qualification number one. Is that you?
Just think about it a little bit. I think it probably is. Qualification number two, if anyone thirsts, you have to be thirsty. Okay, that requires something of you.
[28:54] You have to want it. Okay. So qualification, you have to be part of anyone. Great. Tick. You have to want it. Well, you need to decide that. Do you want God in your bones?

Qualification number three, if anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. You have to drink.
Which is a lot like wanting it, if I'm honest. But you kind of, you have to, you have to do something well.
You have to receive. Oh, it's just like salvation. Yeah. It's just like salvation. Just have to receive.
There's an activeness to drinking.
You know, if I just sort of try to pour water on you, it's not going to work, is it? You have to, the cup has to come to your mouth. You have to drink. Essentially, you have to have a, what I'd call a happy expectation.
It's like, I want this, and I believe that God wants to give it to me. Bingo. That's what the Lord's looking for. And then I know, without a shadow of the doubt, that you will receive the Spirit.

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[29:54] For the first time, or the hundredth time, God will come to you, and be in your bones, and delight you. In a minute, we're going to do that. Can I have the band?

Thank you. You can, you can become a Christian, if you'd like. You can meet Jesus, receive the gift. You can receive the Spirit, if you'd like. In one sense, I've trotted through these things fairly fast. I haven't laid the whole thing out. There's more we could say. But, you can receive right now. Or in just a moment. And you might be thinking, oh, okay, no, the thing for me was, how do I, who's at my table?
How do I, these things are actually more connected than you might think. Because how, it's when we get, that we're just, saved by grace, and we're just a, bunch of fools, or at least I am, who've sort of stumbled our way, into the kingdom, and then find ourselves, clothed in royal robes, without deserving a jot of it.
That we're like, oh, yeah, okay. I could probably have some people, around my house. Like, those things do actually, follow from each other. But it's also, when we're full, of the Spirit of God, and like, I know I'm loved.
[31:03] Because I know I'm loved. Because he lives in me. It's like, I guess I could probably do anything. Might not always live like that.

But I could. And it's when I go, oh, and look, he loves them too. I could see it. But I realize, okay, we're part of a people. We need to act like one. Like, these things are connected.
How are we going to do this, Jesus? Come to that. I'm not quite sure what I'm going to do next thing. Why don't we all stand together?
And then, Charlie, if you could tinkle away a little bit, that would be wonderful. And we'll sing in just a second, I'm sure. If you ever get your microphone back. the, we're going to give you an opportunity to respond if you'd like.
There's, there's two things here. There's, I want to receive the spirit and I never have. We, we might do something for us in a minute, but I want to receive the spirit and I never have. And I want to meet Jesus.
[32:11] And I never have. I have no idea if this is one person, Tempe, I don't know. Let me pray.

And then I'll, I'll give you an opportunity. Lord Jesus, would you come to us by your spirit? Would you turn our attention towards you so that we know that you're here powerfully?
That you love us, that you're for us. Would you just start to stir people's hearts, Lord, if you aren't already with just that little sense of, oh gosh, this might be for me.
That I think Tim might be about to ask me to do something slightly brave, but, but what? And I don't know about that, but maybe I need to do something about it. Would you, would you just start to stir that in people's hearts, Jesus?
Jesus? Amen. We love you, Lord. Amen.
[33:23] Okay. And if that's you, if there's some kind of little stirring in your heart, you're like, oh, I think maybe I need to respond.

What I'm going to do is, I'm going to pray a prayer that you could pray along with me if you've not been a Christian. And then I'm going to ask you if you did that. And then I'm going to ask you if you did that to come forward.
And we're also at the same time going to create a time for you to come forward if you'd like to receive the Spirit for the first time. Because if you've just become a Christian, we want you to receive the Spirit right now too.
And we'd like to talk to you and help you set up on that. And like I said, I don't know who we might be aiming this at. So I'm going to pray this short prayer.
Pray along with me if you would like to meet Jesus for the first time. Lord Jesus, I confess that my life is a mess.
[34:31] That I have sinned against you and against other people. But I believe and I'm trying to believe that your death on the cross might rescue me from that and offer me new life.

Help me trust you. I want to trust you. And turn away from my sin and receive new life.
Please come to me right now. Amen. Okay.
Okay. If you just prayed that prayer or if you think, oh no, I'm a Christian but I'm not sure about this spirit stuff but I'd like to receive.
Well, you do a really brave thing and come forwards. Make your way down the front here. Stand somewhere in this section. What will happen is some people will come to talk to you and pray with

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you.
[35:43] and then you'll meet with God. Why don't you do that right now? Particularly brave for the first person.

We're not even singing a song. I've not given you any cover. It's very mean of me. It's particularly brave for the first person. Well done.
Friends, as we start to have people respond, could some of you who are confident to pray, there's particularly a couple of women over here right now but could you find your way forward to come to pray with people?
Anyone else? Anyone else? do you

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