



**“PARADOX, POWER,
AND THE CRUCIFORM LIFE”**
SPEAKER: BRAD WILLIAMS
DATE: SEPTEMBER 26, 2021

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help lead your group through a progression of engagement with the Bible passage(s) and the speaker's message. They can help you understand and apply the teaching.

BIBLICAL TEXT(S) + MESSAGE SUMMARY:

2 CORINTHIANS 10:1-2, 17-18; 2 CORINTHIANS 11:30; 2 CORINTHIANS 12:9-10; 2 CORINTHIANS 13:4; 1 CORINTHIANS 1:20-24; LUKE 9:23-24; 1 CORINTHIANS 2:2; GALATIANS 2:20; 2 CORINTHIANS 5:14-15

This week, Pastor Brad continues our study in the book of Corinthians. He looks at several passages that have a counterintuitive message. Paul points out to the church in Corinth that Jesus' crucifixion, a moment of scandal and extreme weakness in the eyes of the world, is our greatest strength and the core of the Gospel. Like Jesus, we are called to live sacrificial lives and constantly deny ourselves, embracing our weaknesses, and rooted our identity in Jesus alone. This has life-changing implications for each and every follower of Christ.

LEAN IN: *These are icebreakers and warm ups, mostly to get the group talking and start the flow of conversation. Choose one and talk it over for 5-10 minutes.*

1. Have you ever been given a piece of advice that was counterintuitive? What was the advice and how did it turn out?
2. What do you think is the difference between true humility and false humility?
3. If you are cooking, creating, or building something, do you prefer to wing it or do you prefer having explicit directions to follow?
4. What was your high/low for this past week (or since the group last met)? What was the best thing that happened and the worst thing that happened?

LOOK DOWN: *These are questions about the Bible passage(s) and observations about what's been read. Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max.*

1. Read through 2 Corinthians 10:1-2 and 17-18, 2 Corinthians 11:30, 2 Corinthians 12:9-10, and 2 Corinthians 13:4. What do you learn from these passages about humility, boasting, weakness, and strength? How would you sum up the message of these passages in your own words?
2. How does Paul describe the message of the gospel in 1 Corinthians 1:20-24? What barriers does he mention that may keep people from believing? Who does the passage say is able to understand the gospel message?
3. What does Jesus ask his followers to do in Luke 9:23-24? What outcome does Jesus say will come from doing this?
4. What does Paul say about the importance of the crucifixion in 1 Corinthians 2:2, Galatians 2:20, 2 Corinthians 5:14-15? How does he describe the importance of that event for his own life and identity and the life and identity of those who choose to follow Christ?

CONTINUED:

5. Looking at all of these texts together, what are the common words, phrases, or themes that you see? What do you think are the main points that run through them all?

LOOK OUT: *These questions help connect the world of the Bible to today. Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max.*

1. What do you think it could look like in our world today to boast in your weakness, as Paul suggests? Have you seen people do this well? Who? Have you seen any examples of people using weaknesses or struggles as a point of pride? How is this similar or different from what Paul is suggesting we do?
2. What are barriers of faith that you have seen people come up against in our own age/culture? How are they similar or different to the barriers Paul described that Jews and Greeks had? What do these passages/this sermon teach you about how we can help others overcome these barriers?
3. Pastor Brad talked about how we are called to live a cruciform life, a life that is utterly reshaped and re prioritized because of the crucifixion and the sacrificial example that Jesus sets for us. What examples can you think of from history or from your own experience of people who live this way? What actions do/did they take that demonstrated a sacrificial way of living?
4. Pastor Brad said that part of daily taking up our cross is letting our identities and the things we think give us value die and instead allow Jesus to be our main source of identity. What kinds of identities/values have you seen Christians cling to instead of Jesus? How does that impact their ability to follow Jesus?
5. Based on these passages/this sermon, what do you think a church living out the cruciform life would look like? How would the members treat one another? How might they impact their community?

LOOK IN: *These are questions that help you consider how to engage the teaching personally. Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max.*

1. What might it look like in your own life for you to “boast in your weaknesses?” What impact do you think this could have on how you view yourself and how others relate to you?
2. How do you generally treat/view those who either don’t know or have rejected the Gospel? How does this sermon/these passages impact your attitude?
3. On a scale of 1 to 10, 1 being I’m 100% living for myself and 10 being I’m 100% living a cruciform life shaped only by Jesus, where would you rate yourself? What do you think it might take to move yourself up a point on that scale? What changes might you need to make in how you think or behave?
4. What identity do you tend to cling to (and we all have something we cling to by default that isn’t Jesus)? How might this identity or value prevent you from being able to follow Jesus fully and do all he’s asking you to?

CONTINUED:

LIVE IT OUT: *These action steps help apply this week's message to day to day life. Choose one prompts and talk it over for 5-10 minutes.*

1. What's one way that you can "boast in your weakness" this week?
2. Have these passages and/or this sermon brought to mind any places in your life where you are not living a cruciform life? What can you do this week to take up your cross and follow Jesus? How can your group/family support you as you do this?
3. Is there some identity that continues to define you? Spend some time in prayer this week, asking that you would see yourself through God's eyes and not through the lens of this identity.